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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A Messiah of Social Justice

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Abstract: *The study of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his ideas have acquired a new relevance in contemporary Indian society particularly at a time when socio-economic disparities are increasing and there are growing incidents of caste atrocities being reported from across the country. In fact, despite Indian entering the age of globalization and scientific progress the Dalits/Depressed classes are at the receiving end of violence being perpetrated by the dominant castes. In villages, segregation of population on the basis of caste is still rampant. Dalit women are often subjected to the humiliation of rape with police and administration looking the other way. Finally, the tragic suicide of a number of Dalit students at Central Universities and IITs is a testimony to the conditions of Dalits in present day India. It is in view of this situation that the life and work of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar provides us with guidance for our future course of action. Dr. Ambedkar was an uncompromising crusader against the deeply entrenched caste system. Himself a Dalit, he led a heroic struggle against the inhuman custom of untouchability and ultimately reached India's highest democratic platform and became the principle architect of the Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar is a role model for millions of Dalits and other downtrodden sections across India and was in fact, voted 'the Greatest Indian' in a T.V poll in 2012. In this paper an attempt is being to examine the struggles of Dr. Ambedkar against the caste system, his ideas of social justice and how it influenced the process of constitution making and the continued relevance of Dr. Ambedkar in present day India.*

Keywords: *Caste System, Untouchabilty, Separate Electorate, Social Justice, Constitution.*

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Introduction

India has a long tradition, a glorious past and an equally inspiring struggle for freedom. Alongside this struggle for freedom, another equally significant struggle was waged by the socially deprived classes against the age old system of social stratification on the basis of caste and the inhuman and socially degrading practice of untouchability. The division of society on the basis of caste has been one of the major features of Indian society since time immemorial. The castes are further divided into sub-castes (*Jatis*). Nobody is sure about the exact origin of the caste system as some scholars try to trace the origin of caste-divided society to the *Vedas*. In fact, they trace its origin to the *Purusha Sukta* hymn of *Rig Veda* (*Mandala X*), whereas some consider it to be a later interpolation. The people of the lowest caste were considered to be outside the fold of the *Chautur-varna* (four-fold caste division) and according to *Manu Smriti*, a Hindu law book, were treated as 'untouchables' or out-castes. The stalwart, the champion of the depressed classes and one of the path-breaking leaders of struggle against this caste inequality was Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who was posthumously conferred the Bharat Ratna on 31st March 1990. In this essay an attempt is being made to examine the struggles of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar against the pernicious caste system and also explore his ideas of social justice and how it went into the making of Indian constitution. Finally, the essay discusses the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar and its continued relevance in post-independence India.

It is instructive to note that even before Dr. B.R. Ambedkar efforts to root out the evils of the caste system were made by his illustrious predecessors like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. The anti-caste movement assumed a visible shape in the 19th century when Jyotirao Phule started the *Satyasodhak Samaj*. His *Din Bandhu* was the first anti-caste journal. In 1888 Gopal Baba Walangkar-himself a Mahad and a retired soldier-became the first Untouchable to start a journal called *Vital Vidhvasak* (Destroyer of Brahminical or Ceremonial Pollution).[1] It was efforts of these pioneers which laid the ground for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his all out struggle against the evils of caste system. The horrendous practice of caste system and its associated evils attracted the attention of other social reformers and nationalist leaders as well. N.G. Chandavarkar one of the early leaders of Indian National Congress and a social reformer speaking at a meeting of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association in 1894 declared, 'We must remember caste is the greatest monster we have to kill'.[2] M. Singaravelu, a pioneer of the Communist movement in India launched a scathing attack on the brutal system of untouchabilty and its inherent exploitative nature, in his presidential address delivered at the Atheists Conference held at Madras on 31st December 1933. He declared in no uncertain terms, 'the untouchables numbering around six crores are economically poor and downtrodden. What they need is, not God or religion. They need a square meal a

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day and an opportunity to earn a decent livelihood.'[3] Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi in an article published in 'Young India' on 27th April 1921 wrote unambiguously, 'Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to untouchabilty'[4] However, the tallest and leader of the anti-caste movement was B.R. Ambedkar who understood what it meant to be an untouchable from his lived experience. In fact, in his life of about Sixty-Six years he witnessed the unique stages of suffering, experiencing, learning, mobilizing and implementation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891 in an untouchable community known as Mahar at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. Being born in an untouchable community he spent his whole life fighting injustice, inequality and social discrimination. Ambedkar's lifelong experience of humiliation and discrimination shaped his outlook as a leader of the depressed classes. Ambedkar and other untouchable children were segregated in school and were provided with little help by the teachers in the school who even refused to touch the notebook of untouchables for fear of being polluted. What was most galling was that they were even denied the basic right of drinking water from the vessel kept in the school. As a young boy he and his brother were denied a ride on the bullock cart from Masur Railway station to Goregaon village in the Khatav Tehsil of Satara district because they belonged to the *Mahar* caste. The Sudras and the untouchables were deprived of the right to study Sanskrit and Ambedkar despite his keen interest to study Sanskrit had to perforce opt for Persian. Even after Ambedkar returned from foreign to Baroda in September 1917 and took up job as military secretary to the Baroda state he faced ill treatment on grounds of untouchability. He not only faced hurdles in finding a house due to his caste but even the peons in his office maltreated him by refusing to give water and dropping files on his table instead of handing them over to him.[5] All this steeled his resolve to fight inequality and free the depressed classes from the thralldom of caste-based tyranny. His efforts to emancipate the downtrodden and his fight against the evil of caste system under odd circumstances may be divided into four distinct phases.

First Phase or Preparatory Phase

The first phase of his life till 1924 may be considered as the preparatory phase in which he established himself for the future struggle. B.R. Ambedkar graduated from the Elphinstone College, Bombay University in 1912. The Gaekwad of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaekwad sent him to Columbia University in New York in 1913 by providing a State Scholarship of 11.50 pound sterling per month for three years. He completed his Post-Graduation in June 1915 majoring in economics and in 1916 completed his second master's thesis entitled '*National Dividend of India-A Historic and Analytical Study*' which earned him a second M.A. In fact, when he completed his degree, he had

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more than double the credits required. In October 1916 he took admission for the Bar Course at Gray's Inn and also enrolled at the London School of Economics to work on a doctoral thesis. However, he came back to India in June 1917 following the end of the scholarship awarded by the Baroda State but returned to London and completed his Master's Degree in 1921 and also completed his D.Sc in Economics in 1923. In the same year he was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn.

Ambedkar from his lived experience at Baroda and elsewhere realised that the approach of social and religious reformation will not be fruitful for rooting out the entrenched evil of caste system and giving a status of equality to the depressed classes. In order to ensure social justice to the suffering multitude comprising the untouchables, political approach would be more effective and in order to do so he adopted a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand he tried to question the very religious basis of the caste system and raise the consciousness of the depressed classes and highlight the problems faced by them. On the other hand he tried to unite the untouchables under one banner and free them from the crippling handicaps imposed by the caste system as he focused on awakening the masses. In order to realise his first objective he published the weekly newspaper *Mooknayak* from 21st January 1921 which was later renamed as *Bahishkrut Bharat*.[6] Dr. Ambedkar believed the press to be a powerful tool of social transformation. Moreover, in order to organise the depressed classes politically so as to realize his goal of emancipation of the untouchables he started the *Bahiskrit Hitakarini Sabha* or the Depressed Classes' Welfare Association on 20th July 1924 at Parel, Bombay. The aim of the association was to make the untouchables conscious of their deplorable state, generate awareness about their genuine demands and legitimate rights. Towards fulfillment of these aims Ambedkar gave them the motto of: "Educate, Organize and Agitate".[7] In keeping with his strategy of fighting the age-old menace of caste system through political means, Ambedkar in his testimony before the Southborough Franchise Committee which was doing the spadework for the Government of India Act 1919 forcefully argued for granting reservations to the untouchables.[8]

The Second Phase (1925-1946)

The second phase saw the emergence of Ambedkar as a leader of the politics of agitation and culminated in the constitutional struggle to secure 'separate electorate' for the untouchables. A momentous incident in the life of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the march to Mahad. The background of the march was a resolution in the Bombay Legislative Council moved by S.K. Bole and adopted by the Bombay Government which allowed the untouchables to make use of water bodies and other public utilities maintained by the government.[9] A similar resolution was passed by the Mahad municipality in 1924 to implement the Act but it remained a mere paper resolution

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and could not be implemented at the ground level due to stiff opposition from the caste Hindus. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar now decided to launch a Satyagraha in the town of Mahad which was a stronghold of caste Hindus.[10] In fact, a Conference was called by the Kolaba District Depressed Classes at Mahad on 19th and 20th March, 1927. In his address to the Conference Dr. B.R. Ambedkar called upon the government to take necessary steps to transform the 'Bole Resolution' into a reality. After the Conference the assembled untouchables led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar marched to the Chavdar Tale also known as Chowder Tank, where Ambedkar followed by thousands of awakened Untouchables drank water from the tank.[11] This was indeed an event of momentous magnitude as for the first time the Untouchables led by a great leader and champion of social justice marched to vindicate their rights.

Ambedkar planned a second conference at Mahad in December 1927 but owing to the fact that Caste Hindus had filed a case in claiming the tank to be under private ownership and the matter being *sub judice* Ambedkar desisted from going ahead with Satyagraha. But in any case as part of the Mahad Satyagraha, a resolution was passed under the stewardship of Ambedkar on 25th December 1927 which called for burning copies of the *Manusmriti*, a code of slavery for the untouchables. The resolution declared: "Taking into consideration the fact that the laws which are proclaimed in the name of Manu, the Hindu lawgiver, and which are contained in the Manusmriti and which are recognized as the Code for the Hindus is insulting to persons of low caste, are calculated to deprive them of the rights of a human being and crush their personality. Comparing them in the light of the rights of men recognized all over the civilized world, this conference is of opinion that this Manusmriti is not entitled to any respect and is undeserving of being called a sacred book. To show its deep and profound contempt for it, the Conference resolves to burn a copy thereof, at the end of the proceedings, as a protest against the system of social inequality it embodies in the guise of religion."[12]

Ambedkar now went ahead with publicly burning the copies of the *Manusmriti* as a symbolic gesture of rejection of the religious sanction of untouchability.[13] In fact, Ambedkar in his very first paper "*Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*" had critically examined the question of caste and realized how it had been legitimized by Manu in his inhuman code.[14] In March 1930 he led another Satyagraha to establish the right of the untouchables to enter the famous Kalaram Temple at Nasik and it continued till March 1934.[15] A distinct shift in the approach of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar may be discerned in the period after 1927 as he shifted his focus from politics of mass mobilization and agitation to constitutional struggle for achieving the socio-political rights of the Untouchables vis-à-vis the caste Hindus rather than depend on the whims

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and forbearance of the upper castes. It is in this context that Ambedkar submitted a memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission), set up by the British government in 1928, in which he demanded inter alia recognition of the Depressed Classes as a separate minority community and reservation of 15 seats for the Depressed Classes out of 140 seats in the legislature.[16] Following this submission in recognition of his stature as the tallest leader of the Untouchables Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was nominated by the British government to represent the interests of Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conference in 1930. He along with Diwan Bahadur Rettamalai Srinivasan voiced the concerns of the depressed classes which comprised almost one-fifth of the total population of the country. Dr Ambedkar's spirited defence of the rights of the Depressed Classes left an indelible mark on the Conference as he accused even the British rulers of having failed to bring about any change in the material and living conditions of the Untouchables. He declared in no uncertain terms that in any future constitution of India Untouchability should be declared illegal to all intent and purposes.[17] Dr Ambedkar submitted to the Round Table Conference a 'Supplementary Memorandum on the Claims of the Depressed Classes for Special Representation' in which he demanded emphatically that the Depressed Classes should not only have separate electorates but shall also have the right to be represented by their own men[18].

It is instructive to note that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was of the firm belief that Communal representation was the only effective tool to deal with the pernicious effect of division in Indian society and which would also ensure genuinely responsible government and not a mere change of political masters. The demands of Dr. Ambedkar naturally evoked a sharp reaction back home in India where he was even accused of betraying the Indian nationalist cause. But he remained steadfast in his commitment to uplift the downtrodden and much despised untouchables as he declared: "I can never consent to deliver my people bound hand and foot to the Caste Hindus for generations to come".[19] The Conference provided Dr. Ambedkar with a platform to highlight the demands of the depressed classes in a forceful and persuasive manner. In his concluding remarks to the plenary session Ambedkar in his inimitable manner reminded the British that, "the time when you were to choose and India was to accept is gone, never to return. Let the consent of the people and not the accident of logic be the touchstone of your new constitution".[20] The British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald after detailed deliberations accepted the demands of Dr. Ambedkar and announced it in the Communal Award of 16th August 1932. It extended the provisions of the separate electorate to the depressed classes (now called Scheduled Caste under a changed nomenclature) in the 78 seats reserved for them. This was exactly what Dr. Ambedkar had wanted and was a moment of great triumph for him.

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However, Mahatma Gandhi considered it to be a sinister ploy on part of the imperial authorities to divide Indian society and weaken the basis of the freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi was in Yervada jail in this period having being arrested for breaking the salt law but declared his intention to fast unto death from 20th September 1932 according to his own inner convictions unless the decision to grant separate electorates was revised.[21] Mahatma Gandhi expressed the rationale for the fast unto death in a letter to his friend in the following words: 'What I am aiming at is an understanding between the two, the greatest opportunity of repentance and reparation on the part of the suppressors. I am certain that the moment is ripe for the change of heart among them'.[22] Dr. Ambedkar was in a state of dilemma as to whether he should succumb to the moral appeal of the Mahatma or to stick to the political gains made at the Round Table Conference. Ultimately, Ambedkar agreed to give-up his demand for separate electorate in favour of joint electorate along with the other communities of the Hindu society. As a quid pro quo Mahatma Gandhi agreed to enhance the number of reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes from 78, as declared in the Communal Award to a much higher figure of 151, in joint electorate.[23] This settlement between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar was known as the Poona Pact, signed on 24th September 1932. The British Government also accepted the Poona Pact thereby nullifying the Communal Award. It is of utmost importance to note that the essence of Poona Pact, providing for seat reservation for the Scheduled Castes in a joint electorate, was later enshrined in the Indian Constitution.[24] Ambedkar in coming to a compromise with Mahatma Gandhi and other caste Hindu leaders showed a great humanitarian spirit and explained his readiness to come to an understanding with Gandhi in the following words:

'No man was placed in a greater and graver dilemma than I was then. It was a baffling situation. I had to make a choice between two different alternatives. There was before me the duty, which I owed as a part of common humanity, to save Gandhi from sure death. There was before me the problem of saving for the untouchables the political rights which the Prime Minister had given them. I responded to the call of humanity and saved the life of Mr. Gandhi by agreeing to alter the Communal Award in a manner satisfactory to Mr. Gandhi'[25]

In fact, it would not be wrong to say that before the Poona Pact, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was considered only to be a leader of the Depressed Classes but following the Poona Agreement he emerged as one of the foremost national leaders. He was of the firm conviction that until or unless the Depressed Classes entered the corridors of political power it was not possible to usher in an egalitarian society and hence towards the end of the second phase Dr. Ambedkar established the Independent Labour Party in 1936 and participated in elections to the Central Legislative Assembly. He also served as the

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Labour member in the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 till 1946.[26]

Third or Final Phase (1946–1956)

Dr. Ambedkar was a realist and a pragmatist and hence in the post-independence period he correctly assessed the changed political situation and decided to enter the Constituent Assembly in order to fulfill his lifelong goal of protecting the genuine interests of the downtrodden sections of society. Dr. Ambedkar by his oratorical skills, grasp over mind-boggling legal and constitutional questions and ability to handle diverse interests impressed all the members of the Constituent Assembly and was appointed as a member of the Seven-member Drafting Committee, of which he soon became the Chairman. The Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of putting together the brick and mortar supplied by the other Constitutional committees to erect the edifice of the Indian constitution. It is important to note that the appointment of Dr. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee was no concession to please the sentiments of the Scheduled Castes but was recognition of his extraordinary potential which eminently fitted him for the staggering task of drafting the constitution of the largest democracy in the world. In fact, his election as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee also came as a pleasant surprise to Dr. Ambedkar.[27] He was the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and it was his ideas of social justice that suffuse this great legal document. In fact, it would not be out of place to briefly examine Dr. Ambedkar's ideas of social justice and how it was sought to be implemented in the Constitution of the newly-independent country in some detail.

Dr. Ambedkar's Notion of Social Justice

Before discussing the Dr. Ambedkar's ideas of social justice it is necessary to have an understanding of the term Social Justice. The term Social Justice comprises two distinct words 'Social' and 'Justice'. The term 'Social' connotes all the individuals who live in the human society while the term 'Justice' suggests ensuring basic rights such as liberty and equality. Thus, Social Justice implies ensuring every individual the basic rights of liberty and equality so that he can realise his potentialities to the highest extent possible. It can be said without a shade of doubt that social justice in turn ensures social happiness. But the Caste-divided Hindu society refused to acknowledge these basic rights of liberty and equality as it considered the Brahmins to be a hereditary privileged class followed by the *Kshatriyas* and the *Vaishyas* while the vast majority of the population particularly the 'untouchables' were condemned to a servile status and were supposed to perform lowly and menial tasks. The Hindu social system which designates a hierarchical status to each caste engenders bad blood and discord. The Hindu Society founded on the principles of *Varnashrama* was a very negation of the concept of Social Justice as the modern principles of social justice require that society

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should be organized on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity so as to ensure the free and fair development of all individuals.

It is herein that Dr. Ambedkar's idea of social justice becomes relevant in the Indian context. Dr. Ambedkar's concept of justice is derived to a great extent from the French Revolution of 1789. Dr. Ambedkar was firmly convinced that the basis of social justice was social democracy as mere political democracy can neither ensure social justice nor survive on its own. Freedom sans social and economic parity was superfluous. Hence, it was necessary to establish social democracy by ensuring the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity which are the foundational rocks of a just social and economic order. But the conditions of Social Democracy can be fulfilled only if equality of status and opportunity is available to all sections of society as there is no place for any hierarchical structure based on birth in a social democracy. He firmly believed that in the unique situation obtaining in India the demands of social justice require that the principles of Civil Liberty and Political Liberty should be enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The Scheduled Castes, for example, were often deprived of the right to enter Hindu temples or use public facilities like wells and tanks and were at the receiving end of the violence and various atrocities perpetrated by members of the so-called upper castes which was a blatant violation of their civil liberties. As far as the concept of political liberty is concerned it involves the rights of the individuals to share in the governance of the country and participate in the making and unmaking of the government of the day. But the caste system prevailing in the country assigned specific social, cultural and economic role to be performed by each caste with no liberty to change the same which was often described as *Dharma* (duty) in ancient Indian tradition/texts. It therefore not only curtailed social and economic liberty but also destroyed a person's capabilities and potentialities. At the same time it gave monumental concessions and prerogatives to the upper castes, especially Brahmins.[28] This denial of essential liberties to the 'untouchables' in the traditional Hindu social order was totally antithetical to the idea of a just social order which was a sine qua non for the established of a modern nation state. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar defined fraternity in the following words: 'fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians'.[29] But unfortunately Indians were artificially divided along caste lines into discrete units and were precluded from fusing into one another through the custom of endogamy.[30]

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution and with his long background of fighting against the evils of untouchability and exploitation sought to enshrine in the Constitution of India certain provisions which would protect the rights of millions of downtrodden and subjugated people. In fact, Ambedkar's philosophy of social justice has been one of the greatest influences

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in the making of the Indian Constitution, particularly with regard to various articles contained in Part III. Article 14 of the Constitution provides-'The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India'.[31] It implies absence of any special privilege by reason of birth, creed etc. Similarly, Article 15 declares, 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them'.[32] But at the same it provides that, 'Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes'.[33] As a matter of fact, sometimes preferential treatment is required for particular sections of society who have been deprived since time immemorial so as to bring them on an equal footing with other more advanced sections of society. It was the firm conviction of Dr. Ambedkar that a modern society is one in which the real criteria of a man's status were his caliber and attainments and no one was 'noble' or 'untouchable' because of his birth. Hence, he advocated a policy of preferential treatment for the socially suppressed and economically downtrodden people. However, the most path-breaking of the constitutional provisions was Article 17 which prohibited the practice of untouchability. It declared: *'Untouchabilty is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "Untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law'*.[34] This law can be considered as a charter of freedom for the depressed classes as it ushered in a social revolution by criminalizing *Untouchability. The Indian parliament further passed the Untouchability (Offences) Act on 1st June 1955 which prescribes penalties for the enforcement of any disability that arises out of untouchability.*

Apart from this Article 23 of the Constitution declares: 'Traffic in human beings and begar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law'.[35] In other words the law forbade forced labour which has always been an instrument in the hands of the dominant caste members in rural areas to suppress and exploit the lower castes.

Thus it can very well be asserted that the Indian Constitution, which was drafted under the stewardship of Dr. Ambedkar, contains a number of provisions that enjoins the state to secure for all its citizens, justice, social, economic and political, along with liberty, equality and fraternity so as establish the principle of social justice. Dr. Ambedkar realized that affirmative action was the only means through which the lot of the depressed classes could be improved. The name of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has, in fact, become synonymous with constitution making in India. It was through his intellect and legalistic acumen that roots of social democracy were sought to be planted on Indian

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soil as the Indian constitution guarantees equal right to all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed and sex.

Legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

The name of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar will go down in history as a great champion of social justice and equality. He was not only the framer of the Constitution but also a lifelong crusader for social justice. He remained a non-conformist throughout his life whose life's mission was to restore the self-respect of the millions of downtrodden. The legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has left a deep imprint on the society and politics of post-independence India cutting across the ideological spectrum. The initiatives of Dr. Ambedkar have also influenced governmental policies as several programmes are undertaken both by the central as well as state government for the wellbeing of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs). The life and thought of Dr. Ambedkar has inspired the rise of a number of Dalit organizations, engendered a new genre of literature popularly known as Dalit literature and given rise to a number of political parties such as Dalit Panthers, the Republican Party of India etc. Finally, the conversion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to Buddhism on 14th October 1956 has led to a revival of interest in Buddhism both in India as well as abroad. The contribution and legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was best summed up by the former Chief Justice of India, Shri P.B. Gajendragadkar in the following words, 'He became the law giver of the 20th century-the Modern Manu. But unlike the Law of Manu under which there was never prosperity, the constitution made by Ambedkar will make India a paradise by removing inequalities based on caste and the bane of untouchability'.[36]

Conclusion

To conclude, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a great visionary, an acclaimed economist, an erudite scholar, an accomplished author, a brilliant barrister, a towering political leader and above all a champion of social justice. But he was never an armchair intellectual but a down to earth person who never lost his connection with the grassroots. He was a man of action who devoted his entire life to lift the untouchables from societal margins and pathetic socio-economic conditions. Dr. Ambedkar sought to translate his ideas of social justice into reality by enshrining the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in the constitution of India. It is true that the dream of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is yet to fully realised particularly in view of the fact that many heinous crimes are still being reported against the SCs/STs and socio-economic differences are ever increasing in present-day India but still the Dr B.R. Ambedkar stands like colossus inspiring hope among the suppressed and downtrodden multitude even to this day.

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