

“EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF DR. BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR, THE ARCHITECT OF MODERN INDIA”

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar is one of the makers of modern India. Education has an immense impact on the human society. Born in a poor and deprived family, Dr. Ambedkar touched many heights in his life considered difficult for humans. He is considered among the most educated people of modern India. One can safely assume that a person is not in the proper sense until he is educated. It trains the human mind to think and take the right decision. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the world. According to Ambedkar, “Education is a weapon of creation of mental and educational development, weapon of eradication of social slavery of economic development of political freedom”. The basic theme of his philosophy of education is: inculcating the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the boys and girls of all shades by the way of his educational philosophy. B.R. Ambedkar’s name is written in golden letters in the history of India as a creator of social justice. He was not only the man of age and builder of the constitution but is the founder of a new social order for the betterment of the downtrodden. The paper is based on secondary source and with the objective of to understand the contributions and views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar towards education.

Keywords: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Education, views and contributions.

Introduction

Education is most important among all of us. Education plays a very important role in our life. For living a luxurious life or for living a better life, you should be educated. Education is that which transforms a person to live a better life and even in a social well-being. Education is the

one that doing something constructive in our near future. Education plays a vital role in success in the personal growth. The more you have knowledge the more you grow. Being educated and earning a professional degree prepares you to be a part in reputed organizations, companies or institutions. A person who gets good education will become good citizen. Education is the process by which man has made the great positive changes in the society and the lifestyle. The importance of education cannot be stated enough. It is a self-enlightening process. It is crucial to the overall development of an individual and the society at large. Education for all means has been the most important debate in all stages of society, progress and development.

Dr. B.R Ambedkar was not only the father of Indian Constitution but was a great freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, writer, economist, editor, and a revivalist for Buddhism in India. His Educational philosophy stresses on development of persons and their environment. Dr. Ambedkar strongly believed that education should be provided without any discrimination to all the citizens of independent India. "Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one." was the fundamental educational thought of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar believed in liberal education and based on religious inspiration of non-theistic nature. Education according to Dr. Ambedkar was a blend of pragmatism of Dewey and „dhamma“ of Buddha. He thought that education would enlighten his people and bridge the gap between the higher classes and untouchables.

Purpose of Education according to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar:

Dr. Ambedkar identified two purposes of knowledge: first, to acquire it for betterment of others and secondly to use it for one's own betterment. He has also argued against professional learning (The British Educational System) which aims at creating a clerical nature of workers. He emphasized on secular education for social emancipation and freedom.

Education has the sole purpose to enlighten the depressed classes so as to enhance their cause of social, economic and political upliftment. The social and ethical philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar aimed at making the depressed people aware to change their thoughts and old behaviour-patterns and to move forward in the direction of unity and freedom through education. The basic theme of his philosophy of education was to inculcate the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and moral character among the boys and girls of all religion, region, class and caste.

Views on basic education:

Ambedkar has been described as a philosopher, a patriot, scholar or a writer, the constitution maker, a social revolutionary, a humanistic thinker, or the socialist and he had also contributed a great deal to the cause of education. He mainly emphasized that the education as a vital force for individual development and social change. For Ambedkar, education was the main key to open the doors of light, vision and wisdom. He himself said, "Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of every one. The object of primary education is to see that every child that enters the portals of a primary school does leave it only at a stage when it becomes literate continuous to be literate throughout the rest of his life."

Universalisation of education:

Dr Ambedkar was eminent supporter of his mentor John Dewey's view of democratization of education. A large section of the people of India remained deprived of the right to education for a long time due to the prevailing social inequality in India. Dr.Ambedkar was of the view that education is the birth right of every person and nobody can be denied to attain this right. Therefore, a democratic country should give the right to education to all in its society without any discrimination.

Emphasis on moral education and character building:

Dr.Ambedkar regarded that education without moral values cannot be called education in real sense. He firmly believed that if due importance to moral values and character building is not given in educating the people, then such an educated person will not be of any use to society. Addressing the Bombay province Depressed Classes Youth Conference 12th February 1938, he stated that 'An educated man without character and humility is more dangerous than a beast. If his education is detrimental to the welfare of the poor, the educated man is a curse to society...Character is more important than education.'

Job-oriented and skill-based education: An important aim of education is to make a person capable of earning a living or making himself dependent. Dr.Ambedkar acknowledged that employment or earning livelihood is very important in a person's life. He believed that education

would be considered completed only when some skill would be associated with it and such skill would generate some employment for the person. Hence, he emphasized on technical education and considered it necessary for the rise of the deprived and backward classes in the society.

Importance to mother-tongue and foreign language:

Language is the main tool of education. The fundamental principle of education is that if education is provided in the child's mother tongue then it is easy for the child to understand. Dr Ambedkar advocated mother tongue teaching but at the same time he required each student to have knowledge of at least one foreign language. So that he can know the development happening in his subject at global level and understand what is happening in the whole world. Moreover, many people are unfamiliar that Dr Ambedkar proposed to make Sanskrit language as national language or language of state in the Constituent Assembly meeting.

Dr. Ambedkar's Ideas on the Curriculum

Curriculum is a condensed outline or statement of the main points of a course of study or of books or other documents. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the hard and fast syllabus as it brings restrictions on the teaching. He said. It is, therefore, necessary that the university should give broad guidelines of the subjects concerned and teachers must be given a freedom to teach what he thinks proper in the light of those guidelines. For this purpose Dr. Ambedkar pointed out "the teachers of the university ought, under proper safeguards, to have entire control of the education and examination of their students".

Ambedkar's Ideas on the Methodology

The process of teaching-learning occurs in human association. This human association is possible through formal education. Formal teaching and training facilitates transmission of all resources and achievement in a complex society. By this we can say that Dr. Ambedkar believed in interactive teaching and learning where the teacher is a facilitator and guide, to facilitate the learning of a student. He also stressed on self-learning for which he always furnished his libraries with the right kind of books and easy access to them.

Education and Students according Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar

Dr. Ambedkar had served in various educational institutions as professor till years. So, he had deep understanding of the minds of the students. He said that the self-confidence of the students should be raised through education and the students should not lose their self confidence at the time of examination or using the learned skill. He stressed the value education and said that students should self reliant the knowledge, intellect, politeness and strict discipline into their behaviour and character. Politeness is required along with the knowledge and knowledge without politeness is useless. He also said that social emotions should also be incorporated in the students through educational process. According to Dr.Ambedkar, “To score good marks in the examinations and to get the degree is a separate issue, but, to be cultured, knowledgeable and educationist is totally different. The teacher should understand the basic problems and loopholes in the education of the students. The ability to create something new, to find the answer of questions in a logical way, to express oneself with confidence, to put the inner ideas properly in front of audience and the basic knowledge of the concepts are absent in the students.” The students should be shaped as per the need and requirement of the society and nation. The curriculum and teaching material should be framed by taking into consideration the culture, customs, duties, economy, historical perspectives, knowledge about the various societies and logical thinking in the students.

Education and Society:

Social change is a continuous process. The way of social change is processed through education. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar says in this context that it is important to have the strong attitude of accepting the changes in the society for giving speed to the process of change is reflected in the social educational philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar. No society will be awakened without the process of education. He stressed that the social and behavioural inequalities in the society can be removed through the medium of education. He says that the socialization and moralization of man is the purpose of education because education lays the foundation of culture and civilization.

Education as a tool to ensure Social Justice:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wanted an educational system which would serve all. His educational model was a socialist one based on Buddhist ideology. According to Dr. Ambedkar, the society must be

based on reason, and not on traditions of caste system. “The backward classes have come to realize that after all education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight. We may forgo material benefits, we may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunities to reap the benefit of the highest education to the fullest extent. That is the importance of this question from the point of view of the backward classes who have just realized that without education their existence is not safe.” Dr. Ambedkar’s ideas for the untouchables was to raise their educational standards so that they may know their own condition, have aspirations and rise to the level of higher class and be in the position to use political power as a means. Educate, agitate and organize are three final words of Dr. Ambedkar to Untouchables to raise themselves in the society. He believed that liberation of depressed classes is based on education as an educated person can assert their rights and be motivated for development. It not only trains the human mind to think but also to take the right decision to ensure social justice. He asked that, “It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom.” He also awaked the Dalits regarding the injustice – social, economic and political and make them aware of the possibilities of establishing a society in which they could be given equal rights, respect and opportunities and regarded as equals.

Women education:

Delivering a lecture on 20 July 1942 at Nagpur, he said, “I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.” He was clear that if half of the country’s population remains uneducated, then India, no country in the world can progress. Being a true patriot and social reformer, Dr. Ambedkar was a strong supporter of women’s education. He was well aware that for the progress of the society and the development of the country, it is very important for women to be educated. He observed that ‘Education is as necessary for females as it is for males. If you know how to read and write, there would be much progress.’

Role of a teacher:

Dr. Ambedkar considered the teacher essential for the overall development of the student. He believed that if we have good teachers, then we will be able to create good students. He had great regard for the teachers and was supported giving a high place to the teachers. He was of the view

that teacher plays the most important role in the development of a healthy and complete human personality. A good teacher should have positive and egalitarian attitude towards all sections of the society. He recommended that qualifications and other abilities of teachers should be checked exclusively while appointing them in schools or universities.

Relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's Philosophy of Education:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had constantly fought to eradicate birth-based oppression where the basic amenities like education, employment, housing, equal opportunities are restricted for the benefit and development of the few upper classes. Equality in every aspect is reflected in the constitution and proves to be an important element is its composition. The NCERT says, "Across the country, enormous strides towards establishing schools within the reach of every habitation have been made. Attempts to put larger number of children through schooling have proved to be successful. But pockets of children still remain to be reached- children from the socially weaker sections, those belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes, those belonging to the minority groups, and particularly girls, in each of these groups. The need of the hour is to identify the extraordinary socio-cultural circumstances which restrict these children from accessing schools." Hence despite of making constitutional legal rights, the children and youth of depressed classes are not able to enjoy the equal and quality education. In the Indian society, people are illiterate and they are not aware about education as well as their basic rights of the life, still people are facing caste discrimination in society. The education system projects itself as a tool for empowerment, upliftment and equality for depressed sections. But social perspective has not changed its image. Dalit students in today's knowledge and technological laden era are still facing the rejection from their teachers who give priority to so called upper caste students. The lower castes are still sidelined from the learning process and are harshly treated. Although for economic upliftment of these students government but maximum students are giving scholarships under various schemes are devoid of awareness about these scholarships.

Conclusion

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was a well-known teacher himself. He established People's Education Society in Bombay and Aurangabad to educate the students of Dalit community. His educational philosophy is reflected in his lectures, his published articles in various magazines and his work in

the educational institutions. He said that every educational institute should be an agency of change society. Dr. Ambedkar strongly held that education should be a priority for the society and utilised for growth of individuals with character. The present paper is concerned with his educational thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar wanted a type of education that not only inculcates awareness and fulfilment of human rights among citizen but also teaches human dignity and justice in India. According to him Education could open the eyes and encourage the oppressed ones to fight and remove injustice and exploitation they are suffering from ages. He recognized that, lack of education was the main cause for the backwardness of poor people. He preferred humanistic education which enables a man to rediscover himself and ensure freedom rather than being a student of the church, school or the state. He put all his efforts to ensure the educational opportunities to all the citizens of independent India without any discrimination, for which he framed some rights in Indian Constitution.

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