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### "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar And Historical Evolution of Caste Movement in India"

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#### **Abstract**

Therefore to deal with caste movement is further become complex issue. But two main writers and social reformist are done commendable work. They are, Dr Babasahab Ambedkar and Jotirao Phule. Both rationally use caste movement to remove suffering of thousands of years of 'broken men'. The question of 'caste system and its emergence' is puzzled to everyone, from art to science. Not only Indian but also foreign writers are dealt extensively the question of caste system. The references books and historical materials they used to deal with caste were varied and depend upon result.

#### **Introduction:**

Buddha period, charwaq Caste movement in India can be traced back, to Buddha could be rationally considers as first who raise a revolt against caste oppression. He directly challenges 'ritual' and sacrificed in the name of religion. Brahminical religion used to scarified and consider themselves as 'middlemen of god'. They consider themselves pure and have exclusively reserved right for themselves to 'learn VEDAS'. They prohibited to Sudra and outcaste to do business and study the Vedas. Babasahab Ambedkar gives more emphasize that Caste movement could be clearly seen in the context of Buddha. Historian has ignored 'Battle between Buddhism and Brahmanism. He wrote, History of India is nothing but the battle between Buddhism and Brahmanism. Sanskrit as god language to frightened common people. Buddha challenges Brahmins ideology by showing them right path, that 'killing animal never give you salvation', until you concentrate on your mind. which is based on inequality. Dr Ambedkar in his book, who were the Shudra and how they become untouchable narrated that 'Todays Untouchable were never untouchable' they become untouchable due to social tricks of Brahmins. Actually untouchable were a warier clan. They were the first person to adopt Buddha path.

#### **Objective:**

1. Understand caste and contemporary caste movements.

## 2. Study impact of conversion and Dr Babasahab Ambedkars movement

### **Methodology:**

Using secondary data in recent development of caste movement and its oppression creates qualitative interpretation.

### **Buddha and his Buddhism:**

Buddha's counter to Brahmanism led to forcefully adopt to change their 'rituals'. They were so weak to conspire against Buddha that they had to adjust with Buddhism. Many of them either converted into Buddhism or adopt Buddha's method to counter Buddhism. Religion actually was a bread and butter issue for Brahmanism. They wanted to bear the shock of Buddha has given them by adopting 'cow as sacred animal' and they adopt 'Ahimsa' to singled public that they are having similar kind of ideology to counter Buddhism. But it has created tension and conflict between Brahmin and Non Brahmin since Brahmin adopted VEG and Non Brahmins continued to eat it. This led to create 'COW eater and COW non eater issue' in public. Brahmin religion has used this issue to propagate their ideology to mobiles mob. Earlier to this, Brahmins were killed cow for their daily ritual that becomes very problematic to cultivator or farmer caste. Thus, they do not like Brahmin's ritual and when they found Buddha's teaching that to achieve 'MOKSHA', there is no need to perform 'ritual'. They began attracted toward Buddhas. But to counter Buddha, Brahmins used 'COW' as their weapon. But they failed to divide people. There after thousand of year Buddha's survived and become great man. His teaching also motivates people to use rational path. Brahmin use trick and they stop 'Upanaya' which is considered important sanskar in Brahmanism. Thus, without this Sanskar, one cannot become a warrior clan. Thus, it led to creation of 'outcaste'. From there on ward, thousand battles were fought against caste system. We will discuss here, in next chapter details about 'caste movement'.

There was constant counter by Brahminism to Buddhism. Brahminism adopts various techniques to counter Buddhism. Even they changed frequently to counter Buddhism. Buddha had allowed all caste and women to enter into Buddhism and provide them equal opportunity to salvation. Buddhism was against of Vedas and rebirth; they even criticized Brahmanism and their four varna system.

Movement is 'word' derived to 'move on' which is sort of river or a flow of change. It also means that it has rapidly change human thought to cultivate mind or civilized mind. Today's behaviors of people are a work of thousands of people. The way people are behaving today could be traced in the history. Caste movement is very wide topic. To just introduce this topic, we can able to write a book on this topic. The deepest of this topic is like a sea. Thousands of people have given strong shock to caste system which becomes cause of emergence of caste movement. Therefore, I will discuss and confine to 'a big movement of caste'. But I truly cannot also ignored 'small but historical contribution by various well know personalities in the caste movement.

The practices of caste system are common in 1500 BCE, Rigveda confirmations of caste genesis. Hindu's sacred book strengthens the traditions and rituals, 'the Bhagavad Gita' and Manu Smriti, it legitimized caste system in the 3rd century.

The practices of 'Untouchability' noted by a famous Chinese Buddhist Faxian and discussed 'Chandalas segregation from the mainstream population.' It suggests that a stretched history of socio-economic discrimination of SCs. (Ambedkar, 1987). The caste system is highly unequal entitlement of rights. The perpetuation of historical injustice and inhuman treatment has denial of equality and justice. Scheduled castes are linked with a notion of impurity therefore suffers from socio-economic exclusion made them dependent on so-called higher caste for their survival. In villages have been a tradition-bound notion and attitudes are being observed in nomenclature of caste. Those who are at a top enjoying most rights coupled with least duties and those at a bottom performing most duties coupled with no rights (Thorat, Sadana and 2009). A theory of Karma which propagated in Hinduism is actually perpetuated caste system. "If you born a Dalit, it was because of your previous birth Karma. In this life, here you cannot do anything to change your karma. You have to bound with rules and ritual of Brahmins Dharma". This propagation has appeared in the form of 'religion text by Brahmins has led 'destruction' of aspiration to come out from caste misery. However, Brahmins may be cunning or cruel, he should be given respect. Manusmriti has ruled of undermined dignity of women and Dalit. "Teno Loki Brahmin shratra" In three world Brahmin is great" Text of Manusmriti gives upper hand to Brahmins. There is different provision for Brahmin if he committed any crime. They denied education to women and dalits.

### **Buddha's period and caste movement:**

Buddha was a rational philosopher. He realized in his early age that people are ignorant about their act. Brahmins were misusing this ignorance of people for their own benefit. It was the time of emergence of various schools and thought of studies. Many new ideologies emerge and propounded by various Rishies. There had their own ashrams. In this time although society was divided into four varnas. But 'caste' is invisible and not rigid. But presence of hierarchy is evident and clearly seen in the ritual of Brahmins. They consider themselves superior. They had privileged over other three varna. Inequality and social injustice was present in various forms. Society is based on class and division of varna has given rise to caste and subcaste based division. Buddha propagates the path of Karuna, Maitre and Sheel. He considers and emphasize on "how human interact with each other" and what kind of society should be. He gives more emphasize on 'cultivation of mind'. He has given five sheel, (Pancha sheel) Speak to truth, No violence, not to drink alcohol and eight noble fold path. He has no relation with 'heavenly' things, what will happen after death has nothing to do with his Dhamma. He uses vernacular language and never paid any attention to ritual for salvation. 'Ata deep Bhava' it means become an own light, do not depend upon other. If you understand teaching of Buddhism, we can easily understand that most of his teaching is rational and countering 'Brahminism'. In Brahminism more attention is paid to 'Karmakand' and ritual', they do not consider equality and depend upon after birth. Buddha negated all this.

### **Dr Babasahab Ambedkar, and caste movement:**

Dr Babasahab is unopposed leader of caste movement in India. His contribution in mass mobilization in caste movement is remarkable. He himself belongs to 'untouchable' caste. He was a Mahar by caste. He bears caste oppression early in his life. He earned highest and high education. His personal life is a movement of nation building. He worked relentlessly and opposed caste based inequality. He is unparalleled. His life is motivation to worldwide.

He mobilizes Dalit masses. He established various organization, such as Bahikrist Bharat, Bahistrit hitkarni Sabha and led various movement, Kala Ram satayagrah, Chawadar Tank Satagrah. He also publically burn 'Manusmirti'. He started various newspapers to convey his views to masses. Through this he propagated that 'Untouchable' are treated badly. He propounded grievance before British and Indian masses. He also wrote many books that deal with issue of caste system. He took an oath that 'I was borne a Hindu, but solely assured that I will not die a Hindu' in 1936 at Yewala. He tried hard to pursue mind of Hindu's people. Gandhi and Ambedkar had tussle in the issue of separate electorate given by British government after roundtable conference. Gandhi opposed Dr Babasahab on the issue of representation of Dalit. Punna pact sign and in the place of separate electorate, some seats were reserved in the assembly. But Dr Babasahab had signed this pact in 'forceful circumstance to save the life Gandhi'. He has done various works in development of India. He was a labour minister; he worked on various development schemes. Even his role of contribution of India's highest bank, RBI is commendable.

His most acclaimed work in drafting of Indian constitution and Hindu code bill. In the case of Hindu code bill opposed vehemently by caste Hindu. Even the bill was addressing issue of 'Hindu women'. Because of caste system, caste Hindu considers this act to ruin their religion.

### **Annihilation of cast:**

He wrote a book, named 'annihilation of caste' and riddles in Hinduism, which talk about caste, issue and give idea of how to eradicate caste system. His tussle between Gandhi is well known. Gandhi wants to eradicate 'Untouchability' but want varna system to be continued. He does not find any wrong in hierarchal division of Varna. Varna system divides society into four class, Brahmin works in teaching and religion work, Shatriya, a warrior works to defend from enemy, Vasiya do business activities and Shudra works for other three varna. There is also another class, which is 'outcaste' or untouchable. They lived in outskirts of village. They were considered as 'impure'. Purity and impurity notion of caste is deeply rooted.

### **Gandhi and Harijan savak sangh:**

Gandhi finds this practice non objectionable. He also mentioned that eradication of this practice would destroy basis structure of Hinduism. Gandhi does not able to pay due attention to problem of untouchability and its association with Varna system. He undermines the issue of caste and varna. Gandhi uses 'Harijan savak sangh' platform for this political activities. For Gandhi, eradication of caste system is platform, not a program. Babasaab criticized Gandhi in many occasion due his views on caste system. However, Babasahab views on caste system are based on practical experience and he knows how to deal with caste. Gandhi considers

‘considering Dr Ambedkar method to problem of caste will create lots of issues’. Babasahb also criticized fervently on Congress, he wrote a book, which deals extensively on how Congress and Gandhi misuse Dalit and does not actually consider the issue of Dalit oppression as national importance. Congress was an upper caste organization. Their views that ‘Once we get freedom from Bristisher’ then we can easily abolish caste based oppression, but Babasahab has doubt on Hindu mentality, that is true, even after 72 years of India Independence ‘caste based atrocities are still continued.

### **Dr. Ambedkar and conversion to Buddhism:**

Can Buddhism answer to caste system? Babasahab works tremendously to find a way to come out of Brahminical system of caste. He knows that ‘Waiting to change mindset of Hindu’s people, will not work out’ They are not going to change their mindset. He observed this in various occasion. He studies caste system carefully and knows that ‘caste is sanctioned by Hindu religion or religion text such as Manushritri, Bagawat Gita, Shorites, Rigveda etc. All most all material written by Brahmin has sense of castesism. These texts propagate castes in a mind of people. It has only method to review all text of Hinduism; this is kind of proposing new religion. That will require more time. A good home cannot stand on garbage; thus, it is necessary to find out alternative. After reading so much on different religion, he comes to point that ‘Only Buddhism’ can answer social disharmony and give equality, justice and liberty to human.

In 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956, Dr Babasahab and his follower converted into Buddhism in Nagpur. It was historical and epitome of all movement in the caste movement. It is culmination of all struggle of ‘untouchable caste’ till date. This conversion has changed Dalit’s life entirely. Babasahab calls it ‘a new birth’. In waiting for Visa, This small autobiographical evidence of Babasahab life reflects in all his life work. He once mentioned to Gandhi that ‘we do not have homeland’. Nobody is going to call a homeland where discrimination and humiliation is persisted. Where a touch of Dalit prohibited? Denied in education, water, dignity and freedom, how can one proudly call it land? If in the future, we would not faithful to this land, then, it will not our fault, it will be fault of this entire country.

### **Summary:**

Dr. Babasahab warn to all Indian. We are waiting for Visa. We are waiting for homeland. Conversion to Buddhism is actually greatest contribution of Babasahab on India. Undoubtly, conversion is a milestone of caste movement. In the history, there were many attempts to eradicate caste system. In Bhakti (period) Movement, in which various saint among Shudra and untouchable castes tried to find out alternative to Brahmins god. They preach ‘one god, Nirvikar, Nirmankarta etc but could not able to actually change the life of Dalits In India. ‘Many saint come and go but Dalit remains Dalit’ These saints only work in surface. Babasahab gives example of Dhaynashare, a Marathi Brahmin saint; his own caste people ostracized him. He able to see ‘god is everywhere’ but never comes and settle in the Dalit hemlets. These so called saint and Mahata never saw ‘untouchable’ as human.

Babasahab and his follower have converted into Buddhism in the year of 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956 in Nagpur. It is greatest religion conversion in the history of India.

This conversion has changed history.

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