



DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR AS SUBALTERN VOICE: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Vasant G. Kore

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Sangameshwar College, Solapur.

ABSTRACT :

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made the radiant metamorphosis in the narration of Indian society, metaphysics, literature and religion by bringing subaltern consciousness. He disapproves the legitimized and perpetuated values, beliefs and ideology of established castes and religions. He highlights on the cultural manipulation of dominant social castes on the underprivileged and Dalits. He brings out different forms of manipulation through his important speeches and writings. His defense for the subaltern society is quintessential.

This research paper attempts to understand the value of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's efforts in the subversion of established history, society and metaphysics. It concentrates on the grand narration with false ideologies of historians and literary writers. He subverts the false intellectual property of Indian myth and scriptures. His writing paves the way to recapture the subaltern self-consciousness erased in the march of caste hegemony.

KEYWORDS : *Subaltern, hegemony, ideology, orthodox, narration, counternarration and Dalit.*

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar protests against the established values and ideologies of dominant castes and religions. He primarily highlights on history and literature which have been created false consciousness against underprivileged and Dalits. He relates the suppression of culture and denial of dignity of Dalits in India. Ambedkar realizes Brahminic Hinduism which reinforces and discriminates against the downtrodden in India. The suppression of lower caste is not the new issue of the world. Dominant social castes and elite class often looked to the subalterns in maligned and prejudiced way. The manipulation was on the basis of education, languages, culture, caste and race. It is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar makes the radiant change in the society by bringing subaltern consciousness.

ANALYSIS:



Ambedkar traces the genesis of the oppressive nature of the caste dominated Indian society to the so called sacred Shastras of the Hindus who guarded them so closely that if anyone except them read or hear them he would commit any act of sacrilege. He realizes that caste and Brahminic Hinduism reinforce each other and discriminate against the downtrodden sections of the society. Indian religious texts subjugated Dalits and reduced by their domineering conquerors to inhuman state. *Rig Vedais* one of the hegemonic religious scriptures which enshrines the version of *Purusha*

Suktashymns which mentioned the four basic *varnas*. (The Philosophy of Hinduism, p. 80).

Manusmriti sanctioned plainest for such a sacrilegious act. According to Ambedkar, the ancient scriptures like Vedas, Smritis and Shastras were all instrument of torture used by Hinduism against the untouchables. In fact, it was Ambedkar's subaltern perspective, which pierced through the Shastra's to reveal their true face. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar puts forward *Manusmriti* before us and its heinous statement against untouchables. Through this book, he points out the baseless of hierarchy of social structure that is *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*. Ambedkar protests against the orthodox system of Manu and exposes his view in fierce, "This system of rank and gradation is, simply another way of enunciating the principle of inequality so that it may be truly said that Hinduism does not recognise equality." (Philosophy of Hinduism, p. 25)

According to him, this book is the instrument of torture proposed by Hinduism against untouchables. Indeed, it was Ambedkar's subaltern approach which pierced through the Shastras to reveal their true face. The *Manusmriti* is not only derogatory remark against the untouchables rather imposed several social religious restrictions upon them. It sanctioned austere castigation for such a disrespectful act. *Manusmriti* was written in the Sanskrit language and only few people can use to understand the same. The content of this book was unfamiliar those who are untouchables. The most essential thing is various religious and social restrictions imposed on Shudras. Dr. Ambedkar puts forward the rigid rules of Manu regarding marriage. He proposes that Manu opposes the intermarriage outside the defined class. He says, "Manu was most anxious to preserve the rule of inequality which was his guiding principle." (Philosophy of Hinduism, pp. 26-27). Babasaheb officially destroyed the authority of *Manusmriti* by drafting the Indian Constitution that established rights of Dalits and women as human rights.

The Mahabharata exemplified the degraded status of the outcastes like Ekalavya. He proposes that *Bhagwad Gita* is dogmatic scripture, having unbending, inflexible, rigid doctrines. He recommends Buddha's preaching of non-violence and his offensive similes against the theories of Chaturvarnya is counter narration to *Bhagwad Gita*. (Krishna and his Gita, p. 363)

Ambedkar made the subversion of Ancient Indian history. His narrative version is alternative and counter narrative to Vedic, Puranic views of Indian culture and history. His seminal book *Who were the Shudras?* traces back the racial history of *Shudras* in India. Dr. Ambedkar officially demolishes the authority of Vedic traditional views about social structure. Dr. Ambedkar's rejected the superiority of Aryan theory of the subaltern. He says, "Aryan Samajists have done great mischief in making the Hindu society a stationary society by preaching that Vedas are eternal... infallible." (Who Were the Shudras? p. xvii)

In his seminal book, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar designates the quintessential issues which concerned him all through his life. He not only encouraged the wisdoms of Buddha but gave new understandings appropriate for the present context. His picture of Buddhism focused more on the social message of Buddha. He proposed Buddhism over other religions. The Buddhist teachings like *Pradnya, Karuna* and *Samata* gave energy to the oppressed and downtrodden. (The Buddha and His Dhamma, pp. 285-325). Buddhism emerged as an answer to the evils that existed in Brahminic society, Buddhism was the revolution against Brahminic society. Decline of Buddhism emerged as a result of the revival of Brahminism under the king Pushyamitra, with the help of Manusmirti this led to the establishment of Hindu religion with its rigid caste system and suppression of women. *Varna* system was replaced by rigid caste system with strict division of labour and endogamy. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar showed an astonishing interest in Marxism in the 1950s. In his seminal books, *The Buddha and his Dhamma*, *Buddha and the Future of His Religion*, and *Buddha and Karl Marx*, refer to Marx as the central figure. He acknowledged certain critical realm on which he agreed with Karl Marx: the task of philosophy is to transform the world; there is conflict between class and class; private possession of property causes regret and manipulation; and good society requires that private property be collectivized.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made the metamorphosis in the by approving Buddhist tradition which made the emancipation of Dalits. For Ambedkar Buddhism proposes a social rebuilding for abolishing suffering of the subjugated. Embracing Buddhism is not for its fighting nature, but as an ideological

revolution, a counterculture and ethics. Ambedkarian philosophy aims at giving life to those who are underprivileged at elevating those who are repressed and ennobling those who are downtrodden and granting liberty, equality and justice to all irrespective of caste, gender and creed.

He emphasized in his *Annihilation of Caste* that the Smirits and Shastras were not the embodiment of religion but a system of rules to deprive the untouchables even of their basic needs and deny them equal status in the society. Therefore, he said that there is no hesitation in saying that such a religion must be destroyed and there is nothing irreligious in working for the destruction of such a religion that discriminate against its own people whom it bracketed as untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar says, "It is not Buddha who weakened Hindu society by his gospel of non-violence. It is the Brahminic theory of Chaturvarnya that has been responsible not only for the defeat but for the decay of Hindu society." (*Annihilation of Caste*, p. 219). In *Untouchables or the Children of the India's Ghetto*, he contrasts it with other varieties of inequality which were not so difficult to abolish or correct. He figures out the source of untouchability in their diverse forms. He explores that slavery of untouchable is very institution of Hindus. It was systematized by Manu. According to Ambedkar, "untouchability is not the free social order. It was worse type of unfree social order. It was obligatory." (*Untouchables or the Children of the India's Ghetto*, p. 9)

Ambedkar's work '*Revolution and Counter Revolution in India*' is an alternative version of Indian history. It is a subversion of Ancient traditional history. This is necessary to unconventional to Vedic and Puranic clarification of Indian history. His book *Revolution and Counter Revolution* is a treatise to subaltern history. Indian history is written in the perspective of Brahminic or Vedic hierarchy of knowledge. Ambedkar's narrative supports the oppressed and marginalized. He reinterpreted the history for social metamorphosis in favour of the Dalits and outcastes. This is complete demolition of the orthodox systems of ancient and medieval India. Ambedkar says that Buddhism is revolutionary to orthodox Hindu religion. It was not the religious revolution but also social and political revolution. This is a counter narration he wrote in his treatise. (*Revolution and Counter Revolution*, p. 153).

The suppression of lower caste is not a new issue of the world. Dominant social castes and elite class often looked to the subalterns in maligned and prejudiced way. The cultural manipulation of the dominant social castes on the underprivileged classes and Dalits was on the basis of education, languages, caste, and culture. It is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made the radiant metamorphosis in the society by bringing subaltern consciousness. His ideology is based on the equality, liberty and fraternity.

Dr. Ambedkar dedicated his life for the uplifting Dalits. He was opposed to the theory of caste based superiority and social discrimination. He made a path for legal rights to enact the laws in connection with progress of Dalits which could positively change their lives. The outcastes are oppressed and exploited sections of the Indian society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote quintessential narrative works to evaluate the basic source of Indian caste system. His articles and writings contributed to figure out the problems, prospects and consequences of the caste, creed and religions.

Ambedkar's narration of history has a great potential in mediating both liberal and communitarian traditions of the west. He connects the individual and community based on morality. He designates the humanistic, reformative and rational religion that is Buddhist religion which is the source of ethics and associate living. When Ambedkar criticises Hindu community for its oppressive nature, he does it with a standard of individual liberty and freedom. When he is talking about suffering of individual members of Dalit community he is projecting an ideal moral community based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Another important part of Ambedkar's subaltern approach for the empowerment of Dalits and their liberation was his important construction of Indian nationalism. This was in opposition to the dominant discourse of orthodox Hinduism as represented by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Raja Rammohan Roy, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

His conception of nationalism articulated and synthesized the national perceptions and aspirations of the downtrodden. Ambedkar's alternative form of nationalism, popularly known as 'Dalit-Bahujan Samaj', also incorporated the subaltern philosophy of Jyotirao Phule and Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Naicker. His perspective protested against Hindus particularly Brahmins as anti-Hindu and anti-Brahminical discourse of

Indian Nationalism. His epistemology of Dalit aimed at founding a casteless society in which no one can be manipulated and discriminated on the basis of birth, caste, creed, race, ethnicity and occupation. Ambedkar constructed a counterview of pre-colonial Brahminical society which was established on hierarchy. The dichotomy between privileged and underprivileged graded the caste system. This part of system is called a inequality which lead to the process of oppression by the orthodox Brahminical castes. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's subaltern perspective is counter-narrative to established and legitimized cultural and religious traditions.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, it can be stated that both in his training and in his vision of life, Ambedkar was deeply aware of the larger dynamics of the world, its complexity and differential bearing on social groups, localities and nations. For Ambedkar, the vision of emancipating untouchables was clearly anchored in the principles of justice, equality, fraternity, and liberty. His approach to subaltern communities was pragmatic, realistic and sensible rather than naïve, unrealistic and impractical. What this essay has tried to do is to frame his wide-ranging and astute vision in and through the recurrent struggles of his life. In doing so, the paper has relied on the contribution to the subaltern societies and deprived classes. For the state to sustain a modicum of hegemony Ambedkar has become an indispensable necessity today.

REFERENCES:

1. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 'Annihilation of Caste', *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol. 1, p. 261, Mumbai: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1989.
2. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 'Revolution and Counter Revolution in India', *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol. 3. p. 153, Mumbai: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1989.
3. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 'Philosophy of Hinduism', *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol. 3, pp. 25-27, 80, Mumbai: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1989.
4. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 'Krishna and his Gita', *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol. 3, p. 363, Mumbai: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1989.
5. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. 'Untouchables or the Children of Indian Ghetto', *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol. 5, p. 9, Mumbai: Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1989.
6. Ambedkar, Babasaheb. *Who Were Shudras?* p. xvii, Mumbai: Thackers Publication, 1946.
7. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. *Buddha and His Dhamma*. pp. 285-325, Mumbai: Siddhartha Publication 1957.
8. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. *Annihilation of Caste*. p. 219, Mumbai: Government of Maharashtra, 1987.