



DR. BABSABH AMBEDKAR'S YEOLA DECLARATION: A REVIEW**Mr. Doddappa****Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of History & Archaeology,
Karnatak University, Dharwad.****ABSTRACT**

This paper deals with the some important vies and decisions of Dr.Ambedkar regarding the upliftment of depressed classes more particularly ex,untouchables. In the depressed classes emancipation strategy of Dr.Ambedkar. The religious conversion is important one this he thought of during the Yeola declaration of 1935 as result there was hue and cry over the religious conversion declaration of Dr.Ambedkar. Here the reactions and oppositions of the Hindu leaders including congress leaders are discussed regarding the Yeola declaration. Even the opposition of untouchable leaders also briefly discussed finally the defense of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers are also mentioned. Thus paper analysis the course of Yeola declaration of 1935.this paper is mainly based on Historical method of study.



KEY WORLD : Conversion, Depressed classes, Buddhism, Yeola Declaration, Communal Award, Human dignity, Human Rights.

INTRODUCTION :

This paper deals with some important views and decisions of Dr.Ambedkar regarding the upliftment of the depressed classes more particularly ex untouchables. Probably it is much discussed debate. The pain of Depressed Classe(untouchable) people in the hands of caste Hindu is the worst part of Indian life. Since the time immemorial the untouchable community was suffered because of caste hierarchy and graded inequality. The worst part of caste system is that, it denise the growth and guarantee of human dignity and progress. The untouchable were out caste i.e Avarna, which was other than the four varnas that were mentioned in Rigveda. The people of untouchable has to live separately of outside village. In other words, untouchability which has been existing for two thousand years is peculiar psyche of caste Hindus.Comparatively untouchable seemed to them ugly. The fight against this inhumanity and the cruel treatment to untouchable people there were movements and struggles in the course of history. In the modern context, Mahatma Jyotibha Phuley, Shri Narayan Guru, Shahu Maharaj and such concern humanitarians dedicated and sacrificed for the people of Depressed suppressed and exploitedsection of the Hindu society and also for the upliftment of women.

Like such social reformers especially Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, an Architect of Indian Constitution, a man of mission and a seeker of truth has dedicated to abolish this social evil of India throughout his life. He fought for the people of exploited, neglected and downtrodden through various means and movements with his strong strategiesand in which conversion is one of them.

Dr. Ambedkar experienced bitterly as others and was much pained, insulted, disturbed due to be born as untouchable even though he was highly educated and barrister. As result of this, he promised innocent untouchables to free them from this social stigma and slavery. In 1927 Satyagraha was launched

had to drink water from Mahad Chaudar tankand in order to awaken the untouchable people freeing from social slavism and restore in them self-respect and human dignity. This movement can be compared with Gandhi's Dandi Satyagraha of 1930.¹ But in the course of it caste Hindus attacked and their cruelty on children and women inhuman and brutal. It was great misery of untouchables. Hence Ambedkar strongly agreed that it was very difficult to get the human rights and equal status in Hindu society. He obviously stated that emancipation of the untouchable was only decided through conversion into another religion that was a Buddhism. On the other hand he bitterly declared I was born as a Hindu-untouchable unfortunately and but I will not die as Hindu, such was a thought provoking, declaration he made at Yeola in 1935.

Earlier in 1929, twelve people of Mahars (untouchables) of Jalagaon (Maharashtra) converted into the Islam themselves because of his speech in the Jalagaon Parishad in the same year. Baba Saheb stated that if untouchables wanted to regain their lost status, conversion would be only remedy and it would be as inevitable as Swaraj or freedom.

In 1930, Ambedkar started Kalaram temple entry movement at Nasik, which was an important Satyagrah, but here also caste Hindu opposed the entry of untouchables and wounded many innocent people including Dr. Ambedkar. Any how the struggle to get social and religious equity was not succeeded. Therefore Ambedkar knew that it was very difficult to uplift the Depressed Class within the Hindu religion. Dr. Ambedkar through Communal Award got separate electorates to his people, but unfortunately Gandhiji and Congress opposed the same. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar was compelled to sign Poona Pact (1932) and Joint electorates with reserved seats was provided to Depressed Classes. As a challengeable leader Ambedkar tried to uplift the exploited community politically through constitutional method but Congress and M.K. Gandhi disturbed and gave set back his movement for ex Poona pact. The Poona Pact was another reason and turning point for the Yeola declaration of religious conversion by Dr. Ambedkar. Within few years after Poona Pact (1932) he declared at Yeola in 1935 about religious conversion.

YEOLA DECLARATION :

On October 13, in 1935 at Yeola near Nasik in Maharashtra All India Depressed classes Parishat was held. The people from Maharashtra, Hyderabad and United Provinces including various other parts of India more than ten thousand members of Depressed Classes assembled in Nasik in 1935. On October 13th there, Ambedkar addressed the gathering that "it was impossible to get the human rights and equal status in Hinduism and it was very worse to call us ourselves as Hindus. Definitely we would be not free from cruelty of upper castes until and unless we convert into another religion. So it was for better to accept any other religion in order to correct our mistakes". And then Ambedkar declared, "I was born as a Hindu but I will not die as Hindu"².

Dr. Ambedkar mentions that it was impossible of having good opinion about untouchable on the one hand and on the other hand they treated us like dogs, foxes and leprosy and were inferior to them because we are untouchable Hindus, At any cost it was not possible to free from exploitation until we leave the Hinduism. So that we have to convert into Buddhism for our self respect, equality, freedom and human dignity. And then Dr. Ambedkar strongly expressed his thought provoking idea. Human being cannot merely live for eating because who has great mind and zeal. Religion is for man and not a man for religion.³ He pointed out "religion plays very essential role in the upliftment of human being and the welfare of the society. To emphasize an religion, Dr. Ambedkar says conversation is not a play of children nor a matter of entertainment, but religion can pave the way how to succeed the human life as sailor can prepare all his equipments before launching his ship, like this Dr. Ambedkar had decided to leave the Hindu religion and convert into the Buddhism with preparation.⁴

REACTION OF THE HINDU LEADERS ABOUT YEOLA DECLARATION OF CONVERSION:

The declaration of Yeola has surprised to many Hindu high caste leaders, including Congress leaders, and mainly, M.K. Gandhi, V.D. Savarkar, Madanmohan Malaviya, C. Raj Gopalchari, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Valabai Patel, Dr Moonje others, who expressed unhappiness in this regarding.

Meanwhile M.K. Gandhi opposed the declaration that it was an unfortunate thing. And then he said "religion is not just like to wear and change, so it is not possible to change like cloth or wall clock but religion stands for life and death. It is also integral part of the soul, Gandhiji further explains that Ambedkar mostly took such decision because he was depressed by the incidence of a village called "kavita" and because of upper caste people's atrocities and wickedness on the untouchables. Here Gandhiji responded that "Conversion is not final judgment. Dr. Ambedkar will not succeed and for what reason he thought to reject this Hinduism." Gandhiji felt that there were millions untouchables who were not ready to listen to be Ambedkar instead, who would like to remain in their ancestor's religion.⁵

Dr. Ambedkar replied that Congress and Gandhi should allow the Depressed Classes to conversion in order to improve their fortune and enhance their status. If untouchable remain aloof from this decision, it is foolishness to remain in their ancestral religion. Again Dr. Ambedkar replied to the criticism of Gandhi, let us choose over suitable way, as suitable clothes for our body.⁶

Madan Mohan Malavia also opposed for this decision of Dr. Ambedkar and he said "untouchable should not reject Hindu religion and he promised to solve this sin. Let the Harijans not forsake Hinduism and we will apply the dust under their feet to our foreheads.⁷ But, Dr. Ambedkar answered that Gandhi and Malavia had no rights to speak about conversion because they failed to fulfill the promises of Poona Pact.

Similarly V.D. Savarkar not only opposed Yeola declaration but also called it anti-religion. One day the son of Dr. Ambedkar would return to Hindu religion, on the other hand untouchability is an internal problem so they could solve this problem themselves.⁸ But it is a fact that the inheritors of Dr. Ambedkar remained in Buddhism till today, no one was gone back to the fold of Hindu religion. In this regard Dr. Ambedkar never forced anybody to follow him. And he left untouchables to take their own decision in choosing the religion. Thus the argument of Savarkar was false one.

In the same way Sardar Valabai Patel also opposed this declaration "Any diseased body must be cured through well treatment but not cut its parts". And he also opined that untouchability is an internal problem of human body.⁹ But Dr. Ambedkar replied that untouchability is like a wound inside the human body but it cannot be rooted without surgery.

V.T. Rajashekar, famous writer of Karnataka, replied in different ways. He said that Dr. Ambedkar accepted lifeless and dead religion called Buddhism.¹⁰ The population of Buddhists was merely 0.05% before the great Conversion of Dr. Ambedkar in 1956. After this there was 80% increase in the Buddhist population. And in 1951 population of the Buddhists was 1,80,853, but it increased to 79,55,207 in 2001.¹¹ Basis on this increased statistics. So it seems Buddhism is a dynamic and live religion.

Dr. Kurtakoti Guru of Hindu religion expressed his opposition and he was the president of the Hindu MahaSangh, which was held in Lahore. There was rumour that Dr. Ambedkar could accept Sikh religion. But Ambedkar rejected to convert into Sikh, because in that religion also there is inequality prevailing. Dr. Kurtakoti supported conversion to Sikhism because he felt that it was a part of Hinduism. Further Jameshed, N.R. Mehata considered the views of Dr. Ambedkar very seriously has replied that suppose Hindu did not change their stands about untouchables the conversion of Dr. Ambedkar could be really fruitfully succeedes.¹² When Hindus could provide equal opportunities in the all field of public sector you would stop untouchables to migrate from Hindu religion he cautioned the caste Hindus.

The leaders and religious Gurus like, N.C. Kelkar, C.B. Boptar, Chitrarshastri, S.M. Mote, R.B. Pradan and others tried to motivate Ambedkar not to leave the Hindu religion but Dr. Ambedkar replied that nobody could change his stand regarding the conversion.

The Opposition of Untouchable Leaders to Yeola Declaration :

Likewise untouchable leader like M.C. Raj, J.A. Gavai, Jagajivanram, P.Babu, P.N. RajBhoja, N.S. Kajrolkar also opposed Dr. Ambedkar's idea of declaration of conversion. On the other hand, M.C. Raja, leader of untouchable, belonging to untouchable Chammar-caste of Madras, said, I was born as Hindu-untouchable and I would like to die as Hindu untouchable.¹³ Hindu religion is our forefathers' religion, it is our responsibility to purify, protect and revive this. In this way he opposed the Yeola Declaration. But Dr. Ambedkar said that I will convince M C Raja regarding the conversion. This shows kind hearted and the greatness of Dr. Ambedkar.

J.A. Gavai untouchable leader of Maharashtra, who was follower of Dr. Ambedkar expressed his opposition to conversion. Gavai mentions that Gandhi and other Hindu leaders put their efforts to remove the inequality of untouchables in Hindu religion that no one could forget them. One day definitely their effort would succeed.¹⁴ Further, Gavai suggested that suppose Dr. Ambedkar wished to remove the inequalities early he would use any other strategy. But Dr. Ambedkar ignored this opposition of Gavai, because he was faithfully follower of Gandhiji and Congress.

Similarly, R. Bahaddur Shrinivas another untouchable leader of Madras Presidency expressed his opposition. He opined that to convert into another religion will lead the decrease strength of untouchables and they become minority in other religion also their exploitation increases and it would disturb the unity of our class. Instead, to remain them in Hindu religion and organize systematically to fight against the injustice. But Dr. Ambedkar did not give any heed to this and he thought alternatively, if all exploited people has accepted Buddhism they would be shareholders in many fields like political power and etc. There was a great belief that other religious followers could support to demolish the wickedness and support the cause of Depressed Classes.

Narayan Kajrlikar, of Bombay expressed his strangeness to the declaration of Yeola. Hence he felt that the rejection of Hindu religion, by Dr. Ambedkar, it would be a great loss to the untouchable in coming days.

According to Ambedkar Raj Bhoj, M.C. Raja, Gavayi, such untouchable leaders had become faithful followers of Hindu leaders and in order to please the Congress leaders and they did stand against the human rights of untouchable.

Dr. Ambedkar's defence of Yeola Declaration:

Many religious leaders appreciated his decision of conversion and requested to embrace their religion. The Christian, Islamic (Muslim), Sikh, Parsi and Buddhists leaders invited Dr. Ambedkar and they promised to take responsibility of the Depressed Classes and their liberation.

Yakub Hasen Shet of Bombay mentions that the decision of Dr. Ambedkar was very meaningful and God might bless him to pave the way for his community and demolish the complex mentality of Muslim. Muslim would become kind hearted fellows in order to accept the untouchable as their brothers.¹⁵

The Matang untouchables of Bombay also supported the Yeola Declaration of Dr. Ambedkar. And similarly 4000 Mahars left the Hinduism and in meeting at Bombay (Naigam) under leadership of D.V. Nayak in order to support the stand taken by Dr. Ambedkar.¹⁶

Untouchables of surrounding the regions of Nagpur supported Dr. Ambedkar and they formed platform called Hindu Religion Renouncement Committee. They prepared the list of programmes to awaken the untouchables for great conversion movement.

Women Representatives of Depressed Classes led by Devikabai Kamble, Meerabai Jadhav, Anusuyabai Veval and others claimed that Dr. Ambedkar had done very hard work in order to bring up the equality of untouchable but it was not possible within the Hindu fold. That's why they supported the conversion due to the prejudiced attitude of Hindus.¹⁷

Thus many Depressed Classes and their institutions expressed their support to Yeola Declaration of Conversion.

CONCLUSION:

Obviously Dr. Ambedkar had provided freedom, equality, fraternity and social justice to everybody. Through this way Dr. Ambedkar declared that he decided to build a beautiful India and reserved his rest of life for propagation to the Buddhism. The credit goes to Dr. Ambedkar who brought back the migrated Buddhism to the motherland, it was born in India but was went to foreign countries. On the other hand the conversion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had changed the culture and religion of contemporary Indian society. Really it is wonderful that Dr. Ambedkar had achieved adventurously revival of Buddhism in modern India.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. **Ahir D C**; *Dr. Ambedkar on Buddisim, 1982*, Siddarath publication, p8.
2. **Zelliot Eleanir**; *Ambedkars World, 2013*, Navayana Publishing, New Delhi, P145.
3. **Varma R K**; *B R Ambedkar Selected speeches, 2011*, Aries Publisher and Distributers New Delhi, P53.
4. **Jadhav Narendra**; *Ambedkar speaks, 201 seminal speachees, 2013*, konark publishers New Delhi p274.
5. **Zelliot Eleanor**, *Ambedkars World, 2013*, Navayana Publishing, New Delhi, P145.
6. **Zelliot Eleanor**, *Ambedkars World, 2013*, Navayana Publishing, New Delhi, P151.
7. **Zelliot Eleanor**, *Ambedkars World, 2013*, Navayana Publishing, New Delhi, P151.
8. **Rayamane M L**; *Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, 2010*, Divyachandra prakashana Banglore, p 104.
9. **Bombay cornicle** 11th November 1935,
10. **Rajashekar V T**; *Ambedkar and His Conversion, 1983*, Dalita sahitya academy Banglore p104.
11. **Buddhaghosh Devendra hedge**; *Matantara, Meesalati mattu Ambedkar, 2007*, Sambuddha prakashana Gulbarga p 19,
12. **Bombay cornicle** 11th November 1935,
13. **Javaraiah**; *Ambedkar chintana sahitya, 2011*, Bhujana Madyama Kendra Mysore, p311.
14. **Javaraiah**; *Ambedkar chintana sahitya, 2011*, Bhujana Madyama Kendra Mysore, p311.
15. **Bombay cornicle** 26th October 1935.
16. **The times of India** 2nd November 1935.
17. **Bombay cornicle** 24th November 1935,

**Mr. Doddappa**

**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of History & Archaeology,
Karnatak University, Dharwad.**