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An Appraisal of Influence of Eminent Personalities on Ambedkar's Political Thought during Early Twentieth Century

Ishita Aditya Ray

Bejoy Narayan Mahavidyalaya, Burdwan University, India.

E-mail:ishitaaditya@gmail.com

Sarbapriya Ray (Corresponding Author)

Shyampur Siddheswari Mahavidyalaya, University of Calcutta, India.

E-mail:sarbapriyaray@yahoo.com

Abstract

Born in a socially backward caste, educated according to the western system, rational in outlook, to some extent, rebellious in temperament, Ambedkar, the great architect of Indian Constitution, came to the appropriate moment to assume the natural and appropriate leadership and participated in the social struggles and constitutional matters in a strategic way in India. Ambedkar was schooled in the liberal political tradition which he imbibed through his interaction with the Western culture as result of his British moulded higher education in India and his training in Columbia University and London School of Economics and Political Science. He was fortunate enough to receive education in the West where he came under the influence of the liberal- minded professors like Dewey, Harold Laski, Seligman and others. Against this background information, this article attempts to depict the influence of various eminent personalities on the political thought of B.R.Ambedkar. Ambedkar's birth in an untouchable community and in a system based on graded inequality and injustice and deprivation of basic human rights to his community was responsible for giving a purpose and a mission to his life.

1. Introduction:

Born in a socially backward caste, educated according to the western system, rational in outlook, to some extent, rebellious in temperament, Ambedkar, the great architect of Indian Constitution, came to the appropriate moment to assume the natural and appropriate leadership and participated in the social struggles and constitutional matters in a strategic way in India. Ambedkar was one of the most brilliant sons of India. He was the chief architect of the constitution which is the most famous constitution of the world. Born in an untouchable family of India, he was to be a minister of Law. He was not only a constitutional expert, an administrator, a legislator but also a great nation builder, educationalist, social reformer and religious leader. He is remembered not merely as a father of Indian constitution but also a front- ranking crusaders against untouchability. His relentless and sustained efforts culminated in legal abolition of untouchability in India although its perpetuation continues in one form to another in social intercourse and political arena. The overview of Ambedkar's position on the social, political and economic system and being Indian citizen, vision of Ambedkar on issues that continue to confront us as critical will help in unfolding the various dimensions related to the contemporary society and its polity. The complex issues which Ambedkar explained and defended, although not always to the satisfaction of many and sometimes not as rigorously as required ,have continued to claim intellectual and political attention to this day in many societies and specially in India.

There was a time when the untouchables were denied the use of public wells and were asked to drink only filthy water they could find. Their children were not admitted to schools. The *Hindu* temples were closed to

them. The caste *Hindus* did not show any sympathy for them. D.R. Jatava in his book wrote “In short, there was absolute lack of social humanism. They took birth as untouchables, they lived as untouchables and they died as untouchables”⁽¹⁾. In these social circumstances, Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891. “The ills, insults and wanton humiliation hold on this lad by the schizophrenic left an indelible impression in his tender mind”⁽²⁾. To become such a towering figure of a surprisingly uncanny foresight, Dr Ambedkar was influenced by so many factors.

His father Ramji Sakpal was the instructor in the military school. He had fourteen children. He became a follower of Kabir Panth and was an admirer of Jatibao Phoolle who pioneered major reforms among the lower classes in Maharashtra from the later part of the nineteenth century. Ambedkar’s mother Bhima Bai was the gentle and self respecting woman. She and her husband Ramji Sakpal was the great social worker of the day. He was sincere and hard working and patient because of his father’s and mother’s influence.

Ambedkar and Gandhiji began social and political activities for eradication of untouchability almost in same period in the early 1920. Ambedkar firmly believed in social movement rather than political movement. In the struggle for the freedom of the country, Gandhi had support of the millions of Indians, but in the struggle for liberation of the untouchables millions opposed him. Ambedkar was for the establishment of absolute equality in all spheres of life.

2. Social status of untouchables during the birth of B.R. Ambedkar in 1891:

Dr. Ambedkar’s whole life was shaped and influenced by his bitter and degrading personal experiences, by those of other untouchables when he came of age to observe life and things and also by those his forefathers who had suffered in the past when untouchability as a social practice had started being observed by the Hindu society and became institutionalized and so get embedded in the Hindu social system.

The severe social disabilities which the untouchabilities were made to suffer at that time have been very vividly summed up by Babasaheb’s biographer Dhananjay Keer in the following words, “Their (untouchables) touch, shadow and even voice were deemed by the caste Hindus to be polluting. So they had to clear the way at the approach of a caste Hindu. They were forbidden to keep certain domestic animals, to use certain metals for ornaments, were obliged to wear a particular type of dress, to eat a particular type of food, to use a particular type of footwear and were forced to occupy the dirty, dingy and unhealthy outskirts of villages and towns habitation where they lived in dark, in sanitary and miserable smoky shanties or cottages. The dress of the male consisted of a turban a staff in the head, and a rough blanket on the shoulder and a piece of coin cloth. The women were bodies and rough sarees barely reaching the knees”.⁽³⁾

“These untouchable Hindus were denied the use of public wells and were condemned to drink any filthy water they could find. Their children were not admitted to schools attended by the caste Hindu children. Though they worshipped the gods of Hindus, observed the same festivals, the Hindu temples were closed to them. Barbers and washer man refuse to render them service. The caste Hindus, who fondly threw sugar to ants and reared dogs and other domestic pets and welcomed persons of other religions to their houses, refused to give a drop of water to the untouchables or to show them an iota of sympathy. These untouchable Hindus were treated by the caste Hindus as sub-humans, less than man, worse than beasts. Cities have now mostly overcome this prejudice”.⁽⁴⁾

“Their miseries did not end at this. They were illiterate, ill-treated and untouchable for ages, all public service including police and military forces were closed to them. Naturally, they followed hereditary occupations. Some of them plied trades of a lower and disregarding order such as those of street-sweepers, scavengers and shoemakers. Some skinned carcasses, tamed hides and skins, worked in bamboos and came and mowed grass. Others who were more fortunate filled the land as tenants, worked as labourers in field, a great number of them subsisted on food or grain given to them as village servants and also ate carrion. Thus being deprived of social, religious and civil rights, they had no chance of bettering their conditions; and so these untouchable Hindus lived in the life of a by gone and dead age, dragging on their miserable existence in insufficient accommodation, in sanitary surroundings and social segregation. In short, they were born in debt and perished in debt. They were born untouchables, they lived as untouchables and they died as untouchables”.⁽⁵⁾

As an untouchable, Babasaheb was subjected to serve insults and indignities not only during his student days but also during the days he was occupying important positions in Government. The ghost of untouchability was closely hunting him whenever he went. That made him fight tooth and nail to remove its root and branch.

According to Bapuji “untouchability is a gangrenous limb of Hindu society and if measures are not taken to remove it, the society would become crippled. And a crippled society cannot go on like that so that it will ultimately perish. But the untouchability was described by a handful of social reformers and thinkers without diagnosing the root cause of the disease. Consequently, their remedies, not being based on a sound footing, touched only a fringe of the problem. Babasaheb was the first who attempted a systematic a theory of untouchability to prove into its origins, causes and reasons for its sustenance.

According to Babasaheb, “untouchability” is notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the way and means of getting rid of that defilement. ⁽⁶⁾ Basically untouchability is related to the idea of segregation based on the belief that physical touch would bring about pollution, defilement and contamination. . Although notion of untouchability was prevalent in the primitive and ancient societies such as that of New Zealand, Tonga Fiji, Uganda, South Africa and Egypt etc, it has been firmly deep-rooted in the Hindu mind due to the dictates of Manu Smriti The event such as birth, death, menstruation have been prescribed, according to many, to get rid of the evil effects of pollution and defilements such as by touching the low, looking at the such after sipping water etc.

It is significant to note that the untouchability among Hindus is permanent is nature. There is no way out for the untouchables to get themselves purified. Babasaheb observed “The Hindus who touch them and become polluted thereby can become pure by undergoing purification ceremonies. But there is nothing which can make the untouchables pure. They are born impure, they are impure while they live, they die the death of the impure, and they give birth to children who are born with the stigma of untouchability affixed to them. It is a case of permanent hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse”.⁽⁷⁾

The unique feature of the Hindu system of untouchability is the territorial segregation of untouchables. Babasaheb has observed “The Hindu will not live in the quarters of the untouchables and will not allow the untouchables to live inside Hindu quarters. This is the fundamental features of untouchability as it is practised by the Hindus. It is not a case of social separation a more stoppage of social inter course for a temporary period. It is a case of territorial segregation and of a cordon sanitaire putting the impure people inside a barbed wire into a sort of a cage. Every Hindu village has a ghetto. The caste Hindus live in the village and the untouchables in the ghetto”.⁽⁸⁾ Ambedkar was the first major leader of the untouchables in modern Maharashtra, who rose from amongst the untouchables themselves. Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890) and Vitthalrao Shinde (1873-1944) who had worked for the untouchable cause were both caste Hindus- Phule, a Mali and Shinde, a Kshatriya Maratha. Shinde’s work was almost exclusively dedicated to the untouchables, but it took on the character of a movement for amelioration, education and advocacy. The significance of this difference between Phule and Ambedkar is often lost when one emphasizes the similarity between the protests against “Brahmanism” launched by Phule and by Ambedkar.⁽⁹⁾ In 1870 , raising the banner against Brahmanism, Phule emphasized the unity of interest of all the non-Brahman groups i.e. of all the shudras in Marathi society. In the 1920s, Ambedkar raised his protest against Brahmanism; he was speaking against all caste Hindus and emphasizing the community of interests of the untouchables in Marathi society. He attributed Brahmanism not only to Brahmans, but also to all other castes Hindu who treated the untouchables as low caste and therefore, undeserving of social respect or social equality.⁽¹⁰⁾

Against this background information, this article attempts to depict the influence of various eminent personalities on the political thought of B.R.Ambedkar.

3. Discussion and results:

Several factors that Ambedkar encountered with, contributed to the formation of his political ideas. In fact, the experiences he gathered during his life at different levels-personal, intellectual as well as socio-political exerted deep influence on the formulation of his ideas.

(a) Personal:

Experiences of personal humiliation and inhuman treatment meted to him were so bitter that Ambedkar could not but revolt against the social taboos created by the Hindus against the untouchables. Those bitter experiences led him to search for ways to eradicate them and to reconstruct society on the lines of social democracy. Dhananjay Keer observes: “Under the pressure of all sorts of such disabilities and maltreatment attendant on the birth of an untouchable of humble rank, Ambedkar was cultivating a spirit of patience in the school of experience. All such insulting refusals and ill-treatment must have engendered in him a burning hatred for Hinduism. It was thus in his boyhood that Ambedkar experienced at the hands of his co-religionists the galling humiliations and the inhuman treatment under which his whole community had been labouring for untold ages.”⁽¹¹⁾

His experiences, however, did not embitter Ambedkar against Hindus at the individual level. But he worked actively against Hinduism, especially Brahminism, because it stood in the way of the establishment of an egalitarian society. The aim of human society, he thought, must be to enable every person to lead a rich, all round life involving as much the cultivation of the mind as also the satisfaction of basic physical wants.

There was a time when the untouchables were denied the use of public wells and were asked to drink only filthy water they could find. Their children were not admitted to schools. The Hindu temples were closed to them. The caste Hindus did not show any sympathy for them. D.R. Jatava thus sums up their conditions as: “In short, there was absolute lack of social humanism. They took birth as untouchables, they lived as untouchables and they died as untouchables”⁽¹²⁾.

The severe social disabilities which the Untouchables were made to suffer at that time have been very vividly summed up by Ambedkar’s Biographer Dhananjay Keer in the following words:

“Their (Untouchables) touch, shadow and even voice were deemed by the caste Hindus to be polluting .So, they had to clear the way at the approach of a caste Hindu. They were forbidden to keep certain domestic animals, to use certain metals for ornaments, were obliged to wear a particular type of dress, to eat a particular type of food, to use a particular type of footwear and were forced to occupy the dirty, dingy and unhygienic outskirts of villages and towns for habitation where they lived in dark, insanitary and miserable smoky shanties or cottages. The dress of the male consisted of a turban, a staff in the head, and a rough blanket on the shoulder and a piece of loin cloth. The women wore bodices and rough sharees barely reaching the knees”⁽¹³⁾

Some of the recorded incidents of insults and indignities heaped on Ambedkar as an untouchable have been briefly explained below:

(i)Class Room Episode:

In the school at Satara, the caste Hindu children used to keep their tiffin boxes behind the black-board. One day the Class-teacher called upon Ambedkar to come to the blackboard to solve a mathematical sum. This instantly sparked off an uproar in the class.Dhananjay Keer had beautifully described the reaction of the caste Hindu children in these words:” Since they feared that their food would be polluted by Bhim’s presence near the board, they dashed to the blackboard and hurled their tiffin-boxes aside before Bhim could reach and touch the blackboard. This crackling sound of the tiffin-boxes was not less piercing than the croaking voices of the children’s parents at home and in the streets at the Untouchables”⁽¹⁴⁾

(ii).Barber’s refusal to cut Ambedkar’s hair:

At Goregaon, the barbers who claimed social superiority over the Untouchables, refused to cut the hair of Ambedkar.Describing this incident, Keer, the Biographer, wrote:

“ It was indeed a touching scene when Bhim came to know that his hair defiled the purity of the razor of the barber who regarded even the buffalo-shaving as a better and holier than tonsuring a human being who was his co-religionist and his country man”⁽¹⁵⁾

(iii).Thrown out of a Bullock-cart:

During his school days, on a summer day, Ambedkar and his elder brother, Balaram,had set out from Satara to meet their father, Ramji Sakpal, who was working as a Cashier at Goregaon after his retirement from Millitary.As their father did not receive their letter in time ,he did not turn up at Mansur Railway station.

They waited at the station for a long time .At last, with the good offices of the Station Master, they secured a bullock –cart and set out for Gurgaon.After the cart had moved a few yards, the cartman who was a caste Hindu,enquired about their caste.On hearing that they belong to *Mahar* community ,he got enraged and instantly threw them out on the road as one overturns the dustbins,“for he felt that they had polluted his wooden cart and destroyed the purity of his domestic animals!”⁽¹⁶⁾ However, his anger subsided when they offered him double the fare. The cart-man followed the cart on foot while young Balaram drove the cart. They reached the destination at midnight.

(iv) Gujarati Professor’s objection to his drinking water from the same pot:

In November 1918, Ambedkar was appointed Professor of Political Economy in Sydenham College through the good offices of Lord Sydenham, former Governor of Bombay. His success as a Professor could not mitigate the evils of untouchability in the temple of learning .His Gujarati Professor colleagues objected to his taking water from the pot reserved for the teaching staff of the college.⁽¹⁷⁾

During his school days, it is learnt, only a few teachers encouraged Ambedkar to pursue his studies. The orthodox Hindu society did not encourage or create a favorable environment for the untouchables to acquire knowledge and get them educated. They were denied admission to schools, and if admitted, they were asked not to sit with other students in the classroom. Further, they were denied to learn Sanskrit on the ground that the *Vedic* text prohibits untouchables to learn or to hear Sanskrit. It was at the school that Ambedkar had the first experience of untouchability. However, fortunately for Ambedkar, a few teachers came forward to get Ambedkar out of the ruts.

Thus, at Satara, Ambedkar completed his primary education and began his high school career. One day, at Satara, he went to school in soaking rains. The class teacher by name Pendse by name, who was a Brahmin was moved by the sight of little Ambedkar. He at once asked his son to take Bhima to his residence to give Ambedkar a hot bath and a piece of cloth to cover his body and also to hang up his wet clothes to dry.⁽¹⁸⁾This incident had a profound effect on young Ambedkar’s mind.

(b)Influences of contemporary intellectuals:

Encounter with English education in India and abroad helped Ambedkar to come into contact with several contemporary great intellectuals. However, in some cases the contact was not personal, but through their ideas, Ambedkar was enriched intellectually.Influence of contemporary social reformers and educationists that left a deep impression on Ambedkar has been discussed in this section.

Gautama Buddha:

Ambedkar believed in Buddha’s philosophy that a man himself is responsible for his weal and sadness. Man according to him is the builder of his own fate- good or bad, and he is not the mere hand-puppet of internal causes which fix his fortune for him. A man can overcome sorrow and achieve happiness by his own sustained efforts. In the same way Ambedkar said, “Man therefore is a factor in making of history and environmental forces whether impersonal or social if they are the first and not the last things” (thus speaks Ambedkar pp28-31).

Buddha’s doctrine of *Annicca* (transitoriness) and *Annatta* (egolessness) exercised a profound influence on Dr. Ambedkar. Buddha revolted against *Vedas*, *Brahmans* and *Upanishad* as there are no uniform social values. Lord Buddha led him to question the infallibility of the *Vedas*, the faith in the salvation of the soul, the efficacy of rites, ceremonies and sacrifices as means of obtaining salvation; the theory that God created man or that he came out of the body of the *Brahma* (God of Creation); and in the doctrine of *Karma* which determines man’s position in present life by deeds done by him in his past life. The impact of teaching of Buddha can be seen in Ambedkar’s writing. This can be seen through his book ‘Buddha and his Dharma’. Dr. Ambedkar tested the validity of the *Vedas*, the *Brahmans* and the social organization which is based on *Chaturvarna* by applying the Buddha’s doctrine of *Annicca* and *Annatta*. He wrote that Lord Buddha revolted against the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas* because they assumed that (a) the *Vedas* are not only secret but they are infallible and are not be questioned ;(b) that salvation of the soul or escape from transmigration can be had only by the due performance of *Vedas*’ sacrifices, religious ceremonies, and the offering of gifts to *Brahmans*; (c)that the ideal religion is contained in the *Vedas* along with a theory for an ideal society ; (d) that the pattern of this ideal society is based on *Chaturvarna*. Therefore, Ambedkar was influenced a great

deal by Lord Buddha. The reason being that from the life works of Lord Buddha, he could determine that a man could become great not merely due to his royal birth but because he was motivated by the dynamics of social purposes and acted as the scourge and scavenger of society. The republican principles of Buddha's constitutional set-up of the Sangha had a lasting influence on Ambedkar.

Kabir:

Dr. Ambedkar has regarded Mahatma Kabir as his second Guru. His family belongs to the devotional Kabir school of thought. As his father was a follower of Kabir, he used to encourage young Ambedkar to recite the poems of Kabir. According to Ambedkar, Kabir's poems express in gracefully imaginative terms, the rational and secular ideas of the Buddha⁽¹⁹⁾. The thoughts of Kabir taught Dr. Ambedkar not to regard any one as a great man or a mahatma, since it is difficult to be human let alone to be a saint. "*Manus hona kathin haya tou sadhu kahanse hoya.*" (Doha of Kabir) [In English, to be a man, it is very difficult task, so, how will you be a priest?]. Therefore, Ambedkar never thought Gandhi as 'Mahatma' rather Mr. Gandhi.

Jyotiba Phule:

Dr. Ambedkar thought that all men were equal by birth but social evil created discrimination among men. He wanted to provide opportunity to the suppressed classes to raise them socially, economically and politically. He held Jyotiba Phule in great respect. In 1951, Phule started the first school for women and worked for the uplift of the downtrodden classes. Phule wanted the women and the shudras to be given compulsory education. He criticized *Manusmriti* because he realized that it was the largest obstacle in the way to social change; he also criticized the unchangeability of the *Vedas* and the *Brahmanas*. The unjust claim of the Brahmins as divine arch for themselves and treating the rest of the mankind as inferior, sub-human, sub-animal being was completely intolerable for the just man like Jotiba Phule. After surpassing a long -drawn tyranny of the Brahmins, the Brave-heart Jotiba appeared in the scene of despondency, with his boundless courage stimulated the truth to awaken the divine slaves of the country. He resorted to strip the corrupt and criminals before the eyes of the downtrodden people who were to accumulate courage and inspiration to rise in revolt against the paper tiger. Phule took up the cause of female education first. In India, women irrespective of caste were debarred from education. He began by throwing an open challenge to the *Manusmriti* and established a school for mangs and Mahars and he made the *shudras* rebel against injustice by making them aware of their slavery. Therefore, Ambedkar dedicated his books, '*Who were Shudras?*', to the memory of Jyotiba Phule. The dedication runs as follows: "Inscribed to the memory of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule 1827-1890, the greatest Shudras of modern India who made the lower classes of Hindu conscious of their Hindu slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India, social democracy was more vital than independence from the foreign rule".

Tukaram:

His father Ramji Sakpal sang also the spiritual song from the Marathi saint-poet like Tukaram. The one of his children, Ambedkar derived immense benefits from these songs. Constant recitals, recitations and exposition of these songs etc. helped to develop a taste in his children and provided them with a certain matching and command of the language in their early ages.

Seligman:

Ambedkar's orientation and the inclination to Edwin Seligman, his guide, the London School of Economics seemed a better option, given his progressive ambience. The one professor that he was enamoured of was Edwin R.A Seligman. He was a friend of Lala Lajpat Ray who was introduced to Seligman by Sidney Webb. Ambedkar took to Seligman as 'duck takes to water' as depicted by his Biographer, Dhananjay Keer, and ran after the professor from class to class with his special permission to attend his class. This professor, who was fond of dogearing the pages of the book in hand while teaching, taught well and guided his students with affection, and thus produced a lasting effect on Ambedkar. When asked by Ambedkar as to the method of research, he advised him to go on earnestly so that he might evolve his own method. In 1916, Ambedkar published his thesis under the title "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India". The work opens with an introduction by Edwin R.A. Seligman who taught Ambedkar the first lesson in public Finance. Observing that the problems discussed by Ambedkar in his excellent dissertation was one that was arousing a growing interest in all

parts of the world, the professor remarked “ Nowhere to my knowledge has such a detailed study of the underlying principles been made.” In this thesis, Ambedkar traces the growth of the financial arrangements from the Act of 1833 under the imperial system. The chapter on the budget is very valuable in their educative and illustrative aspects with regard to the nature and enlargement of the Provincial Finance. The style of the professor becomes one with the soul of the patriot and Ambedkar bitterly exposes the British bureaucracy, denounces the designs and objects of the imperial system and also lashes out at all the reactionary forces in the country.

John Dewey:

John Dewey became his teacher at the time when Ambedkar was the student of the Columbia University. His philosophy of instrumentation might have led Ambedkar towards a critical analysis of the concrete problems which humanity faced. His pragmatic approach might have persuaded him that any philosophy which sought to offer a way out from the troubles in which humanity was caught must be dynamic and pragmatic. He might have been influenced by Dewey’s method of inquiry which indicated a way to deal with painful solutions. He was also impressed by Dewey’s activist epistemology and the idea of a realist school of political scientists and therefore he paid sharp attention to practical rather than mere academic politics. Dr. Ambedkar fully approved Dewey’s stress on education as a means to change the world and not merely to understand it. Education should be capable of creating human values which have universal applicability. Therefore, he established the Peoples’ Education society, Bombay, in 1946 in order to raise the cultural level of the depressed and oppressed classes who did not have any valuable cultural heritage as they were denied the educational facilities.

Dr. Ambedkar first recounted that at Columbia, he experienced social equality for the first time. ‘The best friends I have had in my life, he told *The New York Times* in 1930, were ‘some of my classmates and my great Professor John Dewey’. When Ambedkar arrived at the Columbia University, he was only twenty years old. John Dewey had already established himself at the peak of American Intellectual life. The young mind of Ambedkar had been influenced by Dewey’s concept of instrumentalism. Dewey’s idea provided the foundation which led Ambedkar for a systematic analysis of problems relating to politics, economics, society, religion and history .There is a string running through these problems which calls for an integral rather than a piecemeal approach. This integral approach enabled Ambedkar to find that society is equally aggressive and tyrannical than government⁽²⁰⁾.

Ranade:

Ambedkar had deep attraction to Ranade who was considered to be progressive and liberal leader in his approach towards the problems of society and economy .It is Dr. Ambedkar who, throughout his political life, struggled for eradicating untouchability and gave priority to social reform as against political independence. Amongst the galaxy of social reformers of Maharashtra of the 19th century, Justice Ranade (1842-1901) is one of them whose social and political thinking inspired Ambedkar for his movement of uplifting downtrodden classes. Ranade firmly advocated the reorganization of *Hindu* society on the principles of equality and absence of casteism. In this respect, Ambedkar’s policy comes closer to the concept of social reform of Justice Ranade.

Although Ambedkar heard of Ranade at the age of nine, several years after, he found a copy of petition, from the old papers of his father, sent by the ‘Commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the *Mahar* Community (untouchables resided mainly in Maharashtra) to the Government of India against the order issued in 1892 banning the recruitment of the *Mahar* in the Army’ which was eventually ‘drafted by Ranade to help the aggrieved *Mahars* to redress’. This incidence generated curiosity about Ranade in the mind of Ambedkar which subsequently encouraged him to study carefully Ranade’s career and writings and formed an idea about him. Ranade first made a dispassionate analysis of the causes of downfall of *Hindu* society and spent a major portion of his life in promoting social reforms .Ambedkar was influenced by the impartial opinion about the weakness and evils of the *Hindu* religion. Dr. Ambedkar finds in Ranade’s views the justification of his movement against the caste *Hindus*, particularly the *Brahmins* who had legalized untouchability.

The political philosophy of justice Ranade also had an impact on the mind of Dr. Ambedkar. It made his pragmatic approach to problems systematic and evolutionary. The political philosophy of Justice

Ranade was summed up by him in three propositions:

- 1) We must not set up as our ideal something which is purely imaginary; an ideal must be such that it must carry the assurance that it is a practicable one.
- 2) In politics, sentiments and temperament of the people are more important than intellect and theory;
- 3) In political negotiations, the rule must be what is possible, that does not mean that we should be content with what is offered.

Why Ambedkar agreed with the terms of the Poona Pact of 1932 by sacrificing the benefits of the communal award can be assessed from the above mentioned political philosophy. Ranade wanted to vitalize the Hindu society to create social democracy and he lived in a time when social and religious customs were sacrosanct. Just as Ranade's aim was to cleanse the old order and improve the moral tune of the Hindu society, Ambedkar's had formed similar view which partly lends strong influence from Ranade and for cleansing odds of Hindu Society, Ambedkar worked throughout his whole life.

J.S. Mill:

The writings of J.S. Mill, the political thinker had a great influence on Ambedkar. Ambedkar's advocacy in favour of freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of action was similar in line with Mill. The absolute responsibility of these concepts moulded the political philosophy of Ambedkar. Mill's writing impressed on him the importance of individual initiative and personal responsibility. Like Mill, he was also convinced that unless men are free to form and maintain their own opinions, they cannot develop that mental good on which everybody depends. 'Freedom of thought is absolutely indispensable although freedom of action is limited. The liberty of individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to the other' ⁽²¹⁾.

That the actions of an individual must not become an annoyance was pointed out by Ambedkar in his forceful statement before the Constituent Assembly while he dealt with the exceptions and qualifications of the Fundamental Rights. He said, "In the opinion of the critics fundamental rights are not fundamental unless they are also absolute rights. The critics rely on the constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights embodied in the first ten Amendments to that Constitution in support of their contention. It is said that the fundamental rights in the American Bill of Rights are real because they are not subject to limitation." ⁽²²⁾

Instances of personal humiliation and inhuman treatment were so many that Ambedkar could not but revolt against the social taboos created by the Hindus against the untouchables. This pungent experience made him explore ways to reconstruct society on the lines of social democracy.

Bernard Russell:

Ambedkar's mind was busy with the ideas of intellectual conquest. About this time, he wrote a review article on Bernard Russell's book 'Reconstruction of Society' in the journal of Indian Economic Society. Describing it as a war book, he observed that Russell was right in believing that war could not be banished by rationalistic appeal alone but by positive life of impulses and passions antagonistic to those that led to war. Russell opined that activity led to growth and quietism was another name for death Force was such an energy that must be used constructively to achieve any definite objective. At the end, Ambedkar added that Russell full credit for having emphasized the psychic basis of social life ⁽²³⁾.

Harold Laski:

Dr. Ambedkar appreciated H.Laski for his insistence on the moral order as a requirement of democracy. He says that if there is no moral order, democracy will go to pieces. It requires a public conscience.

In India, all citizens were not considered as equally tangible units of society. The people from the upper strata of society were entitled to special privileges and others specially the untouchables, well denied all facilities for self development. It produces a society of social decrepit. Similar is the opinion of Laski. He says 'Those who were denied the power to authority assume the subordinate position of obedience and those who enjoy the privileged position of authority struggle to maintain their power and prestige and tend to justify their retention by most specious and fallacious kinds of arguments. Whenever men become only recipients of orders they lose their individuality and ability to realize their own good.'

Edmund Burke:

There is the emphasis on moral order for which he sometimes kept company with Edmund Burke. The use of force is but temporary. Therefore, in the Round Table Conference, 1940, he asserted, “we feel that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we can not remove them unless we get political powers in our own hand⁽²⁴⁾”.

4. Conclusion:

Ambedkar was born in a society based on inequality. Ambedkar was schooled in the liberal political tradition which he imbibed through his interaction with the Western culture as result of his British moulded higher education in India and his training in Columbia University and London School of Economics and Political Science. He was fortunate enough to receive education in the west where he came under the influence of the liberal- minded professors like Dewey, Harold Laski, Seligman and others. It was, therefore, quite natural that he imbibed the spirit of liberty. But, in dazzling contrast to the intellectual tradition of liberalism he was brought upon, he was destined to live and suffer in an anti-liberal Indian universe. This made a strong impression on his philosophy. Liberalism led him to his confidence of an ideal social order based on individual right and dignity. Yet at the same time, his social experience of a system which deprived of Justice to individual and recognized him only with social group led him to think in terms of activities. Thus he made an attempt to analyze the social problems from Marxist viewpoint. This explains why he was against dictatorship, autocracy and totalitarianism. As a social philosopher, Ambedkar had developed logical structure of interrelated ideas which he used as a theoretical framework to explain the social phenomenon as well as to suggest changes in the existing pattern of social relations. Being an integral and organic part of that stratum of society which for generations together had been the victim of organized exploitative system, he had the advantage of having clear vision of the problems and complexities of the social system. Ambedkar tried to eliminate inequality and injustice and reformed the untouchables through the weapon of education. Ambedkar’s birth in an untouchable community and in a system based on graded inequality and injustice and deprivation of basic human rights to his community was responsible for giving a purpose and a mission to his life.

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