

## **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Philosophy on Higher Education and its Relevance to the present society**

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### **Abstract**

*“The backward classes have come to realize that after all education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight. We may forego material benefits, we may forego material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forego our right and opportunities to reap the benefit of the highest education to the fullest extent. That 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. B.R. Ambedkar**

Education has an immense impact on the human society. 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. In other words, man becomes a rational animal when he is educated.

It is through education that knowledge and information received and spread throughout the world. An uneducated person cannot read and write and hence he closed to all the knowledge and wisdom he can gain through books and other mediums. The quality of human resource of a nation is easily judge by the number of literate population living in it. This is to say that education is necessary if a nation aspires to achieve growth and development and more importantly sustain it. This may well explain the fact that rich and developed nations of the world have very high literacy rate and productive human resource. In fact, these nations have started imparting selective training and education programs to meet the new technical and business demands of the 21st century.

In short I would like to say that this paper highlights Babasaheb's mission, his thoughts, ideology, and strategy to strengthen our people through higher education and its relevance in the present society.

**KEYWORDS:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Educate, Agitate, Organize, Higher Education

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### ***Introduction***

The status of communities as Dalits in the Hindu caste system was the most serious impediment to their education. While stringent social taboos conscribed their behaviour, severe strictures were laid down to prevent their access to knowledge. It was treatment for some communities that they were taboo from walking on the road in daylight because even their shadow was considered polluting. On the pathetic condition

of untouchables, Ambedkar had given lot of facts. He writes that , *“Under the rule of the Peshwas in the Maratha country the untouchables was not allowed to use the public street if a Hindu was coming along lest he should pollute the Hindu by his shadow. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or on in his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting them polluted by his touch through mistake. In Poona, the capital of the Peshwa, the untouchables was required to carry, strung from his waist, a broom to sweep away from behind the dust he treaded on lest a Hindu walking on the same should be polluted. In Pune, the untouchable was required to carry an earthen pot, hung in his neck wherever he went, for holding his spit falling on earth should pollute a Hindu who might unknowingly happen to tread on it. The children of untouchables were not allowed to study in public school. Untouchables were not allowed to use public wells, to wear apparel or ornaments they like and to eat any food they like”*. The list of atrocities is even longer than this. In post-independent India, this list is lessen but not completely exhausted.

He recognized that, lack of education was the main cause for the backwardness of poor people. Educate, agitate and organize are three final words of our savior. According to Ambedkar one must get educated before he is conducting agitated thoughts for the movement, so that people can organize with his support. A singular role that Ambedkar played in the upliftment of the untouchables in the early 20th century and the importance that he gave to modern education for their betterment deserves special emphasis. In conferences, lectures and also in meetings, Ambedkar encouraged untouchable youth to acquire education in order to raise their social status and image. His educational contribution starts on a wider scale of educating classes as well as masses starts with this work 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 highest Hindu and be in the position to use political power as a means. This is best reflected in Ambedkar’s famous slogan of Educate, Agitate and Organize.

### ***Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Philosophy on Higher Education:***

Education is the fountain head for the advancement of any society. An individual is empowered with creative thinking, knowledge, reasoning and compassion for fellow being through education, closing the avenues of education from ones reach is nothing but blinding the person.

He found that such an unkind act was performed over a section of the society called Dalits and Sudras and thereby subjugated them to permanent disadvantage in all aspects of life and personality growth.

Dr. Ambedkar said,

*“Higher education, in my opinion, means that education, which can enable you to occupy the strategically important places in State administration. Brahmins had to face a lot of opposition and obstacles, but they are overcoming these and progressing ahead.”*

*“I can not forget, rather I am sad, that many people do not realize that the Caste system is existing in India for centuries because of inequality and a wide gulf of difference in education, and they have forgotten that it is likely to continue for some centuries to come. This gulf between the education of Brahmins and non-Brahmins will not end just by primary and secondary education. The difference in status between these can only be reduced by higher education. Some non-Brahmins must get highly educated and occupy the strategically important places, which has remained the monopoly of Brahmins since long. I think this is the duty of the State. If the Govt. can not do it, institutions like “Maratha Mandir” must undertake this task.”*

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. Ambedkar envisaged that, education was an instrument for the change of the lives of untouchables. He declared that the elevation of the depressed classes was recognized to be the cause of all the enlightened people in the country. He thought that education would enlighten his people and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor to which the untouchables belong. Education plays an important role. It is an effective instrument of mass movement to safeguard life and liberty. Education could encourage the oppressed ones to fight and remove injustice and exploitation and pave ways for the free thinking.

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.”*

An Ambedkar idea for the untouchables was ‘to raise their educational standards so that they may know their own conditions, have aspirations raise to the level of highest Hindu and be in position to use political power as a means to that end’. This is best reflected in Ambedkar’s famous slogan ‘*Educate, Agitate and Organize.*’

### **Educate:**

Education has an immense impact on the human society. 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. In other words, man becomes a rational animal when he is educated.

It is through education that knowledge and information received and spread throughout the world. An uneducated person cannot read and write and hence he closed to all the knowledge and wisdom he can gain through books and other mediums. In other

words, he shut off from the outside world. In contrast, an educated man lives in a room with all its windows open towards outside world.

The quality of human resource of a nation is easily judge by the number of literate population living in it. This is to say that education is necessary if a nation aspires to achieve growth and development and more importantly sustain it. This may well explain the fact that rich and developed nations of the world have very high literacy rate and productive human resource. In fact, these nations have started imparting selective training and education programs to meet the new technical and business demands of the 21st century.

### **Agitate:**

The second step 'agitate' does not mean to agitate physically; it is a mental revolution in its place. It does not mean to go out and start protesting violently on the streets without getting educated first, which most probably our enemy wants us to do. After getting educated about Babasaheb's thoughts and strategy: we should start agitating mentally. We need an agitation of thoughts in our mind in order to move to the next stage: organize.

### **Organize:**

Educated and agitated minds will easily organize for a common mission. We must get ourselves educated and let our thoughts agitate so that we can collectively organize. Agitated minds for a common mission will help them to unite and struggle for their common goal as one force. Only education can bring this change. Ambedkar had also given lot of emphasis on getting education. He said that, "*Educate, Organize and Agitate*". Here he had given prime importance to education. He further added that, "*The backward classes have come to realize that after all education is the greatest material benefit for which they can fight. We may forego material benefits of civilization but we cannot forego our rights and opportunities to reap the benefits of the highest education fully. That 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.*" He suffered a lot due to this caste system. Still in that system of discrimination, he succeeded to well educate himself.

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Ambedkar said, my final words of advice to you is "Educate, Agitate, Organize" have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to an individual is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for reclamations of the human personality.

Educate, Agitate, and organize: this order must be maintained to see the effective results of the movement for the upliftment of our people in all aspect. Babasaheb had a

strategically thought and well-defined process for his mission to be successful. Ambedkar wanted the people to cultivate the values of freedom and equality among themselves; it is possible only through education. He regarded education as a means to reach the doors of light and perception to remove the regions of darkness and ignorance. Ambedkar emphasized on secular education for social emancipation. Following this order, can positively result in achieving more outcomes that are beneficial not only for our community but for the society as a whole.

Dr. Ambedkar emphasized on practical value of the things. His ideas and educational doctrines have been successfully demonstrated through the age, sex, through the best educational system of the world and their cherished ideals have already been incorporated directly or indirectly into educational system of modern India. Dr. Ambedkar philosophy has great ideas for practical fulfillment and these ideas have the relevance to modern society.

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