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**REVIEW ARTICLE**

**ENDEAVOURS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
SCHEDULED CASTES**

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# Endeavours for the Advancement of Scheduled Castes

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A riddle that time and again faced by politicians and social reformers is as how to raise the social and civic status of people belonging to Scheduled Castes. The cares of Scheduled castes people were put to front in Bengal by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand served their cause in North India and Dr. Annie Besant and Col. Olcott handled the south for bringing some kind of positive energy and hopes in the feeble minds of Scheduled Caste people, that had been feeble by generations of oppressions and depressions. The movement like Arya Samaj, Theosophical society, The Brahma Samaj were exceptionally great movement which brought reformation among Scheduled Castes and mitigated their sufferings. Some legislation for the upliftment of these socially thrown people were adopted and implemented but no serious contemplation was given to eradicating the root cause i.e. castism, the evil.

Mahatma Gandhi was the first person to raise voice on behalf these people against the way they were being taken by other members of society. Having called for justice, respect, decency and more humane treatment to scheduled castes people to touch the inner thread of conscience of country as a whole to root out the evil of discrimination. He gifted untouchables with new name "Harijans" (Children of God) hence made Indians aware of the Godly sacredness that is present in every individual on mother earth. On 22-2-1921 in young India he quoted that untouchability was the greatest hurdle in the path of prosperity of land of Bharat which we Indians must do away with disciplined and well organized efforts.

Mahatma Gandhi turned no blind eye towards the pathetic conditions of Indian Scheduled Castes people while simultaneously fighting for the rights of racially abused people in South Africa. He said that untouchable ought to be embraced as inseparable part of Hindu religion, providing them all political, social, cultural and religious rights which were being enjoyed by other Hindu. This was the reason he rejected the idea of separate voting right to the people of Scheduled Castes as he considered them as respectable member of Hindu society. Gandhi put his life on stake by observing indefinite fast so that

schedule castes might not be given as separate political space and to be taken as integral part of Hindu religion itself. Poona Pact was signed in 1932 to avert the political separation of Scheduled Castes people. Gandhi going on fast and conditions present at that time made people sensitive to the injustice being meted out to these badly deprived people and to work for improving their social and economic conditions. Therefore because of pain taken on behalf of Gandhi lead to generation of serious positive Contemplation for Scheduled Caste people. It could be said with emphasis that father of the nation played fatherly role for his disadvtanged childrens who made big efforts to establish the downgraded group of Indian population. We need to emphasis steps being taken by Gandhiji favouring Harijans but he really secured indescribable social movement for the humans being till that time called untouchables both by his own example and his perception. He referred them 'Harijans'. According to P.G. Shaw if we take account of social reformation in India then Gandhiji name must be given special space in social literature; for the reason that he was the only one who garnered so much support for his view points of so called Dalits or untouchables.

As P.G. Shaw further quoted that Gandhiji provided Scheduled Castes their occupational, economic, social, religious and political space or respective fields. It was Gandhiji under whose blessings and calling The Harijan Sewak Sangh, on all India body came into existence throughout the country. Several of branches were established which propagated his preaching of fraternity and equality among Hindu Castes. Gandhi ji, along with other social reformer initiated restructuring and re-shaping of Hindu religion where equal space was provided to people those were depressed since time immemorial. They opined that new reformation of Hindu religion would remove the menace of untouchability. Nearby 1920 Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar imerged as prominent leader among dalits who fought for their right till his last breath. As a matter of facts both Gandhiji and Dr. Ambedkar were poles apart in thinking on the same issue i.e. discrimination against Scheduled Castes. There had always been contradiction on the problem of

untouchability among both great leaders. Dr. Ambedkar opined that root cause of untouchability was caste while problem for Gandhi was only untouchability and not 'caste'.

### **ROLE OF DR. BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR CONCERNING SCHEDULED CASTES:**

To understand the study of Scheduled Castes in India role of Ambedkar essentially need to be taken account of movements initiated from the side of Ambedkar and its results on the aspects of the life lived by these people of Scheduled Castes. He was born as a tall leader of the depressed untouchables in Maharashtra State of Indian Union by the time of 1920.

Ambedkar at that time was only leader among scheduled castes who had educated himself to the level of being earning respect from British administrators and other rational and liberal leaders among Indian leaders. The man himself was victim of the evil of untouchability. For the exorcism of untouchable in 1924, Dr. Ambedkar organized a movement named Bahiskrit Hitkarni Sabha. Under the movement Dr. Ambedkar founded many school and institute of education and hostels for needy girls and boys. He provided College Siddharth in Bombay and Milind College in Aurangabad. 'People education society' was established in July 1945 which today running approximately fifteen major institution spread in different parts of Maharashtra. Doing such things Dr. Ambedkar touches the real thread of prosperity and removing ignorance, generating self-employment among the untouchable through the development of skills. This was how he expressed his concerns and his attachment with the depressed section of country.

Dr. Ambedkar may have been the only leader born as untouchable who tried to promote integration among untouchable and stated that social freedom cannot be received as a mere gift but they will have to fight for it. It would have to be acquired through self-efforts. On April 03, 1927 in Bombay he started publishing Marathi Paper 'Bahishkrit Bharat' to free the millions from the shackles of Hindu orthodoxes and racism. Consequently different Scheduled Castes (untouchables) started coming together and did know the meaning of basic human rights. They started asserting their rights by that time.

To realize social as well as religious rights for untouchables like Mahatma Gandhi Dr. Ambedkar followed the same path of Satyagraha, meaning large peaceful movement and mobilizing people's support for cause. First incidence of Satyagraha was demonstrated in March, 1927 by Dr. Ambedkar to drink water from Chowdar tank at Mahad district of Bombay, Maharashtra. It was named as Mahad Satyagraha. This could be taken as first collectively organized mass movement for gaining access to their social and human rights by untouchables. Under the great stewardship of Dr. Ambedkar another Satyagraha was organized in Nasik in March, 1930.

This purpose served by this satyagraha was to enter Kala Ram temple. Number of untouchable had been gathered at the site. (The Temple site). 1928 coming of famous Simon Commission was blocked and rejected by Congress leaders but at the very coming of Commission Dr. Ambedkar put forth pathetic conditions of untouchables and also suggested as how to improve well-being of poor strata of society. His suggestion included providing cabinet seat and reserved legislature seat for people belonging to lower castes. Despite Dr. Ambedkar making strong case his demands were rejected in 1930 report published by Simon Commission. Separate electorate right was provided to Muslims, Sikhs and Christians but depressed class were continue to be taken as part of Hindu religion. Depressed classes were the term commonly used for Scheduled Castes. Famous Round Table Conference was held in 1930 in London where Dr. Ambedkar took the role of untouchable's leader and presented their case with great force. Using his intellect and attractive communication skill Dr. Ambedkar narrated the untold miseries and woes that were being faced by untouchable in the same land where off they were aboriginals. With resolve he called for having separate electorate for the Scheduled Castes but Gandhi and his associates were adamant on keeping them in Hindu electoral system. As the time passed however differences were resolved after signing the Puna Pact in 1932. The quotations in pact had given few reservations for the so-called depressed classes in political sphere of life.

Dissatisfied with response he was having from big political figures of India in 1935 Ambedkar launched his own independent struggle for fighting against the prejudices being meted out to his brothers. Under the purview of Government of India Act of 1935, in the process of preparation for the provincial legislature Ambedkar designed his own party on all India basis called Independent labour party to protect the rights of untouchables. He founded 'Scheduled Caste Federation' in 1942 and lectured his own people to struggle for their basic rights. For the bad fate of Ambedkar and untouchables the federation could not carry its goal for the reason of resources money, power and foremost acceptability among masses was present nowhere – on the basis of which any organization flourish and nourish.

When India got its independence Ambedkar was made first Law Minister of India. He took every step for mobilizing support for the wellbeing of Scheduled Castes. Social reformers and political leaders were persuaded by Dr. Ambedkar to work for de-chaining of untouchables. Constitution of India was adopted in January, 1950 which is filled number of provisions in the form of acts to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Castes. It was serious attempt in keeping with the spirit of social amelioration put forth by various socially thinking leader where Mahatma Gandhi occupied big space. It is worth mentioning here Ambedkar throughout his complete life laboured for bringing a ray of hope in the mind of downtrodden people who were cornered in the Indian society badly.

Dr. Ambedkar was the only personality who accounted for introducing various special measures in India's constitution to protect the basic human rights of humans those were looked down by their own people since ages. Ambedkar as an intellectual personality among other some tall leader of then India was the prominent architects of Indian Constitution. The Constitution of India imagines of casteless and classless India where all are equal. It swears to make genuine effort for establishment of such social order where political, social and economic justice is available to every Indian national. Appreciable number of provisions are inscribed in the Constitution of India so that basic rights and interests of such denigrated people could be defended and protected so that they can complete with other Indians on the same lines. Such people were referred as 'Scheduled Castes; in Constitution of India. 'Scheduled Caste' is the standard term used in India Constitution. Those castes being described under Article 371 were specifically declared as Scheduled Castes the Constitution of India. To stop these people to be more susceptible to human rights violations adequate references have been given here and there in Constitution.

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