



Ambedkar as a Modern Manu

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ABSTRACT

It has been said about Dr. Ambedkar that he is the Manu of the present age. It is true that Ambedkar was quite equal to the task of constitution making that had been entrusted to him. Undoubtedly, Ambedkar was brilliant both as a Politician and Scholar. His contribution to the drafting and piloting of the India constitution was enormous and excellent. Manu the law giver of Hindu Society made laws for the Hindu Society only and regarded human laws as divine but Ambedkar the modern constitution maker of India made laws Indian Society- Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs etc. According to him laws are simple human creations. Ambedkar gave a clarion call to his people to give battle for the cause of justice and humanity. He made his lifelong efforts towards the cause of untouchables. His only point was that the Schedule Caste should be given due representation in the executive and legislature.

KEYWORDS :

Ambedkar gave a clarion call to his people to give battle for the cause of justice and humanity and to expose the machinations and conspiracy hatched against the rights of his people. He knew this was the last opportunity to assert the rights and the will of his people; for he feared that free India might revert to the old traditions and his people would be impoverished, neglected and ostracised from society and public service.

Admitted in this uncertain atmosphere came to reality one of the dreams of Ambedkar, which he had cherished since 1945. It was his dream to be found an ideal educational institution with modern scientific apparatus and with a staff of proved merit, with a view to promoting higher education among the lower middle classes and especially among the scheduled caste. He founded the people's Education Society which started a college on June 20, 1946 and it has proved to be one of the leading colleges in India. The name of the college is Siddharth which is one of the names of Lord Buddha.

The scheduled caste agitation started with a march to the meeting of the All -India Congress Committee which was held in Bombay. The Scheduled Castes leaders and workers made a black flag demonstration in front of the congress Pandal and demanded as explanation from the congress leaders as to their rights and representation in a free India. They agreed the congress Harijan leaders were not the representatives of the scheduled castes. And the battle started on July 15, 1946, at Poona, synchronising with the opening of the Poona Session of Bombay Assembly. Ambedkar was in Bombay when the non-violent battle began at Poona. In an interview before his departure to Poona on July 17, he stated that they had launched the campaign against the Cabinet Mission proposals. Ambedkar received messages from some leaders supporting his stand, but the General Secretary of Gandhi's Harijan Sevak Sangh threatened him with a counter Satyagraha movement if he did not withdraw the struggle.

Just then members were elected by the Provincial Legislature to go to the Constituent Assembly which was to meet at New Delhi in accordance with the Provisions of the Mission's plan. The congress elected its men. The majority of them were elected not because they know much of constitution making but because they had suffered imprisonment in the patriotic struggle. Ambedkar had no men in Bombay Assembly to support his candidature, and so his name was put up through the scheduled caste representative in the Bengal Assembly. There with the backing of Muslim league, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly.

On July 21 Ambedkar stated in a press interview in Poona that the British had decided to quit India and their powers were to be inherited by the caste Hindus and the Muslims and hence the scheduled caste were entitled to demand a blueprint from the congress regarding the rights and interests of 60,000,000 untouchables in future constitution of India. He said that the Satyagraha started in Poona was only the beginning of a country wide struggle to secure for the

scheduled caste their just political rights. He claimed that the Poona Satyagraha was carried on on a higher moral plane and the non-violent behaviour of the whole mass of volunteers provided a lesson to Gandhi who regarded himself a graduate in Satyagraha. Referring to the Poona Pact, he said that as it prevented the real representatives of the scheduled caste from being elected to the legislatures, it must go. It was a virtual dis-franchisement of the scheduled castes. In the end he issued a warning that if moral resources were exhausted they would look for other means to register their protest.

At a big meeting in Poona, Ambedkar exhorted his men to carry on the struggle to bitter end. The congress Harijan leaders, who always reaped the fruit of Ambedkar's labour and struggle, spoke against Ambedkar's agitation and supported those who always opposed Harijan's demands. It was like barking at one's own benefactor. Gandhi referring to this Satyagraha, wrote in 'Harijan' that there was a parody of satyagrah in the show staged by Ambedkar, if the means were non-violent the cause was certainly vague (Harijan-1946).

Some time later, Ambedkar wrote to Sardar Patel that he considered the country greater than any individual howsoever great he might be. He also said that one could be a great nationalist without being a Congressman and added that he was a greater nationalist than any congress leader.

In August 29 1946 Ambedkar was in Poona where the working committee of the scheduled caste Federation was reviewing the political situation. The announcement of viceroy was a terrific disappointment for Ambedkar and his party. He expressed sharp dissatisfaction at the inadequate representation given to the scheduled caste in the newly constituted cabinet at the centre and demanded one more seat for scheduled caste in the cabinet. He was surprised to see Jagjivan Ram's name in the list as he had supported the claim of the scheduled caste for increased representation in the Executive when Ambedkar had sent a cablegram to the British Prime Minister protesting against the inadequacy of the representation. The working committee of the scheduled caste Federation appealed to Jagjivan Ram not to accept the post, declared that the new Government was not entitled to their respect and asked the scheduled caste leaders to renounce the titles conferred upon them by the British Government.

Ambedkar realised now that although the protestations and demonstrations had their limited result, he must make a final attempt himself in Britain and effect a change if he could. With that end view he started on his political mission on October 15 via Karachi. On arrival in London, he declared that the Labour party had let down the untouchables and belonged their cause when asked about his reaction to the situation at Delhi since the Muslim League joined the Interim Government, Ambedkar said that it was a Government of one country by two nations. He told the press that India was in the midst of a civil war. He, therefore, suggested to the British Government to enforce the 1935-Act and hand over to the Indian Parties a United India after

a period of ten years.

Ambedkar was failing a political paralysis, and it was a very severe blow to the life-long efforts, which he had made towards the cause of untouchables. His only point was that the scheduled Caste should be given due representation in the executive and legislatures. He was working desperately to achieve that end. He admitted that he was depressed. The Muslim League which joined the Interim Cabinet on Oct. 26, 1946, had taken up Jogendranath Mandal as Law Minister in the Interim Government.

The Scheduled Castes had now two seats in the central cabinet. Moreover, Jogendranath Mandal was a Member of the Working Committee of the Scheduled Caste Federation.

On the last day of Oct, 1946 Ambedkar had talked with some leading British politician connected with India. But there seemed no hope for him to gain his points. The close interruption of Labour Members showed that they were not willing to rake up the communal question at the last stage. Ambedkar was advised to adjust himself to the changed situation and to try his luck in the Constituent Assembly. So in an utterly depressing mind he had to leave London.

Shortly after arrival in Bombay, in an interview with the representative of Globe Agency, he observed that although it was a vain hope, the untouchables were ready for the assimilation or absorption of their classes into Hindu society in the real and substantial sense of the term on the basis of inter-marriage and inter-dinning. But another aspect of the same question, he added, was that their merger into Hindu society would become easier only when the untouchables rose to the social status of the caste Hindu.

He expressed a feeble hope that Hinduism in the course of time might so reform itself that it would become acceptable, and therefore they were prepared to stay on where they were as it was not possible to uproot humanity and transplant it from one soil to another.

At this juncture Ambedkar's book who were The Shudras? was published. The book is dedicated to Mahatma Jotiba Phoolay whom he regarded as one of the greatest reformers. It is the thesis of Ambedkar that the Shudras were Kshatriya. They were one of the Communities belonging to the solar race. But they were degraded as the result of a violent conflicts between the Brahmins and Khyatriyas. The Brahmins refused to perform thread ceremonies of these Kshatriyas and degraded them to fourth varna which previously did not exist.

Although it was boycotted by the Muslim League, the Constituent Assembly met on December, 9, 1996, as scheduled. It elected Rajendra Prasad its President, appointed a Committee for framing the rules of Procedure, and on Dec 13 Pandit Nehru laid the foundation of its work by moving a resolution on the Declaration of objectives in a Magnificent speech.

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