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The educational philosophy as envisioned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

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Abstract

Social Philosophy, as a distinct academic discipline, engages in the philosophical examination of social dynamics, human conduct, and societal interpretations influenced by moral principles. This paper explores Philosophy of Education in views of Dr B.R Ambedkar. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, an iconic figure in Indian history, epitomizes the intersection of Social Philosophy and Education through his lifelong commitment to social justice, particularly for the marginalized Dalit community. Born into a society entrenched in caste-based discrimination, Ambedkar's journey from facing adversity to becoming the chief architect of India's Constitution underscores his profound impact on reshaping societal norms. His vision extended beyond legal reforms, encompassing the pivotal role of education in fostering societal change and individual empowerment.

Ambedkar's critique of Hinduism's caste system and his advocacy for equality form the cornerstone of his social philosophy. He recognized education as the key to dismantling societal inequalities and founded the People's Education Society to provide educational opportunities to Dalit students. His educational philosophy, rooted in human rights and dignity, emphasized the transformative potential of education in building a just and equitable society. Ambedkar's mantra of "Educate, Agitate, Organize" epitomizes his approach to activism, advocating for education as a tool for empowerment, active protest against injustice, and collective organization among marginalized communities. Through a comprehensive analysis of Ambedkar's teachings and actions, this paper sheds light on the enduring relevance of his educational philosophy in confronting systemic injustices and advancing social progress. Ambedkar's advocacy for inclusive and empowering educational opportunities continues to inspire efforts to address social inequalities and ensure equal access to education. As societies grapple with persistent challenges of discrimination and inequality, Ambedkar's vision of a fair and enlightened society serves as a guiding beacon for collective action and meaningful change.

Keywords: Social philosophy, society, education, agitate, organise

Introduction

Social Philosophy involves the philosophical examination of social dynamics, probing into questions about the foundations of social structures, human conduct, and societal interpretations influenced by moral principles rather than empirical observations. In contemporary discourse, Social Philosophy has gained recognition as a distinct academic discipline with a well-defined scope. It's important to differentiate it from Sociology, although it is viewed as an integral component of it. While Sociology encounters linguistic criticisms and encompasses a wide array of subjects, spanning from the origins of human societies to various elements like laws, traditions, establishments, languages, beliefs, and more, Social Philosophy specifically directs its attention towards the cohesive fabric of human society. By highlighting the interpretation of distinct aspects of human existence in relation to this cohesion, it focuses on values, objectives, and ideals. In the context of Indian society, Social Justice holds significant importance, representing fair treatment for all individuals irrespective of factors like caste, religion, gender, or place of birth. It is defined by five key principles: Accessibility, Fairness, Inclusivity, Engagement, and Human Rights, with a strong focus on promoting democratic values. The issue of Social Justice is a fundamental matter within Social Philosophy, closely intertwined with the domain of Law.

Throughout history, various facets of societal existence undergo transformation and growth, influenced by the particularities of time and location. Religious beliefs, ideals, and ambitions have long been pivotal in shaping human history, encapsulating much of what defines the essence of humanity. While these components are addressed within Social Philosophy, certain aspects lean more towards Ethics and Metaphysics. The origins of Social Philosophy can be traced back to ancient Greek thinkers, who exhibited a semblance to the modern concept of evolution concerning human life. Plato's Republic stands as a seminal work in Social Philosophy, where he probes into the question of whether human laws can be inherently rooted in the natural order of things.

As per Mackenzie, Social Philosophy endeavours to elucidate the essence of society through the prism of the principle of Social solidarity, seeking to interpret society in relation to the ideal of 'Social Unity.'

Born on April 14, 1891, in Mhow (now Dr. Ambedkar Nagar), Madhya Pradesh, India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a prominent Indian legal expert, social reformer, and the primary architect of the Indian Constitution. Hailing from the Dalit community, which has historically faced marginalization in India's caste-based social system, Ambedkar played a pivotal role in crafting the Indian Constitution and is often hailed as the "Father of the Indian Constitution." As the head of the drafting committee, he made substantial contributions to the document, which was enacted on January 26, 1950. Widely acknowledged as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution globally, Dr. Ambedkar is esteemed not only for his involvement in constitutional affairs and legislative activities but also for his scholarly works and vigorous advocacy for social change. Committed to championing the rights of the marginalized, he persistently opposed the oppressive aspects of Hindu society. Throughout his life, he devoted himself to advancing a reformed social order based on principles of liberty, equality, justice, and global brotherhood. Despite facing discrimination and social challenges, Ambedkar's legacy is celebrated for his pivotal role in shaping the democratic and inclusive foundation of the Republic of India. His ideas continue to influence discussions on social justice and equality in the country. These life events and challenges inspired Dr. Ambedkar to champion social justice through the creation of a constitution, shaping his identity as a social philosopher.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examining the Philosophy of Education according to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.
2. Investigating the importance of Education and the principle Educate, Organize and Agitate.

Research Methodology

The writer utilized both primary and secondary sources, employing an analytical approach in conducting the research.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Education

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a significant figure in Indian history, played a crucial role in advocating for the rights of the Dalits (formerly known as untouchables) and other marginalized communities. His legacy reflects an enduring commitment to social justice and the pursuit of a more equitable society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar aimed to reform Hinduism by freeing it from the constraints of the caste system. He believed that Hinduism, as practiced under Brahmanical principles, perpetuated inequality. The hierarchical structure of Hindu society, particularly in the realm of knowledge acquisition, was viewed by Dr. Ambedkar as inherently contradictory to the notion of universal equality. To address this disparity, he spearheaded various movements with the primary goal of abolishing the caste system altogether. Motivated by a sense of urgency, he worked to swiftly uplift the untouchables, who had long suffered from oppression and neglect. Additionally, his overarching vision aimed at cultivating an inclusive society free from caste-based distinctions and embracing diversity

beyond ethnic boundaries. He aimed to adopt a Dharma that promoted equal rights regardless of social class, surpassing religious confines. According to his viewpoint, abolishing the caste system (Varna vyavasta) was essential for establishing genuine democracy in India. He viewed the caste system as the main obstacle to democracy, arguing that without every class experiencing freedom, authentic democracy would remain out of reach.

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was renowned as an educator, having established the People's Education Society in Bombay and Aurangabad to provide education to Dalit students. His educational philosophy is evident in his lectures, published articles in various magazines, and his work within educational institutions. He advocated that every educational institution should serve as a catalyst for societal change. Dalits, or "Outcaste" and "Untouchables," were denied fundamental human rights, including the right to education, and their marginalized status was justified by religious scriptures. Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of education in society and its role in fostering individuals of strong character. He strongly believed that education should prioritize instilling awareness of and respect for human rights, alongside teaching principles of human dignity and justice. Dr. Ambedkar envisioned an education system that not only empowers individuals but also contributes to the growth of a just and equitable society. He believed that education had the power to awaken individuals to the injustices and exploitation they faced and to empower them to combat these longstanding issues. Recognizing that lack of education was a primary cause of poverty and underdevelopment, he advocated for a humanistic approach to education that focused on self-discovery and freedom rather than adherence to religious or state institutions. He devoted himself to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all citizens of independent India without discrimination, enshrining these rights in the Indian Constitution.

Education holds paramount importance in our lives, as it plays a crucial role in personal and social well-being. It empowers individuals to lead better lives and contributes to their success and growth. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in various fields and become valuable contributors to society. An educated person is more likely to be a responsible citizen and positively impact society. Education has been instrumental in bringing about positive changes in society and lifestyles. Its significance cannot be overstated, as it is essential for the holistic development of individuals and societies. The debate over ensuring education for all has been central to societal progress and development across all stages of history. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, renowned as the architect of the Indian Constitution, was a multifaceted figure encompassing roles as a freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, writer, economist, editor, and a revivalist of Buddhism in India. His educational philosophy focused on the holistic development of individuals and their surroundings, emphasizing equal access to education for all citizens. Dr. Ambedkar firmly believed that education should be universally accessible, stating that "Education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of everyone."

He advocated for a liberal education inspired by non-theistic religious principles, blending pragmatism from Dewey and the Dhamma teachings of Buddha. Dr. Ambedkar saw

education as a tool to enlighten his community and bridge the gap between different social classes, including the untouchables. He envisioned primary education as ensuring every child becomes literate and remains so throughout their life.

Dr. Ambedkar identified two main purposes of knowledge: using it for the betterment of society and for personal advancement. He criticized professional learning systems, such as the British educational model, which he believed fostered a clerical mentality among workers. Instead, he advocated for secular education as a means of social emancipation and freedom. His social and ethical philosophy aimed to awaken marginalized communities to challenge outdated beliefs and behaviors, fostering unity and freedom through education. Dr. Ambedkar's educational philosophy centered on instilling values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and moral character across all religions, regions, classes, and castes.

He outlined three key objectives for policymakers: redefining the aims and purposes of education, using education to achieve substantive equality, and promoting women's education. Dr. Ambedkar regarded schools as sacred institutions where students' minds are cultivated, emphasizing the need for disciplined operations within them. He viewed schools as factories for producing responsible citizens, with skilled educators acting as foremen to refine raw materials into high-quality individuals. Establishing the People's Education Society, he set an example of model educational institutions.

"Educate, Agitate, Organize" was a motto coined by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, encapsulating his approach to social and political activism for the upliftment of marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits (formerly known as untouchables) in India. Here's what each component signifies:

Educate: Dr. Ambedkar believed that education was crucial for the empowerment of oppressed communities. He emphasized the importance of education in raising awareness, instilling self-confidence, and equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to challenge social injustices and discrimination.

Agitate: Dr. Ambedkar advocated for active protest and agitation against discriminatory practices and oppressive systems. He believed that peaceful but assertive agitation was necessary to draw attention to social injustices, demand rights, and challenge the status quo.

Organise: Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the need for collective action and organization among oppressed communities. He believed that unity and solidarity were essential for effectively addressing social, economic, and political issues. Organizing communities allowed them to leverage their collective strength, amplify their voices, and advocate for their rights in a more coordinated manner.

Dr. Ambedkar advocated for prioritizing higher educational qualifications regardless of caste or creed when appointing teachers. He emphasized the importance of admitting Dalit students into educational institutions, supporting co-education to ensure equal opportunities for women alongside men. With extensive experience serving as a professor in various educational institutions, Dr. Ambedkar understood the complexities of student psychology. He

believed education should enhance students' self-confidence and imbue them with values such as knowledge, intellect, politeness, and discipline. Dr. Ambedkar stressed the integration of social emotions into the educational process and highlighted the importance of students' ability to think critically, express themselves confidently, and understand fundamental concepts beyond merely achieving academic success. He emphasized that education should not only focus on academic achievements but also on cultivating cultured, knowledgeable, and ethical individuals. Teachers should be attentive to students, fundamental issues and gaps in education, nurturing their ability to think creatively, understand societal needs, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the nation. The curriculum and teaching materials should reflect cultural, historical, and societal contexts while promoting logical thinking among students.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, known for his innovative and creative teaching methods, believed that education is an ongoing process, with teachers playing a pivotal role in its foundation. He emphasized that education and the abilities it fosters depend largely on the teacher's authentic knowledge, self-reliance, learning approach, and teaching skills. Dr. Ambedkar implemented a triangular teaching formula of "Vachan-manan, chintan, adyeyan," which contributed to his success as an educator and, in a broader sense, a social reformer. He advocated for multifaceted teachers with sharp minds and discerning characters, considering them as the architects of the nation due to their influence on shaping educated manpower. Dr. Ambedkar prioritized intellectual, optimistic, and compassionate teachers in educational institutions, particularly to guide underprivileged and marginalized students, including those from Dalit backgrounds. Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on knowledge was expansive and idealistic, equating it to illumination that should underpin social, economic, and moral development. He viewed education as a tool to liberate individuals from exploitation and to spur societal transformation. Dr. Ambedkar stressed the importance of intellect alongside character and politeness, emphasizing that education should nurture a blend of knowledge and intellect to build self-reliance. He believed that simply enrolling children in schools wasn't sufficient; rather, schools should strive to develop lifelong learning abilities in students. Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the continuous nature of education and its role in driving social change. He advocated for accepting societal changes and promoted the idea that education should instill socialization and moral values, forming the bedrock of culture and civilization.

Dr. Ambedkar envisioned an educational system based on socialist principles rooted in Buddhist ideology, rejecting caste-based traditions in favor of reason. He aimed to elevate the educational standards of marginalized communities, empowering them to assert their rights and participate in political processes for their upliftment. His mantra of "educate, agitate, organize" underscored his belief in education as a catalyst for social justice and empowerment. In drafting the Indian Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar ensured provisions for educational rights for marginalized groups, including women and the depressed classes. His philosophy emphasized equality, liberty, and fraternity, reflected in constitutional guarantees such as Article 30(1) providing minority groups the right to establish educational institutions, and Article 46 directing

the state to promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections.

Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy of education remains relevant today, as it confronts entrenched systems of oppression and advocates for inclusive and empowering educational opportunities for all. His ideals continue to inspire efforts to address social injustices and ensure equitable access to education, echoing his vision of a just and enlightened society.

Analyses, Discussions and Findings

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a significant figure in Indian history, dedicated himself to advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits. His enduring legacy reflects a steadfast commitment to social justice and the pursuit of a more equitable society. Dr. Ambedkar sought to reform Hinduism by challenging the caste system, which he viewed as perpetuating inequality under Brahmanical principles. His efforts aimed to abolish caste-based distinctions and foster inclusivity beyond ethnic boundaries. Dr. Ambedkar believed that true democracy in India necessitated the eradication of the caste system, which he considered a major impediment to democracy. He worked tirelessly to uplift the untouchables and promote equal rights across social classes. Dr. Ambedkar's educational philosophy emphasized the transformative power of education in fostering societal change and individual empowerment. He envisioned an education system that instilled awareness of human rights, dignity, and justice, promoting a just and equitable society. Dr. Ambedkar's mantra of "Educate, Agitate, Organize" encapsulated his approach to activism, advocating for education, active protest against injustice, and collective organization among marginalized communities. His philosophy continues to inspire efforts to address social injustices and ensure equal access to education, echoing his vision of a fair and enlightened society.

Conclusion

To conclude, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's lifelong dedication to social justice and equality stands as a testament to his unwavering commitment. His relentless advocacy for the rights of marginalized groups, especially the Dalits, has left an indelible impression on Indian history. By challenging the caste system and championing education, Dr. Ambedkar played a pivotal role in advancing a more inclusive and just society. His mantra of "Educate, Agitate, Organize" continues to guide those striving to address social injustices and ensure equal opportunities for all. As we confront ongoing challenges of discrimination and inequality, Dr. Ambedkar's vision of a fair and enlightened society remains a powerful source of inspiration for collective action and meaningful progress.

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