

Chapter Two

B. R. Ambedkar on Dynamic Humanism

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a great humanist of the 20th century. As a profound scholar, a brilliant intellectual, an eminent lawyer, a constitutional expert, an able administrator, a gifted orator, an effective parliamentarian, a great educationalist, a great patriot, a dedicated democrat, a creator of social justice, a creative writer, a successful and powerful journalist, a champion of the untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar was born on 14th April 1891 in a Mahar community. Witnessing the versatile qualities in Ambedkar, an American journalist Vincent Sheean once remarked about Ambedkar: “A big brusque fellow with a most belligerent manner, he delighted me by his utter difference from any other Hindu of my acquaintance. It is a form of genius to be individual..... I have known a fair member of other untouchables but nobody at all like Ambedkar.”¹⁷ At the time of his death, while paying tribute to the great Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru said, “A symbol of revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society.” Beverley Nicholas, a famous British called him ‘one of the six best brains of India’. Even the Australian Governor of Bengal described him ‘fountain-head of wisdom and knowledge’. Ambedkar attempted to reform the society and community on the basis of the trio-concepts, such as, liberty, equality and fraternity. One of the important dimensions of his radical humanism is that he wanted to give all citizens the right to equality in religious,

¹⁷ Sheean, Vincent. ‘Dr. Ambedkar’ in *Thoughts on Ambedkar*, edited by Hotilal Nim, Siddhinath Education and Central Society, 1969, p.12.

economic and political matters so that they may get opportunity to emancipate their lives. Ambedkar knew that the most important task is to change the structure of the society. If the structure of the society is not changed, the present system of society will be ruined soon.¹⁸ The other notable aspect of his humanism is that it was not based on any prejudices; rather his humanism was the outcome of a systematic and scientific, and rational evaluation of his valuable ideas and thoughts.

Ambedkar was the founder of scientific and social humanism. While developing his humanism, Ambedkar denied the existence of God, permanent soul and its transmigration and other metaphysical maxims. The philosophy he has developed was scientific, rational and humanistic in nature. His interpretation of humanism stood against all kinds of exploitations and humiliations of the down-trodden people. Ambedkar felt that the exploitations of Brahmanism should be rooted out to save humanity and in this regard, Ambedkar sensed that Buddhism was the only solution for all evils. The so-called humanism that has been approached by Ambedkar has the following dimensions:

- (i) Rationalism
- (ii) Emancipation of women
- (iii) Social equality
- (iv) Socialism
- (v) Democracy

¹⁸ See, Rojgar Samachar, 20-30 April, 1991, p.5.

Ambedkar attempted to establish a just society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. His intention was to establish relation between man and man in all sphere of life. He was against any form of alienation because alienation invites inequalities in society. Where there is inequality, there remains the source of exploitation and injustice. Ambedkar conceived humanism in terms of social justice. Accordingly, his humanism was intimately associated with his concept of religion and morality. It was wrong to claim that Ambedkar was an atheist. He was very much a religious minded man. In this regard, Ambedkar said, "It pains me to see youths growing indifferent to religion; religion is not an opium as it is held by some people. What good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society. I owe them to the religious feelings in me."¹⁹ However, his own understanding of religion is rational, ethical, spiritual and humanitarian. His humanism is full of *karuna*. The religion that he intuits through his humanism actually ensures equality and treats all its believers equal. The humanism that has been assumed by Ambedkar actually stands against any kind of *hypocrisy, injustice, and exploitation of man by man in the name of religion*. The other important aspect of his religion is that it is based on universal principles of morality. It is universal because it has been accorded with reason and based on the verdict of just society or just community by ensuring the trio-concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Ambedkar distrusted any kind of humanism which fails to ensure social justice in terms of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus, according to Ambedkar

¹⁹ Rao, B.R. (ed.). *Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar*, Cough Publication, Allahabad, 1993, p.105.

Hinduism as a religion falls short of humanism. Hinduism alienates one people from another in terms of caste and creed. He was of the view that if Hindu wish to be one they will have to discard the theory of *Chaturvarna*. According to Ambedkar, the caste system is the greatest evil of Hinduism, the *Varna* system is the root cause of all inequality. It incurs untouchability. Hinduism as a religion is partial because it discriminates two fellows. Hinduism gives no support to the principle of social unity. Instead of this, it believes in social separation and discrimination. Ambedkar, therefore, wanted to flush out Hinduism of the doctrine of *Varna* system to make Hinduism a religion of all people.

As a proponent and a messenger of radical humanism, Ambedkar always emphasises deep faith *in man and his powers*. According to Ambedkar, man is the centre of religion. Man is a responsible being and also responsible for all his miseries. Ambedkar always says that as a responsible being it is the sole duty of a man to mitigate his own owes slavery and poverty. He says ‘you must abolish upon god or superman, the sooner you remove the foolish belief that your miseries are predetermined the better, do not believe in fate, believe in your strengths’.²⁰ Ambedkar’s rational and empirical approach of humanism actually leads him to reject the existence of god in religion. Believe in god is a pointless dogma and it would be unprofitable from social, rational, scientific and individual point of view. It makes man inactive, dormant, fatalist and indifferent to the miseries of mankind.²¹ Ambedkar did not believe in *Avatarvada* which states that wherever there is trouble God comes and removes it. According to

²⁰ Jatava, D. R. *The Political Philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar*, Pheonix Publishing House, Agra, 1965, p.37.

²¹ *Ibid.* p.7.

Ambedkar, belief in God or any super human being is a belief in falsehood. As Ambedkar was concerned with man, his status and well-being in his world, man is the centre of his action. Men are the masters of his fate; they are also the captain of their souls. Ambedkar says, “A man will attain self-elevation only if we can learn self-help, regain our self-respect and again self-knowledge.”²² Ambedkar equally rejected the theory of past karma which states that man takes birth in rich family because of his past good karma. Ambedkar felt that the theory of karma of Hindu religion is dangerous and detrimental because it creates a mentality which eventually makes man helpless and hopeless.

Ambedkar through his humanism negated any form or kind of ‘ism’ which robs the basic tenets of just society. He was critical of any form of ‘ism’ which does not ensure the dignity of mankind in general. According to Ambedkar, humanism is a theory which ensures social justice through equality, liberty and fraternity. As Brahmanism negates the spirit of equality, liberty and fraternity, he therefore criticised and rejected Brahmanism. The objective of Ambedkar’s humanism is to uplift the well-being of the depressed and down-trodden classes. He desired the depressed classes to educate, organise and agitate to elevate their position as respective citizens of the country and contribute their share in the uphill task of nation building. In this regard, Ambedkar demanded separate electorate. He justified this by saying that when two groups live apart, how they could vote together once again every five years to promote solidarity. He denied

²² Ibid.p8.

that separate electorate for the down-trodden would create anti-national spirit. For Ambedkar, nationalism and anti-nationalism have nothing to do with the electoral system, rather they are the result of extra-electoral forces.

Thus, with the perception of new humanism based on social justice and equality, Ambedkar has attempted to get rid of social disabilities of the untouchables and in this process he attempted to bring back social revolution that would take out all man-made prejudicial blockades and provide equal opportunities to all. In this regard, Ambedkar remarked, "If we achieve success in our movement to unite all the Hindus in a single caste, we shall have rendered the greatest service to the Indian Nation and to the Hindu community in particular."²³ Even Ambedkar showed greater inclination towards the Muslim demand for partition. Apparently, it bore a wrong message to many Indians. However, Ambedkar supported the Muslim demand for partition in viewing the then situation. He disliked the Muslim's fanaticism as much as he resented the caste Hindu exclusiveness. His suggestion for the partition was based on the reading of Indian history and his views of India's defence problem. He was more concerned about the weakening of free India's defence both as a consequence of weak a centre and the composition of British Indian Army, consisting predominantly Muslims and affected by communal feeling which would have been dangerous to Indian security. This reveals a true patriotism of Ambedkar. He has a far sighted vision which was completely foreign to other leaders. Having said this, Ambedkar was misunderstood because of his dedication to the community of

²³ Shashi, S. S. (ed.) *Ambedkar and Social Justice*, Government of India, Minister of Information and Broad Casting, 1992, p.107.

untouchables. He has proclaimed that whenever there is any conflict of interest between the country and the untouchables, he will take precedence the interest of the untouchables over the country. He firmly believed that the uplift of the untouchables was the uplift of the Nation.

Ambedkar gave much importance on education in his humanism. He realised that education gives birth to the reason, the feeling of unity, brotherhood and love of country. Education helps one to develop his culture and civilisation. Education actually gives manhood to man. An uneducated man is just like an animal. Ambedkar favoured human values in education. Education may create social and moral qualities in man. He felt that without education social reformation is not possible. He favoured good and simple education. Ambedkar revealed that true education would create the feelings of unity and should struggle against injustice and tyranny. For Ambedkar, education which does not create ability, equality and morality is not true education. Education which safeguards the interest of the humanity is good. True education, Ambedkar opines, may create equality in society, give bread and satisfy the hunger of knowledge. In this regard, Ambedkar was influenced by the great American pragmatic philosopher and educationist, Prof. John Dewey.

Pursuit of Humanism Through Rationalism

We have already mentioned that rationalism is one of the important aspects of Ambedkar's humanism. Rationalism is the very essence and foundation of humanism. Just vision is the outcome of reason and a rational society is

composed of good and rational human beings. Thus, rationalism implies belief in reason and equality emphasises the importance of reason. The word 'rationalism' is derived from Latin word 'ratio' which means reason. Necessity and universality are the objective of any rational enterprise. We witness a philosophical doctrine based on reason where reason is identified with rationalism. Thus, rationalism is a philosophical doctrine that the world is knowable to reason and only to reason. As a philosophical tradition of 18th and 19th centuries, Rationalism asserts that "reason is the basis of vital knowledge of reality revealing as a source of genuine knowledge."²⁴ Ambedkar gives importance on reason in his humanism because he realises that reason alone stands against prejudices in the name of god or super sensible entities. Reason or one's rationality alone can stand against mysticisms and unscientific philosophical and social prejudices.

According to Plato, "Virtue is knowledge". It actually means that there is an objective good to be known and that is in fact is known by rational or logical investigation rather than by intuition or a mere guess work. Plato sketches his ideal state in his Republic where there is rule by reason. The philosophers or the kings are the rulers alone have the supreme virtue of reason. We have noticed similar emphasis in Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle says that a man is a rational animal. Reason ensures the happiness of the life of man. Reason is the characteristic of man who has the sense of right or wrong, good or evil and just or unjust. Therefore, the purpose of the state, opined Aristotle, is to create men

²⁴ Bhushan Dictionary of Sociology, Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 1989, p.254.

by reason. According to Aristotle, realising the good of the people is the rational end of the state. In fact, a rational man alone thinks of living in society or state. He being a social animal cannot set aside from the rest of the member of the society in which he belongs to. According to Aristotle, anyone who lives apart from the state is either a beast or a god. In the same tune, Aquinas also believed that the whole universe represents a rational unity that can be possible only through a rational scheme of laws.

In philosophy, the development of rationalism based on reason has been enormous. The 17th century philosophers, such as, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, established the view that reason is the primary source of knowledge and every man at the time of his or her birth possesses some innate ideas. Interestingly, the revival of the 17th century rationalism is found in 20th century mentalist interpretation. Noam Chomsky, a living mentalist, has revived the old innatism in acquisition of language. Chomsky says, "Language is the mirror of human mind".²⁵ Descartes symbolises the modern spirit of critical rationalism and self-conscious individualism 'in the third and fourth part of the Leviathan of Hobbes'. In fact the process of repudiation of transcendentalism has led to the growth of immanentization and rationalization.' Even Hegel's political philosophy represents the rationalistic outlook of political reality. Keeping the impact of reason, even Kant has distinguished between theoretical and practical reason.

²⁵ Chomsky, Noam. *Language and Mind*,

How can we overlook the influence of rational outlook of Raja Ram Mohan Roy? In fact, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was honoured as the father of Indian renaissance who enabled to bring in a social reformation by removing the gross superstition and evil practice like *sati*, like *Basava*. Roy had a rational approach to religion. He believed in monotheism and rejected any supernatural power. He introduced or so to speak advocated inductive reasoning based on uniformity of nature and law of causation. When we read carefully the vision of Universal Religion as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, we will see that he did not admit any kind of orthodoxy. He condemned 'kitchen religion and don't touchism'.²⁶ M. N. Roy has given over-emphasis in the progressive conquest of science over superstition, reason over faith.

Like Nehru and others, Ambedkar was pragmatic in his humanistic approach and outlook. He says, "One ought to follow the intelligent, the learned, the much inducing, the dutiful, the elect one ought to follow the wise, the good man as the moon follows the path of the stars."²⁷ Ambedkar was against man's dependency on God as he elsewhere remarks, 'you must abolish bondage yourself, do not depend for its abolition upon God or Superman. Your salvation lies in political powers and not in making pilgrims and observance of rites; devotion to Scriptures would not free your bondage. Your forefathers have been doing it for generations, but there has been no respite nor even a slight difference in your wear rags, your religious fasts, austerities and penances have not saved you from

²⁶ Gupta, R.C. *Great Political Thinkers*, Laxmio Narayan Agarwal, Agra, 1989-90, p.68.

²⁷ Ambedkar, B.R. *The Buddha and his Dharma*, p.336.

slavery.”²⁸ The humanism of Ambedkar is unique in nature as it has been reflected from the blossoms of his heart. The humanism of Ambedkar distrusts God, his humanism is not spiritualistic in nature, rather he has pleaded for a kind of humanism which is intellectual and socio-political in nature. According to Ambedkar, the concept of God is human creation. Man has developed the theory of God to explain natural phenomena. According to Ambedkar the so-called natural power was malicious and spiteful because it denotes those evil tendencies which give rise to unscientific practices like untouchability. The humanism of Ambedkar is the true reflection of his religion based on scientific and intellectual cultivation and it was influenced by Anglo-American political culture and nineteenth century European liberal intellectuals. It has been revealed that the Europe liberal thinkers have attempted to take apart morality from the slavery of religion and God. In this regard, Ambedkar cited Mill. Mill once remarked that religion praised God in various ways but in reality from the various descriptions of God, it becomes clear that God is a hateful power. Mill then quipped: if God is supposed to be all powerful, all mighty, benevolent, well-wishers, then why there should be so much poverty, violence, suffering on the earth? Ambedkar was influenced by Mill and viewed his position regarding God in the Millian line of thinking. Ambedkar claimed it was really ridiculous to think that in the name of God the Hindu society has dejected downtrodden people as untouchable. Hinduism, in the name of God, promulgated untouchability as an unpardonable crime and also maintained that as it was the

²⁸ Keer, Dhananjay. *Dr. Ambedkar-Life and Mission*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1954, p.234.

sanction of God, it cannot be changed. Ambedkar not only distrusted the existence of God, he equally developed outmost anger towards the concept of God because Ambedkar thought that God came as an embodiment of hatred and injustice. Perhaps this was the reason for which he did not embrace Islam or Christianity because like Hinduism, both Islam and Christianity were founded on the doctrine of divine omnipotency.

It is important to note here that Ambedkar began his approach to Hinduism as a social reformer. He, at the very outset, initiated to cure Hinduism from injustice and spiritualistic prejudices in the name of God. He held that untouchability was an interpolation in Hindu religion because it had been revealed that there was no untouchability in Hinduism in the past. *Hinduism and Hindu scriptures were based on equality and harmony.* It was the creation of Hindu religious leaders. Sensing this truth and in the larger interest of Hinduism, Ambedkar tried his level best to change the attitude of Hindu religious leaders and thinkers. However, when he realised that it would not be possible to reform Hinduism then he rejected Hinduism and embraced Buddhism. Ambedkar's interpretation of humanism is based on social justice and accordingly he attempted to interpret religion in this direction. Even though Ambedkar rejected Hinduism, he did not reject religion in general like Karl Marx. He criticised the discriminatory attitude of Hinduism because he thought that religion was necessary as a system of values and as a science of social reconstruction. He felt religion from the socio-political angles and he thought true religion is such through which the cultural and social orientation is reflected.

Ambedkar did not agree with those who viewed that religion is not essential to society. Unlike others, Ambedkar said, "I consider the foundation of religion to be essential to life and practices of life."²⁹ He desired a kind of religion which instructed people how they should behave with one another and prescribed for man his duty to another. He looked-for a kind of religion without the centrality of God and in the light of equality, fraternity and liberty. His humanism aims at the development of an individual and religion must act into this direction. Therefore, Ambedkar looked at a kind of humanistic religion which makes sure the social development of individual by ensuring liberty, equality and fraternity just in the eyes of humans, but not in the eyes of untouchability. However, he thought that Hinduism had lost these values which were necessary for the reconstruction of Indian society. Religion is the essence of cultural evolution and heritage; religion is nothing but a relation to individual and society. In this regard, Ambedkar was influenced by Western liberal tradition. Ambedkar was influenced by British thinkers, Edmund Burke. He said, "I agree with Burke when he says that true religion is the foundation of the society, the basis on which all true civil governments rest and earn their sanction. At the same time he wanted a religion linked to morality for the foundation of an ideal political community and to win success in the struggle of life. He held that because Hinduism was separated from morality, it had degenerated and become corrupt. He was of the opinion that for the growth of strong and powerful nation, morality was essential. So he wanted such a religion, morality based on values

²⁹ Ibid, P-67

like equality, liberty and fraternity, that is for him religion was a system of socio-cultural values which would bring all the individuals on equal place and would create a powerful political community. In his opinion the so-called might of the Muslims was due to their religion.”³⁰

On the basis of scientific and rational observation, Ambedkar drew the conclusion that the organisation of Hindu society based on the caste system is the main cause of inequality and exploitation in the society. The Hindu religion is the source and locus of creating a crisis of Humanism among Indians. The caste system of Hinduism actually gets the favour from Hindu religion and that *Varna Vyavastha* is responsible for untouchability. Here every right from the untouchables was snatched. In Varna Vyavastha humanity was threatened and the crisis of Humanism was reflected. Hindu religion created untouchables, robbed the dignity and human rights of the untouchables, but did nothing for them in the form of reformation. Therefore, Ambedkar with the message of his humanism stood against the atrocity of Hindu religion and that is why many people of upper caste and even Mahatma Gandhi took Ambedkar as a challenger of Hinduism.

Ambedkar knew it very well that Hindu hated him and he elsewhere remarked that to Hindu he was a snake in their garden. At the same time, he felt that it was very difficult to Hindu to neglect him. In this regard, Gandhi’s remark is particularly relevant. Gandhi once said to the Hindus, “You cannot neglect Dr.

³⁰ Grover, Veerendra, (ed.) B.R.Ambedkar, Deep and Deep Publication, 1993, p.413.

Ambedkar”³¹ Even though Ambedkar was badly treated in manifold of ways in his childhood in particular and throughout his life in general, but everyone knew at that time that as an untouchable Ambedkar’s mind was crossed by the continued inequality and troubles of the Indian society making these touching points. Because of his humanistic urge, Ambedkar touched the inner soul of Indian life with an ability and fearlessness in such a way as could be possible for a very few. From his rationalistic outlook Ambedkar felt that a true religion must be humanistic in nature which teaches the lessons of equality and brotherhood. The problem of Hinduism is that it teaches one man to hate another man, it teaches to create and maintain hierarchism within Hindu society in terms of caste. As a matter of fact, Hinduism as a religion actually held up humanism. Hinduism, in short, is destructive for humanity. Therefore Ambedkar involved himself into the deep study to realise the Indian society not on the basis of religious faith, but from the human’s points and realism. He searched out the real solutions to the inhumanistic torture and accordingly he struggled to bring a drastic change in the system of society.

The humanism that has been envisaged by Ambedkar was based on reason. In fact Ambedkar’s rationalism was that without eradicating the caste system, without annihilating the caste system, upliftment and development of the Hindu society is not possible. Within the existing caste system socialism based on humanism cannot be brought in India and democracy based on social justice cannot be succeeded here. Where there is a crisis of rational humanism there is a

³¹ Das, Bhagwan, (ed.) The Spoke Ambedkar, Vol. II, p.2.

crisis of unity, equality, fraternity. Hindu cannot be united so long Hinduism as a religion does not forfeit casteism. Some scholars have argued that there is nothing wrong in the caste system; it is form of division of labour based upon birth. All the castes are interrelated and interdependence as a continued phenomena because interests of everyone is being fulfilled within this system. Ambedkar does not think that caste system is form of division of labour. In this regard, he says, **“In India there is no division of labourers, rather it is a division of labourers”**.³²

Proponents of the caste system would like to argue that without caste no caste can maintain social purity. In this regard, Ambedkar says that there is hardly any caste which has not foreign trait in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the Rajputs and Marathas, but also among the Brahmins and the other castes. Ambedkar insisted that from the race and blood point of view all are equal irrespective of their caste; it is the only social consideration which not only differentiates different castes rather because of it ‘a hierarchy is maintained among the different sub-castes within the castes.’³³ Ambedkar criticised *Arjay Samaj* and the philosophy of Plato because of their proposal of division of labours. For Ambedkar categorising all people into four *Varna* is not good for humanism, not even good for philosophy. Theoretically, one can accept that the learned man be honoured without his being levelled as *Brahmin*, but practically he may not be honoured if he is *Shudra*. Therefore, persisting with *Varna* system

³² Shashi, S.S.(ed.) *Ambedkar and Social Justice*, Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1992, p.132.

³³ *Ibid.* p.133.

actually stagnates social change and to make social reform fruitless. Ambedkar opined as far as the fulfilment of vital needs of life are concerned, every Varna should be self-sufficient and self-determining. Unfortunately, in the name of the reciprocal relationship, the privileged have to gain a lot. This type of relationship is inhuman and undesirable and it would be detrimental to humanism in general. Thus, owing to establish true humanism in Hinduism, it would be imperative to bring a radical change in Hindu religion and such reformation can be made if Hindu religion will abolish caste system or *Varna Vyabashtha*.

It is important to point out here that Gandhi was very liberal and reformist in context with the depressed classes. From one perspective it can be said that the downtrodden has been immensely benefited with the appearance of Gandhi, but Ambedkar thinks the other way round. According to Ambedkar, Gandhi's appearance would make the problem of untouchability even more complex because Gandhi divided the untouchables and destroyed the unity of untouchables. Gandhi successfully detached the so-called educated untouchables from the ideology of Ambedkar. Thus, with the influence of Gandhi a section of untouchables took Gandhi as the greatest friend of untouchables. Even though the so-called educated untouchables did not realise that they cut their own foot by supporting Gandhi at that time. Ambedkar, however, felt it very well and he anguishly and vehemently remarked elsewhere that 'Gandhi is the greatest enemy of untouchables'. According to Ambedkar, Gandhi not only succeeded in dividing untouchables, he equally supported caste system of Hinduism. Even though Gandhi acknowledged '*Harijon*' but he did not acknowledge

untouchables. Therefore, Ambedkar felt it very well that within Gandhain model or ideology the fate of the untouchables would remain the same. Ambedkar said that the present form of Hindu religion has no principle because it has been functioning with the dictation of *Shastras*. It is not a true religion because it has no rational principle. If religion becomes true, it will become the foundation of the society based on social justice. Only in such a case the true humanity of the society would be reflected because in such a case every segment has common faith. Thus, for Ambedkar, there should be only one religion, i.e. the religion of brotherhood, liberty, rationalism and fraternity. A true religion will help us to build a just society and a just society is the outcome of just vision of each and every individual of the society. But because of the caste system, the *Brahmanism* thoroughly exploited Hinduism and that is why Ambedkar had rightly pointed out that the Hindus are the sick men of Indians. So long Hindu society becomes a caste-based religion, the inner strength for Hindus may turn out to be the only a step towards slavery.

In a nutshell, it can be said that Ambedkar has pleaded for a kind of humanism that has been based on social justice. His understanding of humanism can be realised through his progressive movements towards the annihilation of caste from Hinduism. Ambedkar fought against untouchability that can be divided into three periods. The first period was from 1920 to 1930. In this period Ambedkar demanded equal rights, social, economic, religious as well as political for the untouchables. However, he put more emphasis on social and religious rights which aims were:

- (i) 'to establish hostels for the spread of education for the downtrodden;
- (ii) to start reading and spiritual institutions for the cultural development;
- (iii) to open industrial and agricultural schools for economic development;
- (iv) to start ahead the movement for eradicating untouchability;
- (v) to change the heart of untouchables; and
- (vi) to remove the bad traditions of higher classes.’³⁴

The second period was actually started with the Round Table Conference held at London in 1935 where Ambedkar brilliantly pleaded for the rights of the depressed classes and demanded the following rights:

- (i) “Equal rights’
- (ii) Safeguard against differential behaviour;
- (iii) Reservation in government services;
- (iv) Reservation in assemblies seats;
- (v) A separate department for their development;
- (vi) Arrangement for fine for social boycott;
- (vii) Attention to save the society from exploitation; and he opposed the caste system by burning the *Manusmriti* and demanded for new code of behaviour.”

During this period, Ambedkar put greater stress on political and economic rights. Ambedkar felt that so long the untouchables and the downtrodden people will not acquire political and economic rights; it would be difficult to remove their

³⁴ Ibid. pp.136-137.

grievances. In this regard, Ambedkar prepared a scheme of political safeguards for the protection of the depressed classes in the future constitution of a self-governing India. To uplift the fate of untouchables, Ambedkar demanded separate electorates and special representation for the depressed classes. However, Gandhi undertook a fast unto death against the separation of untouchables from the rest of Hindus. This led to the famous Poona pact under which Ambedkar gave up his demand for separate electorate and instead of this the caste Hindus agreed to the provision of reserved seats with joint electorates for the untouchables.

The final phase of Ambedkar's fight against untouchables did not come to an end. He realised that caste system cannot be removed from Hinduism. Therefore, he initiated to restore constitutional means as the safeguards of untouchables. In this direction the constitutional rights principles of one man, one value, promulgation of preventive detention act, emergency powers of the president, abolition of untouchability, equality before law, equality of opportunity, directive principles of state policy, etc., have been incorporated into the Indian constitution only to see that the downtrodden and the weaker sections (women) could protect their interests in the caste-ridden society. Ambedkar kept a close watch on the honest implementation of the assurances given by the constitution. He was dissatisfied with the manner and in this context that he asked all deprived and weaker sections **to organise, to educate and to agitate** for their rights guaranteed in the constitution. Ambedkar feared that unless a strict vigil is kept by them the hard earned guarantees will not yield any positive results.

Emancipation of Women

Emancipation of women is another important dimension of Ambedkar's humanism. In fact, Ambedkar was one of the few Indians who fought back in restructuring Indian society with the most equalitarian and humanitarian outlooks. He felt it very well that without social and economic democracy it would be very hard to come by peace, happiness and prosperity in India. He paid special attention to the overall development of women status in India. As a firm believer of the trio-concepts of just society, such as, liberty, equality and fraternity, Ambedkar wanted to make sure social equality not only between man and man, but also ensured equal status and human dignity between man and woman. In this regard, Ambedkar criticised the traditional and conservative values of *Manu*. Ambedkar realised that Hinduism was responsible for the degradation of women status and dignity in India. In this regard, Ambedkar was influenced by Buddhism. According to Ambedkar, egalitarian principles were prevailing during the Buddhist period which allowed women to take *sannyas* (nunhood) as the members of *Sangha*. However, careful study would reflect that under the *Brahmin* theory women and *Shudras* were not eligible for knowledge and thus, for *sannyas*, too. In Buddhism women were allowed to become *Bhikkunis* (*nuns*) and opened for them the way to liberty, the way to acquire dignity, independent of sex. In short, it can be said that Buddha took the initiatives of the revolution and liberation of women in India. While speaking of the value of women, Buddha once said that "woman is the commodity supreme because she is indispensable utility or because through her *Bodhi Sattvas* and

world rulers take birth.”³⁵ There can be no doubt that at one time women were highly respected. Women were entitled to *upanayan* is clear from the *Atharva Veda* where a girl is spoken of as being eligible for marriage having finished her *brahmacharya*. Women were taught to read the *Vedas*, *pannins*, *Ashtadhyar* bids testimony to the fact that women attended *Gurukul* and studied the various *slakhas* of the *Veda* and became expert in *Mimansa*. According to Ambedkar, Manu, the law giver of the Hindus was mainly responsible for the downfall of women in India. In this regard, Ambedkar quoted some of laws made by Manu regarding women. They are:

II.213: It is the nature of women to seduce man in this (world) for that reason the wise are never unguarded in (the company) of females.

IX.15: Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world).

IX.17: (When creating them) Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed (of their) seat and (of) ornament impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct.

Such remarks show how in low position was women in the opinion of Manu. Manu further says that women are not free under any circumstances. In this regard, we quote a few remarks from Manu.

³⁵ Dr. Ambedkar –Rise and Fall of Hindu Women, Bheem Patrica Publication, Jullunder, 1988, p.21, 466.

IX.2: “Day and Night women must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families) and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments they must be kept under ones control.

IX.3: Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth and her sons protect (her) in old age, a woman is never for independence.

IX.5: Women are particularly be guarded against evil inclination, however, trifling (they may appear) if they are not guarded they will bring sorrow for two families.

According to Manu, woman is not to have a right to divorce. In IX.45: The husband is declared to be one with the wife which means that there could be no separation once a woman is married. For Manu one man should sell her. Manu in this regard says in IX.46: Neither by sale nor by reputation is a wife released from her husband. Thus, a wife was reduced by Manu to a level of a slave in the matter of propriety. A woman under the laws of Manu is a subject to corporal punishment and Manu allows the husband the right to beat his wife. In VII.299: Manu says, ‘A wife, a son, a slave, a pupil and younger brother of the full blood who have committed faults may be beaten with a rope or a spilt bamboo.’ Under Manu, a woman had no right to knowledge, the study of the Veda was forbidden to her by Manu. Manu further states in V.155: ‘No sacrifice, no vows, no fast must be performed by women apart from their husbands, if a wife obeys her husband, she will for that reason alone be exalted in heaven.’ All these remarks cited above and there are many more like these reflect that Manu wanted to

deprive women's freedom which they enjoyed under Buddhist regime. In this sense, Manu was the greatest opponent of the Buddhist religion.

Besides Buddhism, we can mention the name of Plato from Greek tradition. Plato was regarded the first feminist in the history of political thought. Plato in his book *Republic* obliged towards emancipating women. According to Plato, men and women differ in degree and not in kind. He condemns the seclusion of women to the household. They like men have the three elements of reason, courage and appetite though in different degrees, women also become the rulers and soldiers by receiving the right type of education and hence the unity and strength of the state depend on bringing out them into public life. Then in 18th century, we notice an age of enlightenment where women have been treated from different outlook. Mary Wollstonecraft in her work 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' remarked, "Women are first and foremost human beings and not sexual beings, women are rational creatures, they are capable of governing themselves by reason."³⁶ In 20th Century, Ambedkar's contribution towards the emancipation of women was huge. In fact, Ambedkar was one of the reformers who championed the cause of women throughout his carrier. He discussed a numbers of problems of Indian women and sought of their solutions in Bombay Legislative Council, in the constituent assembly as the chairman of the drafting committee and also in parliament as the first law minister of independent India. The maternity benefit which women are enjoying today was the demand of Ambedkar. Indeed, Ambedkar impassioned love for the fallen women as a whole

³⁶ Wollstonecraft, Mary, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', 1972.

community and his advice to rescue themselves from the despised and disgraceful life were quite meaningful. At the All India Depressed Class women's conference held at Nagpur, on July 20, 1942, Ambedkar emphasised that there could not be progress of a nation without the progress of women. In fact, development of women was one of the important aspects of his humanism. He says, "I am great believer in women's organisations. I know what they can do to improve the condition of the society, if they are convinced. In the eradication of social evils they have rendered great services."³⁷ Ambedkar vehemently rejected the standpoint of Manu that there should be a master-slave relation between husband and the wife. He accorded equal status to men and women in every sphere and he also warned the women against the misuse of their rights. Thus, it seems clear to us that Ambedkar as a humanist should be treated as one of the redeemers of the Indian women. His contribution is unique and it has been exquisitely adored by all women in India.

Socialism as an Important Aspect of Humanism

The term 'socialization' is derived from the 'Socius' which means society. Ambedkar visualised a kind of society where the principle of *one man one value* had been adopted in all walks of life, such as, political, economic and social. According to Ambedkar, the ideal of one man one value is to be achieved by impeding or by religious, economic and social exploitation of man by man. Absence of exploitation in any form is an essence of socialism. Ambedkar was a firm admirer of socialism. In fact, socialism is an important dimension of

³⁷ B.R.Ambedkar, op.cit. p.469.

Ambedkar's humanism. According to Ambedkar, socialism does not only embrace economic equality, it also ensures social and political equality. As Ambedkar was born in mahar community, he was regarded as untouchables. Due to the caste system, untouchability is despised by the Hindus. The caste Hindus, Ambedkar felt, were more anti-social towards the untouchables. In this regard, Ambedkar says, "The Hindus will not allow the untouchables to take water from a well; the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to entry in schools, the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to travel in buses, the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to travel in the same railway compartment, the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to wear jewellery, the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to put tiles on the roof of the houses, the Hindus will not tolerate untouchables to own land, the Hindus will not allow the untouchables to keep cattle, the Hindus will not allow untouchables to sit when a Hindu is standing, they are not isolated facts of a few bad men among the Hindus, they are the emanations of the permanent anti-social attitude of the Hindu community against the untouchables."³⁸ The above remarks clearly suggest the ground reality of the then untouchables of India. The human rights of the untouchables were forfeited by the caste Hindus in terms of religion. Ambedkar, being an untouchable, suffered from it.

According to Ambedkar, Hinduism as a religion failed to ensure humanism. Even though the universal declaration of human rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations includes the right to education, the

³⁸ Ambedkar, B.R. *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*, Thacker and Co. Ltd, Bombay, 1945, p.195

right to choose one's own marriage partner, the right to vote and hold public office and the right to receive equal pay for equal work, but all these rights were not guaranteed to the untouchables. In fact, in India no attempt was made to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. As a matter of fact, no proper atmosphere was created to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among the Hindus. Instead of humanity, tranquillity, brotherhood, there we witness a hierarchism based on religion in Hinduism. Some castes enjoyed special privilege whereas the mass of the community could not achieve freedom. The bulk of the people was denied freedom. Ambedkar felt that even though Hinduism had absorbed many odd cultures into its fold, but it failed to adjust itself to the absorption of untouchables. Hindus oppressed the untouchables and enhanced their glory at the cost of untouchables. The system of untouchability was a gold mine to the Hindus as they maintained pomp and ceremony at the cost of the untouchables and therefore it was possible for them to cultivate a feeling of pride and dignity betting a master class. The treatment of untouchables by the caste Hindus was inhumanistic. Untouchables had been offered lower jobs and prevented them from entering into competition for higher jobs. Even untouchables could be used as shock absorbers in slums and dead weights in booms. Their plight became worse than the slaves. Ambedkar says, "In slavery the masters at any rate had the responsibility to feed, clothe and house, the slave and keep him in good condition lest the market value of the slave should decrease. But in the system of untouchability the Hindu takes no responsibility for the maintenance of the untouchable. As an economic system it

permits exploitation without obligation. Untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation that is because there is no impartial machinery of administration to restrain it. There is no appeal to public opinion for whatever public opinion there is, it is the opinion of the Hindus who belong to the exploiting class and as much favour exploitation, there is no check from the police or the judiciary for the simple reason that they are all drawn from the Hindus and take the side of the exploiters.”³⁹

According to Ambedkar, equality, social or economic, is a must for humans’ life which was absent in India. The people from the upper caste of society were entitled to the special privilege and others specially the untouchables were denied to equal opportunity to stand up and to develop their personality. Any social organisation Ambedkar felt which allows some to starve quietly and others to have abundance denies to man what enables him to be a man. It is inhumanistic in nature because it gives rise to a society of social disparities which according to Mathew Arnold ‘materialises our upper class vulgarises our middle class brutalises our lower’. Laski has a similar observation as he says, “those who are denied power to unauthoritatively 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 attention by the most specious and fallacious kinds of arguments, whatever man becomes only recipients of orders they lost their individuality and ability to realise their

³⁹ Ibid. p.197.

own good.”⁴⁰ Ambedkar realised it very well that there was a great task of creating radical changes by bringing an end of exploitation of untouchables creating in them the sense of self-respect, dignity of individual and the consciousness of equality of status.

It is interesting to observe here that both Marx and Ambedkar were great humanists. They equally contributed a lot for uplifting the standard of downtrodden people. However, the methods they employed were different in nature. Ambedkar did not adopt Marxian methods of ending the exploitation of the untouchables. The notable distinction between them is that Marxian method of humanism is anti-religious, whereas Ambedkar’s method of humanism is religious in nature. In this regard, Ambedkar was influenced by Buddhist way of life. Ambedkar has claimed that the Buddhist way of life is superior to the Marxist way of life. According to Ambedkar, man is a factor in making of history; historical change is the result of the biography of a great man. He insists that economic forces are important but determinant in so far as they are moulded by man in his knowledge and intellect. According to Ambedkar, economic factor plays an important role in human relations, but not to the extent to which Marx accepts. Marx gave outmost importance on economics as he thought economic sufficiency would be the determining factor of uplifting the overall development of the proletariat. That is why Marx stood for the abolition of private property and sided with those who were stricken by poverty, diseases and illiteracy.

⁴⁰ Grover, Veerendra (ed.) *B.R. Ambedkar*, Deep and Deep Publication, New Delhi, 1993, p.273.

There is no concept of private property in Buddhism. In this regard, Ambedkar says, “Buddha enjoined that no monk should have private property, the rules of Buddhist *sangha* regarding the private property are far more severe than any rule that the Marxists have made in Russia, the means used by Marx to bring prosperity to the poor is violence. The Buddha’s method is based on love, persuasion, and moral teaching; the Buddhists in any case would not allow violence for effecting changes in social conditions. Dr. Ambedkar says that dictatorship is not a good method to rule over the people because it robs the people of their individual liberty and deprives them of freedom to act in accordance with their conscience.”⁴¹ Putting everything into perspectives, Ambedkar concluded that Marxist way of life is less satisfactory than the Buddhist way of life.

Humanism and Collectivism

Collectivism is the important mark of Ambedkar’s humanism. In this regard, Ambedkar voiced in favour of political rights for the untouchables at the round table conference. Mahatma Gandhi did not like this scheme and as a symbol of protest, Gandhi went on fast unto death at Poona. However, Ambedkar won the battle because as a protest the depressed class people were given 148 seats as reserved seats. As a pathfinder, Ambedkar also initiated a few political decisions which eventually helped the untouchables at great length. He included the rights against exploitation of man by man, he emancipated not only the untouchables from the fetters of slavery but also the women, the children and the helpless

⁴¹ Bharathi, K.S. *Foundations of Ambedkar Thought*, Dattasons Publishers, Nagpur, 1990, p.103.

people from the scourge of evil systems such as Devadasi, forced labour, employment of a child below the age of 14 years and so on. Moreover, Ambedkar also advocated state socialism in the field of industry and also ownership in agriculture with a collectivised method of civilization. He also demanded nationalisation of insurance. He was of the firm opinion that the plight of 60 million untouchables who were landless labourers cannot be ameliorated through consolidation of lands or by tenancy legislation, only collective farms can solve the problems of the landless labourers.

State ownership of agriculture, according to Ambedkar, is the fundamental rights and hence is unalterable by any act of legislature. The purpose is to protect the liberty of the individual from the invasion by the other individuals. The connection between individual liberty and the shape and form of economic structure of society becomes real only when state socialism has been established through political democracy. For Ambedkar, state socialism and political democracy are not irreconcilable or ill-associated and for this reason Ambedkar desired to establish state socialism not through dictatorship but through political democracy. Ambedkar in this regard writes that “the problem, therefore, is to have state socialism without dictatorship; to have state socialism with parliamentary democracy, the way out seems to retain parliamentary democracy and to prescribe state socialism by the law of the constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of the parliamentary majority to suspend, demand or abrogate it. It is only by this that one can achieve the triple object, namely, to establish

socialism, to retain parliamentary democracy and avoid dictatorship.”⁴² Thus, the main objective of humanism as envisaged by Ambedkar was the all round prosperity and well-being of the downtrodden masses.

Ambedkar conceived socialism in terms of collectivism. For him, collectivism is the essential pillar of socialism. The socialism of Ambedkar actually denounces the existing social, political and economic order as unjust. Instead of existing social order, the collectivism of Ambedkar envisages a new dynamic social order that hinges on *one man, one value, and one vote*. Such new order can only be realised in state socialism and in parliamentary democracy, through constitutional means. Thus, for Ambedkar, socialism linked with collectivism, i.e., the genesis of humanism is a revolutionary will for establishing social democracy to carry out the program of social solidarity, unity and harmony. Ambedkar was sceptical about the proper function of democratic government. The ailments of political democracy and dictatorship are the rule of majority with a suffering minority and curtailment of individual liberty. Parliamentary democracy based on state socialism and supported by constitutional law can overcome the ailments of political democracy. For Ambedkar, the soul of democracy is the doctrine of one man one value. Unfortunately, democracy has attempted to give effect to this doctrine so far as the political structure is concerned by adopting the rule of one man one vote which is supposed to translate into fact the doctrine of one man and one value. It has left the economic structure to take the shape given to it by those who are in a position to mould it.

⁴² Lokhade, G.S. *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar-A Study in Social Dewmocracy*, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982, p.33.

Old time constitutional law believed that the functional scope of constitutional law was to prescribe the shape and form of the political structure of the society. They never realised that it was equally essential to prescribe the shape and form of the economic structure of society if democracy is to live up to its principle of one man one value. Fortunately time has come to take a bold step and define both economic structure as well as political structure of society by the law of the constitution. According to Ambedkar, political democracy must rest on four premises, namely,

- (i) That the individual is an end in itself.
- (ii) That the individual has certain unalienable rights which must be guaranteed to him by the constitution.
- (iii) That the individual shall not be required to relinquish his constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of a privilege.
- (iv) That the state shall not delegate powers to private persons to govern others.

Democracy

The concept of democracy is another important dimension of Ambedkar's humanism. Democracy in one important sense means power of the people. However, in modern sense, democracy is regarded as a form of government in which the people rule themselves directly or indirectly through their representatives. Aristotle considered democracy as a perverted form of

government. However, modern interpretation of democracy is unlike Aristotelian. We do not, however, delve into the nature of democracy, rather what we intend to say here is that democracy is a form of government in which everyone has share. It represents collectivism in the sense where the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation. It is a form of government in which the ruling power of the state is largely vested in the members of the community as a whole. According to Ambedkar, a mere cover-up of democracy would not achieve the purpose of real democracy. A real democracy would be one which will address the welfare of the whole people. Bagehot defines democracy as 'government of discussion'. Lincoln defines democracy as 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people.'⁴³ According to Ambedkar, democracy means, "A form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed."⁴⁴ For Ambedkar, restoration of economic and social rights are keys of humanism. If democracy can enable those who are running it to bring about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people and the people accept those changes without restoring the bloodshed, then it would be a true democracy. Thus, it is the real test for democracy of bringing social changes in human face.

In this regard, Ambedkar advocates the proposal of one man one vote and one value not only in political life of India but also in social and economic life. For

⁴³ Lokhande, G.S. *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar-A Study in Social Democracy*, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982, p.23.

⁴⁴ Das, Bhagwan (ed.) *Thus Spoke Ambedkar*, Buddhist Publishing Home, Jullunder, Punjab, 1963, p.61.

Ambedkar, true humanism would be reflected and restored when political democracy is to be accompanied by social democracy. In this regard, Ambedkar says that “we must make our political democracy a social democracy as well; political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of its social democracy.”⁴⁵ Ambedkar felt it well that political democracy cannot ensure social justice. There is no question of doubt that the government of India ensures political democracy. This does not make sense to claim that the people of India are being enjoyed social democracy. Even today, the status of a particular class of people is based on birth and not on the capabilities and calibre of the people. The very vitals of the Indian social life had been eaten by the religious dogmas and society, based on graded inequality. It is a common perception, Ambedkar said, that certain names became associated with certain notions and sentiments which determine a person’s attitude towards men and things. For example, the names Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra are names which are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu. So long the notion of birth on the bases caste is prevailing, so long these names continue, it would hard to come by social justice in India even though there remains political justice in India. But the problem is that political justice would be ineffective so long there is no social justice. This is the problem of Indian democracy.

According to Ambedkar, there are three main things inherent in parliamentary government. First, parliamentary government means negation of hereditary rule. Here no person can claim to be hereditary rules and whoever wants to rule must

⁴⁵ Lokhande, G.S. *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*, op. cit. p.23.

be elected by the people from time to time. Secondly, any law, any measure, applicable to the public life of the people must be based on the advice of the people chosen by the people. The government of the country is carried out by the elected representatives of the people. Thirdly, parliamentary system of government means that at a stated period those who want to advise the head of the state must have the confidence of the people in themselves renewed. Besides these, Ambedkar also advocates two principal pillars of parliamentary system of government. These are: (a) there must be an opposition and (b) free and fair elections.

Essential Conditions for Successful Working of Democracy

Ambedkar also advocates some essential conditions for making a democratic government successful. These are as follows:

- (a) Democracy is always changing its form. We speak of democracy, but democracy is not always the same. For example, the Greeks spoke of Athenian democracy, but as everyone knows the Athenian democracy was a different from our modern democracy.
- (b) Even in the same country democracy is not always the same. For example, nobody can say that the English democracy before the English revolution of 1688 was the same as the England democracy which came after the revolution of 1688.
- (c) Democracy not only undergoes changes in form in purpose. For example, in the ancient English democracy, the purpose of the democracy was to

curb the king to prevent him exercising what we, how in law call his prerogative rights. The king even went to extent of saying that although the parliament may be there as an enactment making body as a king has got the prerogative to make the laws and laws shall prevail. It was this kind of democracy of the king which means more democracy to come into being.

Thus, it can be said following Ambedkar that in order to make a democracy successful, one has to ensure that there must be no glaring inequality in the society, there must not be an opposed class, there must not be a suppressed class, there must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all the burdens. It is true to say that the house divided cannot stand in need. In this regard the remark of Lincon is particularly relevant. He says, "If you of the southern states and we have of the northern states are divided we shall not be able to stand together, when a foreign enemy comes."⁴⁶ Precisely, it can be said that the deep cleavages between class and class are going to be one of the greatest hindrances in the success of democracy. A successful democracy must address statutory provisions to alleviate the suffering and to do safeguard the interest of the suppressed and oppressed people. The society must be based on the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to ensure social endosmosis. According to Ambedkar, fraternity, the genesis of humanism, is another name of democracy. In this regard, Ambedkar feels that it is the outmost necessity to

⁴⁶ Das, Bhagwaqn, *Thus Spoke Ambedkar*, op. cit. p.62.

annihilate the caste system in the Hindu society, because for Ambedkar the caste system of Hindu society stands as a bar in establishing social harmony in terms of fraternity.

It is true to say that the kind of humanism that Ambedkar has sought through social reformation and by annihilating the caste system of Hinduism has not been well supported by the leaders of Indian National Congress. Even leaders like Gandhi did not realise the significance of social reform. There was no program to improve the status of the untouchables. There was a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Hindus to do away with the disabilities of the untouchables. Truly speaking, the basic human rights were denied to them. Ambedkar felt it very well that the leaders of the Indian National Congress could not remove the grave social and economic backwardness of the untouchables. Indeed, it is a crisis of humanism that on the basis of mere caste taboos, the untouchables were denied civil, political, economic, religious and legal rights for a long period of time. In fact, the concept of justice had no place in the Hindu social system and therefore untouchables had to lead a life of supine servitude. The untouchable was required to have a black thread either on his wrist or around his neck as a sign or a mark to prevent the Hindus from getting themselves polluted by his touch through mistake. In Poona, the untouchable 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. Ambedkar in this regard, calls for constitutional morality. In this regard, Ambedkar cited an example

of George Washington when he requested by the people to stand for the second time for the presidency of America. Washington said, "My dear people you have forgotten the purpose for which we made this constitution, we made this constitution because we did not want a hereditary monarchy and did not want a hereditary ruler or a dictator."⁴⁷ According to Ambedkar, in the name of democracy, there should be no tyranny of the majority over minority. The minority, the downtrodden, the weaker section of the people must always feel safe even though the majority is carrying in the government. There should be adequate scope for motions of censure or the adjournment motions of the minority to redress their grievances.

Following Laski, Ambedkar thus insists on moral order as a requirement of democracy. He goes on to say that if there is no moral order, democracy will go to pieces. It requires a public conscience which becomes agitated at every wrong no matter who is the sufferer and it means that everybody whether he suffers that particular wrong or not is prepared to join the aggrieved to secure justice. According to Ambedkar, a political democracy without an economic and social democracy is an invitation to trouble and danger. Social democracy has a paramount relevance to make political democracy a great success. Indeed social democracy alone can assure to the masses the right to liberty, equality and fraternity, the trio-concepts, i.e. the pillars of just society. Democracy, in this sense, is not only a mere form of government but also a way of life through which social justice can be established. Truly

⁴⁷ Lokhande, G.S. *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar-A Study in Social Democracy*, op. cit. p.28.

speaking, social justice demands that society should promote the welfare of all and not merely the greatest happiness of the greatest number. If social justice unlike political justice actually runs in accordance with the utilitarian principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, then the interest of the majority might gain precedence over those of the minorities. Thus, according to Ambedkar, unlike political justice, social justice must incorporate everyone without exception. At least on that account, perhaps Ambedkar shares with Gandhi's principle of *Sarvodaya*.

With a deep faith in the parliamentary tradition, Ambedkar then fully agrees with the view that there should be three necessary functions of government. These are: (a) to make laws, (b) to execute them and (c) to punish those who commit breach of law. Moreover, he strongly believes that only by dividing the powers of government each department can function with the utmost care and effectiveness. The main function of the legislative body is essential to make laws for the development and reformation of the existing social and economic order. It has to create better laws and institutions for the people. Regarding the function of the judiciary, Ambedkar says, "rights are real only if they are accompanied by remedies, it is no use giving rights if the aggrieved person has no legal remedy to which he can resort when the rights are invaded". Ambedkar has a strong faith in the separation of the government power and of the allocation of functions to various departments. He regards rights as natural and inherent in the individual. He holds that society can do nothing without some organised power. He, therefore, stresses

the need of constitutional morality and some conventions for the practical success of a constitution. He wishes a good moral government to protect the right of the people in all their legitimate functions. In fact, he fought for these rights in his life and rebelled against communal absolutism.

However, Ambedkar does not rule out the possible loopholes of parliamentary democracy. In fact, as the founder of Indian constitution, Ambedkar would definitely be ashamed of had he been the observer of the function of the present Indian parliamentary democracy. However, he did not miss the point of mentioning the possible failure of parliamentary democracy. It may perhaps be the case that at times parliamentary democracy may fail to realise the positive outcome of social and economic democracy. This has vitiated the institution of parliamentary democracy. If political or parliamentary democracy acts in the forms of the rulers and the ruled, then it would be an evil of parliamentary democracy. Because such division is so stereotyped and stratified that rules are always drawn from the ruling class. Ambedkar also warns the harbingers of democracy that if parliamentary democracy fails in this land, the result will be rebellion, anarchy and communism. In this regard, Ambedkar says, “ I want you to take note of these eventful certainties and if you wish that parliamentary democracy prevails in this country, if you are satisfied that there will be assured of our liberty of thought, speech and action, if we should preserve our independence, if we cherish the inherent right of individual liberty, then it is your duty as student, as intelligent community of our country, to strive your

utmost cherish this parliamentary system of government in its true spirit and to work for it.”⁴⁸ Thus, for Ambedkar, a parliamentary democracy can be maintained under guarantees of freedom of speech and criticism together with political and economic initiative for the individual. Democracy as an emblem of fraternity is not only a form of government but also a way of life through which social justice can be established. Social justice demands that society should promote the welfare of all and not merely the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Humanism and Human Rights

The concept of human right is another important dimension of Ambedkar’s humanism. In fact, these two concepts are entwined with each other and in the true sense of the term they are two sides of the same coin. As a Samaritan of the downtrodden people, Ambedkar believes that the establishment of a democratic society in India would be possible only when the untouchables and weaker sections of the society would be given the opportunity to enjoy human rights. As an untouchable, Ambedkar realised that a large section of his countrymen were denied their legitimate rights by the oppressive social customs. He thus began the task of reconstructing the Hindu society by offering scathing criticism and suggesting possible ways for its reorganisation. The human rights of untouchables were forfeited by the caste Hindus. The Hindu society insists on segregation of the quarters of the untouchables. This is a fundamental feature of untouchability as practiced by

⁴⁸ Bharathi, K.S. *Foundations of Ambedkar Thought*, Dattasons Publishers, Nagpur, 1990, p.141.

the Hindus. It is not a case of a social separation, a mere stoppage of intercourse for a temporary period; it is a case of territorial segregation and of cordon sanitaria putting the impure inside a barbed wire into a sort of a cage. Every Hindu village has a ghetto; the Hindus live in the village and the untouchables in the ghetto. Even though untouchability as a social curse has been witnessed here and there in different parts of the world in the course of history, the so-called untouchability in Hinduism in India based on hereditary slaves was a unique phenomenon unknown to humanity except the Hindus. The untouchability in India actually robs the basic human rights of the downtrodden in all accounts. Ambedkar thus asserted 'so long as untouchables continue to be slaves under the yoke of Hindustan's diabolical creed, they can have no hope, no inspiration, no enthusiasm for better life. This religious and this social order have ruined us but this is not going to stop here. This would ruin the Hindus and ultimately India."⁴⁹

According to Ambedkar, the untouchables had no friends because untouchables hereditarily bear social disease. Even the British government had used untouchables only as excuse for its continued existence. The Hindu outrightly denied them. Even the Mohammedams refused to recognise their separate existence because they feared that their privilege might be curtailed by the admission of a rival. Therefore, the untouchables were depressed by the Government, suppressed by the Hindus and disregarded by the Muslims. Thus, every section of the society except untouchables was engaging

⁴⁹ Ambedkar, B.R. *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*, Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay, 1945, p.194.

themselves in robbing the human rights of the untouchables. Accordingly, untouchables were left in the most intolerable position of helplessness which had no parallel in this world. As a knight in shining armour of the downtrodden, Ambedkar made it his mission to make the untouchables conscious of their slavery. Ambedkar described the state of slavery of the untouchables and the denial of human rights at the time of giving evidence before the reforms committee. For Ambedkar the word 'untouchable' is an epitome of their ills and sufferings, not only has untouchability arrested the growth of their personality but it also comes in the way of their material well-being. It has also deprived them of certain civil rights. The untouchable is not even a citizen, citizenship is a bundles of rights such as personal liberty, personal security, right to hold private property, equality before law, liberty of conscience, freedom of opinion, speech, right of assembly, right of representation in a country's government and right to hold office under the state.

Therefore, to ensure human rights of the untouchables, Ambedkar advocates constitutional remedy and thereby has sought to introduce radical and revolutionary changes through constitutional means. Accordingly, the charter of fundamental rights and directive principles of state policy as enunciated in the Constitution of India promulgated in the year 1950. It states: "All subjects of the state in India are equal before the law and possess equal civil rights..."⁵⁰ Ambedkar further asserts that infringement of human rights must

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.41.

earn sufficient penalty and therefore the infringement of citizenship rights must be called an offence. In article 15 of the Indian constitution, it has been stated that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. His slogan, "Tell the slave that he is a slave and he will revolt against his slavery" had a telling effect in that it generated a consciousness in the untouchables and the downtrodden about their plight and the need to secure their human rights. For the steady and systematic upliftment of the downtrodden, he started educational and social institutions and Journals and also launched a movement of satyagrah. In fact, Ambedkar ceaselessly strove to make the untouchables of their self-respect and the need for self-elevation. As a true humanist, Ambedkar in one of his speeches said, "My heart breaks to see the pitiable sight of your faces and to hear your sad voices. You have been groaning from time immemorial and yet you are not ashamed to hug your helplessness as an individuality....it is your birth right to get food, shelter and clothing in equal proportion with every individual, high or low. If you believe in living a respectable life you should believe in self-help which is the best help."⁵¹ We need equal rights which are the common possession of the entire humanity, but due to inhibition created by the Shastras we have been denied these human rights. In this regard, Ambedkar mentioned the examples of France and the emancipation of Nrgoes from slavery. In case of France when the nobles denied the human rights to the lower class people, they massacred the nobles until they finally

⁵¹ Keer, Dhananjay, *Dr. Ambedkar-Life and Mission*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1990, p.45.

won the battle. In America too, the American people fought the civil war in order to emancipate the Negroes from slavery. The untouchables are self-satisfied even though they have been kicked by the caste Hindu people, because untouchables do not have sufficient knowledge and wisdom, they do not have economic, social and physical strength. Because of ignorance, gullibility and utter submissiveness, the untouchables were victimised from their rights. As a matter of fact, the untouchables made their position deplorable, hopeless and helpless. They are facing the difficulties of food, cloth and the place of shelter in the midst of plenty. Therefore, untouchables alone can change the present situation. Untouchables must remember that man is the creator of his own history, own destiny.

Call for Democratic Humanism

Thus, in one sense Ambedkar's humanism may be attributed as democratic humanism. He understands humanism through democracy what he alternatively terms as *fraternity*. A humanist thinker par excellence, Ambedkar seriously studied the prevailing social situation of his times and found that most of the human beings were living in distress and suffering. Ambedkar was deeply influenced by Buddha, Kabir and Phule and adopted an empirical, logical, scientific outlook towards life and world. He thinks that everything should be examined from the standpoint of 'social utility'. He at the very outset favours humanist philosophy based on social humanism where no one can be isolated from the society. He gives importance on human friendship and welfare and the cordial relationship between man and

man. His vision of social humanism is a philosophical thought where man's social situation and problems have been given an utmost importance. According to Ambedkar, the centre of this philosophy is of course not God, nor any supernatural power, but only the oppressed and distressed man, their interests. The central point of Ambedkar's social humanism is to restore man's dignity, protection of equal rights, values individuality, welfare of common people, freedom of expression, just society based on liberty, equality and fraternity, man's all round development through which human rights have been protected. His humanistic philosophy is closely associated with all kinds of progressive and scientific ideas. Thus, in the true sense of the term, Ambedkar's humanism has been a movement for social freedom of the oppressed and the exploited class. Therefore, the basis of the epistemology of humanism is man's reason, his scientific outlook. Inference and *Sabda-Pramana* are acceptable in the philosophy of humanism only to that extent to which reason agrees to it. The humanistic epistemology rejects all those experiences and events that seem to go beyond human experience. Perception, thus, is the sustaining force of any humanist theory. Accordingly, concepts like imagination, blind faith, tradition, divine revelation, mystical expression, super-natural power etc. have no relevance.

The epistemological humanism of Ambedkar has been profusely influenced from the Buddhist philosophy. Like his master, Ambedkar did not accept *Sabda-pramana* as a valid source of knowledge. For Ambedkar, whatever is true must be examined on the basis of reason and experience. Ambedkar was

a true rationalist and a legal luminary where human reason and experience count the most. He gives importance on observation and accepts only those facts which are observational. Accordingly, it can be said the epistemological basis of Ambedkar's humanism points out towards conclusions, such as, (a) there is nothing in existence which is beyond nature; (b) the belief or an idea, which is opposed to perception and experience, cannot be valid; (c) there must be factual and logical consistency in the process of validation; (d) whatever is regarded as infallible cannot be true; (e) that which is considered to be justified on the basis of divine power cannot be true and can never serve human interests. For the discovery of truth, Ambedkar considered the 'method of doubt' for doubt and examination; both are important and meaningful in the field of knowledge. The Brahmins have left no room for doubt, for they have propounded a most mischievous dogma which the Brahmins have spread among the masses, is the dogma of infallibility of the Vedas. In this regard, Ambedkar says, "If the Hindu intellect has ceased to grow and if the Hindu civilization and culture has become a stagnant and stinking pool, this dogma must be destroyed root and branch if India is to progress. The Vedas are a worthless set of books. There is no reason either to call them sacred or infallible...the time has come when the Hindu mind must be freed from the hold which the silly ideas propagated by the Brahmins, have on them. Without this liberation India has no future."⁵²

⁵² Ambedkar, B.R. *Writings and Speeches*, Vol.4, 1987, p.8.

It is quite obvious that Ambedkar's humanism is the by-product of intellect and reason. While developing the social and humanistic philosophy, Ambedkar has accepted only those things and thoughts which were based on observation, reasoning and social utility. According to Ambedkar, man should apply his own mind and intellect to solve the problem of life. Man himself can make his own fate through his own efforts; no supernatural power or God can help him in regressing human grievances. Ambedkar did not accept the divine revelation or grace which the Brahmins and the Vedas had regarded as better than reason and experience. In brief, "without the help of intellect, he (man) can do nothing. Intellect is light."⁵³

The other important aspect of Ambedkar's democratic humanism is its metaphysics based on naturalism, materialism and atheism. For Ambedkar, the ultimate existence of the Universe is not God, but Nature which could be directly observed and perceived by man. As a disciple of Buddha, Ambedkar had accepted the impermanent nature of the world and its variety of things. The entire existence, natural and human, is changeable. Nothing is eternal; nature is not a divine power, but an aggregation of all living and non-living things. Man is also a part of the Nature. Thus, it seems clear that Ambedkar's metaphysics is completely atheistic and humanistic. His democratic humanism actually hinges on naturalism and empiricism. Ambedkar has outrightly rejected the philosophies of *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and *Geeta* as the Brahmins had propounded them without applying any reason and intellect.

⁵³ Ambedkar, B.R. *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, 1943, p.13.

According to Ambedkar, nothing could be sustained without proper reasoning and human experience. Accordingly, he rejected all that is associated with creationism, eternalism, incarnation, supernaturalism, theism, transmigration, heaven or hell etc., as these things did not have any relevance in his theory of humanism. Like Vivekananda, Ambedkar gives supreme place to man as man has been the main factor in the progress of mankind. Ambedkar gives much importance to man because it is due to his faith in the philosophy of humanism. Unlike believing in supernatural God, Ambedkar believed in peace and self-satisfaction as a result of *Kushal Karma* (good actions) and human service. This is not a situation to be alienated from the life of society, but it is the supreme state of more excellence wherein man thinks only of man's well-beings.

As a messenger of neglected humanity, Ambedkar was interested in common man's philosophy. He says, "Every man should have a philosophy of life, for everyone must have standard, by which to measure his conduct."⁵⁴ The humanistic philosophy of Ambedkar is more practical than theoretical and more empirical than speculative. As a democratic humanist, Ambedkar believes in three fundamental standards for governing the individual and social life. These standards are liberty, equality and fraternity. These are also called the basic standards for any state. In fact such trio-concepts actually culminate in the faith in democracy. Ambedkar says, "Positively, my social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: liberty, equality and

⁵⁴ Keer, D. *Ambedkar - Life and Mission*, 1962, p.455.

fraternity....I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha.”⁵⁵ According to Ambedkar, true religion consists of *Prajna and Karuna*. *Prajna* is an understanding, which leaves no room for superstition and supernaturalism and *Karuna* is love. It is the love of man towards man. Without love, society can neither live nor grow. Accordingly, those who want liberty must have Dharma for the maintenance of the democratic way of social life. Liberty, as an essence of moral and religious life, constitutes the standards by which human conduct may easily be measured. The principles of liberty and equality keep man conscious of his own dignity and status in society and persuade him to respect the being of others in social life.

Ambedkar then interprets morality in terms of fraternity. For Ambedkar morality must be universal and sacred. Three important factors have played their part in making morality sacred. These are: (a) the social need for protecting the best; (b) the social need for preserving the common good; and (c) the need for safeguarding the growth of the individual. Without common models and common standards, society cannot be a harmonious whole. The only way to put an end to conflict is to have common rules of morality, which are sacred and equal to all. Morality makes fraternity universally effective. Fraternity is nothing but another name for the brotherhood of men. Fraternity is another name for morality. That is why Ambedkar elsewhere remarks that ‘religion is morality and as religion is sacred, so is morality. Besides liberty and equality, fraternity thus constitutes the third standard in

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.456.

social life. Even though Ambedkar thinks that in democratic humanism, liberty and equality have a prominent place, but unlimited liberty destroys equality and absolute equality leaves no room for liberty. That is why Ambedkar insists on the importance of law. Law has a place in his humanism only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality. However, again he does not believe that law can be guarantee for breaches of liberty and equality. Among the trio-concept of liberty, equality and fraternity, Ambedkar gives much emphasis on fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty, equality and fraternity which is another name for brotherhood of all human beings, another name for religion. Ambedkar in this regard says, “ Law is secular, which anybody may break; while fraternity or religion is sacred, which everybody must respect.”⁵⁶ In other words, he says, “Liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items of a trinity. They form a union of a trinity.”⁵⁷ Even though Ambedkar talks about social and parliamentary democracy, but he gives more importance on social democracy because he thinks that the success of parliamentary democracy actually hinges on the success of social democracy. Ambedkar in this regard comments that the roots of democracy are to be scheduled in social relationship in terms of the associated life between the people who form the society. As a humanist, he declared, “It seems to me that there lies on us a very important duty to see that democracy does not vanish from the earth as a governing principle of human relationship. We must strive along

⁵⁶ Ibid. P.456.

⁵⁷ Pylee, M.V. *India's Constitution*, 1963, p.376.

with democratic countries to maintain the basis of democratic civilisation.”⁵⁸

The essence of democratic civilisation, Ambedkar opines, is the welfare of the common man through freedom, equality and fraternity. At any rate, it is the fundamental function of a modern state to look after the human rights of all men and women. Every democratic society must maintain the minimum required standard of liberty, equality and fraternity in regulating the relations between man and man.

Thus, Ambedkar has a different conception of morality, religion. For him the true religion is the religion of Buddha. His view of religion is social and secular, and human morality is the keynote of it. “Religion or Dharma”, he says, “is righteousness, which means right relations between man and man in all sphere of life. Right relations must be established on the basis of social principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus, human morality (fraternity) is the soul of Ambedkar’s concept of religion. For him, ‘morality arises from the direct necessity for man to love man. It does not require the sanction of God. It is for his own good that man has to love man. Religion as morality, morality as love of man to man, and love of man as brotherhood, is the essence of Ambedkar’s humanism. Thus, the fundamental purpose of Ambedkar’s humanism is to reconstruct human society by establishing right relations between man and man on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p.499.

There is no question of doubt that the democratic humanism of Ambedkar has a thoughtful and profound respect for modern science. In fact, Ambedkar apprehends religion in the light of science. For Ambedkar, the true bond of religion is neither a metaphysical dogma nor a form of historical trustworthiness, but adherence to those appealing human values which are liberal, equal and fraternal, in the life of our society. According to Ambedkar, human intellect and sense-organs are the source of knowledge, the divine relation is baseless and no knowledge is innate and mystical. The external world exists; man is an essential part of Nature. There is no supernatural being who decides the fate of man according to his actions. Man can be virtuous by his own actions and can contribute something to the social end. The moral values are those which create in ourselves respect and equality, compassion and friendship, co-operation and sympathy, towards other members of society. The world-fraternity, i.e. co-existence and co-operation, is the universal balanced and excellent aim of social humanism, which eventually forms the basis of world-peace and prosperity. In a nutshell, it can be said that the democratic humanism that has been envisaged by Ambedkar is the outcome of the trio-concepts, namely, liberty, equality and fraternity with the collaboration of which social and democratic justice can be restored.

Relevance of Ambedkar's Humanism

So far we have outlined and examined Ambedkar's humanism from various perspectives. We are now in a position to assess the relevance of his humanism in our times. It is true to say that in the course of time everything

has changed. Except eternity nothing is permanent. Ambedkar shares the same conviction when he was a firm believer of Buddhism. Everything is momentary, impermanent, and relative and in the course of time takes different shapes and colour. However, when we envisage the relevance of Ambedkar's humanism, we see a different. Even after 60 years no one can deny the relevance of Ambedkar's humanism. In fact, humanism is a kind of umbrella term which cannot lose its foothold in the course of history. The reason is simple. History tells us that the existence of the depressed and poorer class must be there in the world so long human civilization sustains. Ambedkar's humanism is directed to save all human beings from the scourge of the discrimination made on the basis of caste, class and sex. India is predominantly a spiritualistic country. Spiritualism is the genesis of Indian culture. So long spiritualism prevails and dominates Indian culture; people cannot overcome the influence of caste-system.

Ambedkar does not have faith on spiritualism because spiritualism is the by-product of religious dogma where there is no rationalism. Ambedkar gives importance on rationalism, naturalism, empiricism and more importantly his rationalism blossoms from his heart. In this sense his humanism based on rationalism is unique in nature. Even though Ambedkar disregards spiritualism, but he does not deny the relevance of religion. For Ambedkar, Dharma is at par with religion and morality is at par with fraternity. His understanding of religion is intellectual and socio-political. Accordingly, in his discourse of religion, there is no place of God as an independent super-

natural entity. Hinduism is predominantly a God-based religion and hence it was not acceptable to him. Like Hinduism, Ambedkar does not believe in Islam and Christianity as well because they too were founded on the doctrine of divine omnipotence. According to Ambedkar, religion is a must for society, the foundation of religion is essential to life and practices of life. He wanted a religion which instructed people, how they should behave with one another and prescribed for man his duty to another, and religion with god in the light of liberty, equality and fraternity is pointless. Besides, religion was necessary for the development of individual, he also thought that religion was essential for cultural evolution and heritage. He understood religion in the context of making fraternity between individual and society. Conceiving religion in this manner; Ambedkar finds its relevance in Buddhism. Accordingly, he gave up Hinduism and embraced Buddhism. We think Ambedkar's humanism based on religion in the above manner just discussed is relevant in our present society. At present religion is no longer a dogma, a blind faith, rather religion is a science based on reason.

We think Ambedkar's humanism based on reason-based religion is even more relevant to overcome the danger of communalism witnessing in India. India perhaps is one of the leading countries in the world today where communalism is the order of the day. In the past, people were burned in the name of caste and religion. Careful investigation would reveal that every social conflict or communal class is linked with God-based religion. Nobody can deny the historical implication of *mandir-masjid* conflict in India. When

religious issues are politicalised by our politicians to secure votes, then the implication of religion takes a different colour. One should be aware of the recent religious or communal riots as the result of such issues. As humans there is no difference between Hindu and Muslims because to be a Hindu or Muslim is a matter of accident. History tells us that a Hindu became a Muslim and vice-versa. But nobody can deny the ruthless killing of both communities in terms of religion. Ironically the government always performs its post mortem duty of providing compensation to the bereaved family. God based religion or even God-based education, Amartya Sen claims, is detrimental to social harmony. God based religion, Ambedkar opines, is a threat to our society. Instead of this, religion based on Dharma, liberty, equality and fraternity is good for society. Thus, Ambedkar's religion based on humanism has special dignity in the ongoing social transformation. Hinduism because of God- based religion was separated from morality; it cannot provide fraternity among Hindus. In one sense, it has been corrupt and in another sense, it has degenerated. According to Ambedkar, morality (fraternity) was essential for the growth of strong and powerful nation. Therefore, Ambedkar wants a morality based religion based on values like liberty, equality and fraternity. Religion thus was a system of such socio-cultural values which would bring all the individuals on equal platform and thereby would create a powerful political community. Thus, there remains no scope of religious conflict in Ambedkar's humanism.

As a proponent of rational humanism, Ambedkar was not against Hindu religion, 'but he was against that religion, which teaches one man to hate another, he accepted that the religion teaches the lesson of equality and brotherhood, but the Hindu religion did not accept the principles of equality and brotherhood in general behaviour.' Therefore, Hindu religion in general is not religion in proper because it falls short of humanism in Ambedkar's sense. Hindu religion, Ambedkar opines, is destructive for humanity. In fact, Ambedkar, being a messenger of humanism, tries to understand the Indian society not on the basis of religious faith but from the human view point and realism. Ambedkar realised that the *varnashram* system is responsible for the exploitation of untouchables and the women. As a *shudra* he had to bear dishonour and disgrace on every step of his life of a student to the life of a barrister. As a consequence, a great hatred was created in his mind and he took pen against caste system and that continued throughout his life. According to Ambedkar, Hindus have faith in caste not because of the fact that they are inhuman, but because of the fact that they are deeply religious. Caste Hindu will behave with untouchables in the degraded way because of their deep faith on *Shastras*. Thus, Ambedkar's humanism brings a new message regarding religion predominantly based on morality (fraternity).

The other important dimension of Ambedkar religion is that of socialism. His humanism was vocal in favour of democratic socialism based on one man one value in all works of life, political, economic and social. The essence of social democracy is to ensure social and political equality. It ensures human

rights which were denied to the untouchables. His humanism incorporates the rights against exploitation of man by man, and therefore, emancipated not only the untouchables from the fetters of slavery but also the women, the children and the helpless people from the scourge of evil system such as *devadasi*, forced labour, employment of a child below the age of 14 years and so on. Besides, Ambedkar also advocates state socialism in the field of industry; he wants to include the provisions of state ownership of agriculture in the fundamental rights. He wants to establish state socialism not through dictatorship but through political democracy. Such noble principles enshrined in his humanism are alive even today.

According to Ambedkar, democracy means a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without chaos. He prescribes some essential conditions for the successful working of the democracy, namely, there must be no glaring inequality in the society; there must not be an oppressed class, there must not be a suppressed class, there must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all the burdens to carry such things which is a division. For the successful function of democracy there must be a statutory provision to mitigate the suffering and to safeguard the interest of the suppressed and the oppressed people. For the successful function of democracy, the society must be based on the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity in order to ensure social endosmosis. According to Ambedkar, democracy is not only a form of government, but the way of life

through which social justice can be established, a way of life through which society should promote the welfare of all. Here emphasis has been given on value based politics. Thus, the major dimension of Ambedkar's humanism is not only ensuring social equality between man and man but also equal status and dignity between man and woman. In precise, we close this sequel by making a single line conclusion about Ambedkar's humanism. We can say that his humanistic approach to solve the age-old problems of the downtrodden will never lose its relevance so long the state cannot ensure the dignity of the downtrodden in the light of the trio-concepts, namely, liberty, equality and fraternity. Ambedkar's philosophy of humanism, in brief, aims at creating and sustaining such values, namely, the urge for work, the concern for the common good, a sense of public interest, a sense of public conscience, a feeling of highest responsibility, the feeling of personal and social interests. These are the necessary pre-requisites for marching towards a just society. The philosophy of Ambedkar's humanism presupposes a social order of co-operation and mutual help, individual dignity and social unity, absence of exploitation of man by man to ensure social securities and welfare activities. It established the right relations between different social groups on the basis of friendship, equality, co-operation and fraternal mutual aid and communication. It stands for respect and dignity of man, concern of his welfare, his all round development and creation of favourable social conditions for his emancipation and liberation from slavery, serfdom and suppression of all kinds. After the French revolution, it was Ambedkar who

put forward the slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity along with education, organisation and agitation as a way to proclaim men's right to freely develop their natural potentialities. In short, the thoughts and ideas of Ambedkar's humanism constitute the supreme embodiment of all kinds of equality in order to provide the benefits of social justice, liberal democracy and of universal education provisions to all the citizens of the world.

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