

Skill Development Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune Title: “Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: The Real Hero”

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Abstract: *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar revolutionised the prevailing social structure based on man - made caste discrimination and transformed that into the one which would be based on equality, liberty, justice and fraternity. He provided a sound constitutional buttressing to the emerging society that would offer equal opportunity to all in education, employment and living in general. This was not foreseen by either the oppressors or by the victims of atrocious, discriminative social traditions which continued to be there. Dr. Ambedkar was the first one in the millennium who shattered that atrocious baseless caste system without any warfare but by striding the path of education.*

Keywords: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Aristotle, Peripeteia, Anagnorisis, Nemesis

1. Prologue

Greek philosopher Aristotle (384 - 322 B. C.) had introduced the concepts of *Peripeteia* (the reversal of fate that the hero experiences) and *Anagnorisis* (a moment in time when hero makes an important discovery in the story) to describe the characteristics of a hero in literature. However, Aristotle goes on to describe such characteristics of a tragic hero who because of flaws in his character (*Hamartia*) and due to a critical move that he takes in his life (*Nemesis*) leads to his own downfall. This goes pretty well with the tragic hero in ancient history or literature that Aristotle holds for consideration. But, what if he had thought of the real hero whose action brings a turning point in the lives of many and leads to their uprising for the coming ages!

It is not the *Peripeteia* that Aristotle believes to be the reversal of fate of hero from glory to dooms due to his *Hamartia* but it is the total transformation of the mankind that has risen from the dust. It is *Anagnorisis* but that brings revolution in the lives of many for their own good. And unlike the Aristotelian tragic hero, it is not the *Nemesis* that causes downfall of the community that follows him but it is a revolutionary uprising of all those who had never seen the light of the day so clear and bright. All this goes opposite the description of Aristotelian tragic hero because what is being discussed here is all about real hero!

And the real hero here is none other than Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar!

What Aristotle describes about his tragic hero is *Hubris* which something like excessive pride or disrespect in the things that are seen in reality as good as natural. . . . the things that are universally accepted by all without challenging their goodness or ugliness. Babasaheb did see something dangerously ill in what was practised in the contemporary society—untouchability!

There were oppressors and there were sufferers. There were privileged people and there were downtrodden people. Some had rights and privileges and some had more rights and

privileges. On the contrary some had no rights even to dream of what others easily had. They were downtrodden and deprived by birth and they were destined to lead a miserable life without questioning about it. It was a social structure, it was a social hierarchy sophisticatedly called Chaturvarnya System rather a non - system which was based on inequality, injustice cruelty and inhumanity. It was but natural for anyone who had born in that era. And if at all anyone had felt any agony, misery that wasn't fertile to create any urge to bring changes in the existing conditions. So what Aristotle describes as *Hubris* - - - extreme disrespect (or may be pride) was not yet seen anyone who could have been the hero of the millennium! It was only Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who experienced that prevailing injustice and deprivation from being considered as below human. Not only he saw, felt, realised and experienced but he systematically followed it through the study, research, agitation and action. That lead him to be the man of highest calibre who could not be challenged easily by his contemporaries.

Bhimrao later famed as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emerged as a real hero who changed the fate of the mankind by his thoughtful, scholarly actions. The discontent that was set in his mind from the early childhood by experiencing the odds in the society transformed him into a great scholar, activist and visionary so much so that newly formed India had to endow upon him the responsibility to draft its constitution! He provided a workable solution to the problem from which the people suffered for ages and also built a strong framework of legal provisions which would always protect the people from being victimised to any social injustice. Further, he went on to find the path that will take his people out of the age old concepts of religion which never gave them any returns, any social status and any human - like treatment.

And, of course, the masses followed their leader as they were now sure that following Dr. Babasaheb means following the path of light and progress.

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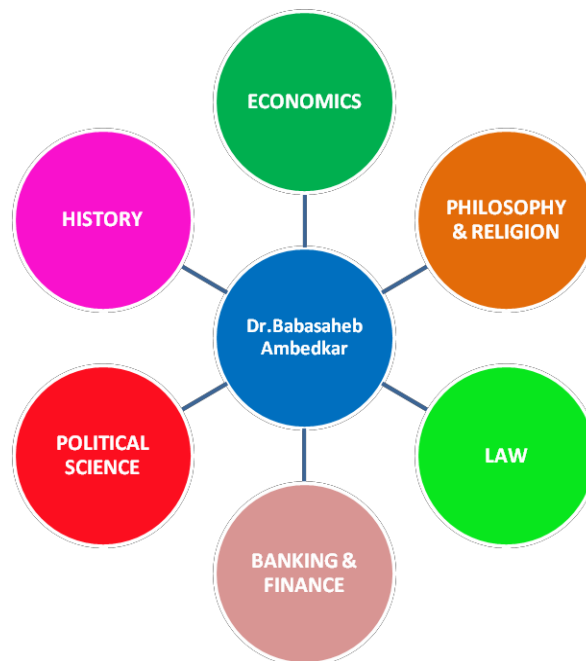
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Characteristics of Real Hero - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar:

Scholarly Dynamism:

In the preface of 2nd edition of “The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution, (History of Currency and Banking)”, Dr. Ambedkar says, “The demand for the book has continued, but unfortunately I could not bring out a second edition of the book for the reason that my change - over from economics to law and politics left me no time to undertake such a task.” It’s interesting to note here that Dr. Ambedkar had been a scholar and Professor of Political Economy and then he was engrossed in works in Law and Politics!

Not only Law, Economics and Political Science but Dr. Ambedkar had done exhaustive studies and research in ancient philosophical doctrines from their source languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, French and German. He was a prolific student earning Ph. D. in economics from both Columbia University and London School of Economics. The scholarly dynamism of Dr. Basaheb Ambedkar is summarised as follows:



We can get a precise idea of Dr. Ambedkar’s multidisciplinary contribution to various fields of knowledge from the following chart:

SOCIOLOGY	ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND COMMERCE	HISTORY	PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annihilation of Caste • Buddha or Karl Marx • Castes in India • Communal Deadlock and a Way to solve it • India and the Pre-requisites of Communism • Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability • Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation Of The Untouchables • Untouchables or the Children of India • The Untouchables and the Pax Britannica • Preservation of Social Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration And Finance of the East India Company • Ancient Indian Commerce • Evidence before the Royal Comission on Indian • Currency And Finance • Commercial Relations of India in the middle Ages • The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India • The Present Problem in Indian Currency • The Problem of the Rupee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes on History of India • Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India • Who were the Shudras? • Commercial Relations of India in the middle Ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manu and the Shudras • Riddle in Hinduism • Philosophy of Hinduism • Bhagwan Buddha and His Dhamma

INDIAN POLITY

- India on the eve of the crown government
- Maharashtra as a Linguistic Province
- Paramountcy and the claim of the Indian states to be independent
- Thoughts on Linguistic States
- States and Minorities

POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Lectures on the English Constitution
- Notes on Acts and Laws
- Notes on Parliamentary Procedure
- Plea to the Foreigner
- Ranade Gandhi & Jinnah
- The Problem of Political Suppression
- The Constitution of British India
- Small Holdings in India and their Remedies

- Administration and Finance of the East India Company
- The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India
- The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), was based on the ideas that Ambedkar presented to the Hilton Young Commission. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._R._Ambedkar as retrieved on 11th June 2019).

Intellectual Emancipation arising from extreme Discontent:

Coming back to the point of Aristotelian hero raised at the beginning of article, the hero he described has an extreme pride or disrespect in something (*Hubris*). This feeling prompts him to take the hasty actions which brings turning point in the story. Here, in case of Dr. Ambedkar although he was grief - stricken by the sufferings of his own people did not become a rebellion who lead bloodshed or he did not become an anti - nationalist who took false measures by shaking hands with the enemies. Dr. Ambedkar was a staunch nationalist and he firmly believed in cultural uniqueness of India and took immense pride in being Indian from the heart.

"It is the unity of culture that is the basis of homogeneity. Taking this for granted, I venture to say that there is no country that can rival the Indian Peninsula with respect to the unity of its culture. It has not only a geographic unity, but it has over and above all a deeper and a much more fundamental unity—the indubitable cultural unity that covers the land from end to end. (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, "Castes in India: Mechanism, Genesis and Development" Paper Presented at Anthropology seminar, 1916, first printed in Indian Antiquary, vol. XLI, 1917).

Dedicated Efforts for the Upliftment of Downtrodden:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had pursued higher education from foreign universities and he might be the first person from his community to reach that level of academic excellence. But history witnessed that Dr. Ambedkar used all his wisdom and knowledge for bringing in the changes that he desired to take place in the society cursed with vices like caste discrimination. His wisdom was not confined to the studies and research in academic domains where he specialised but it was always oriented to the society thereby trying to give a breakthrough to many heinous practices. He became a social as well as apolitical leader. He led many revolutionary campaigns thus giving a breakthrough to the wrong and set it right for the people who were deprived. While practising in Bombay High Court, he tried to promote education to untouchables and uplift them. His first organised attempt was his establishment of the central institution Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, intended to promote education and socio - economic improvement, as well as the welfare of "outcastes", at the time referred to as depressed classes. For the defence of Dalit rights, he started five periodicals – Mooknayak (the leader of the dumb, 1920), Bahishkrit Bharat (Ostracized India, 1924), Samta (Equality, 1928), Janata (The People, 1930), and Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India, 1956). ("Ambedkar's journalism and its significance today". Forward Press. 5 July 2017. Retrieved 13 November 2018.)

The above classification is exemplary of the versatility of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The list presents the literature that Dr. Babasaheb resulting from his fervour for knowledge, quest of tracing the origin of realities way back from the ancient times. The problems and atrocities that he faced from early childhood were pertaining to the caste system and untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar had studied this as a socio - psychological problem with reference to its origin, historical evidences, and characteristics. Later, he engrosses into systematic studies of various thoughts by Bhagwan Buddha and Carl Marx for annihilation of caste system in India.

In his reply to M. K. Gandhi's article in Harijan (August 15, 1936), Dr. Babasaheb wrote that the caste system has ruined Hindus and Indian society should be reorganized on the basis of principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Dr. Ambedkar said in Annihilation of Castes that Hindu society seems to stand in need of a moral regeneration which it is dangerous to postpone and the question is who can determine and control this moral regeneration ((p.146, Selected Work of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar). He further offered the answer to this question by saying that only those who have undergone an intellectual regeneration and those who are honest enough to have the courage of their convictions born of intellectual emancipation.

Dr. Ambedkar himself has undergone this intellectual regeneration by studying the vast amount of literature thus finding the origin, nature and solution to the problems faced by the downtrodden people due to the atrocities laid upon them by rigid beliefs of prevailing social system.

Dr. Ambedkar never confined himself to the efforts of breaking the caste system as a problem pertaining to his own life as one would have done but he always expanded his studies a high grade scholar in the disciplines of law and economics. His writings on banking and commerce, finance are all the evident of his genius intellectual device that he had in these fields.

Dr. Ambedkar was trained as an economist, and was a professional economist until 1921, when he became a political leader. He wrote three scholarly books on economics:

By 1927, Ambedkar had decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He began with public movements and marches to open up public drinking water resources. He led a satyagraha in Mahad to fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town. In a conference in late 1927, Ambedkar publicly condemned the classic Hindu text, the Manusmriti, which justified caste discrimination and "untouchability", and he ceremonially burned copies of the ancient text. In 1930, Ambedkar launched Kalaram Temple movement after three months of preparation. About 15, 000 volunteers assembled at Kalaram Temple satyagraha making one of the greatest processions of Nashik. The procession was headed by a military band, a batch of scouts, women and men walked in discipline, order and determination to see the god for the first time. When they reached to gate, the gates were closed by Brahmin authorities. The so called high caste people had violent attacks on Dalit Satyagrahis in which Dr. Ambedkar, too, was injured. The doors were never let open later as the demand of satyagrahis was continued for next six years. Finally, Dr. Ambedkar, seeing the rigidity and immutability of Hindu religion decided to renounce the Hindu religion.

On political front, too Dr. Ambedkar had massive momentum of actions for giving Dalits their social and political rights.

In 1932, British announced the formation of a separate electorate for "Depressed Classes" in the Communal Award. Gandhi fiercely opposed a separate electorate for untouchables, saying he feared that such an arrangement would divide the Hindu community. ("Poona Pact – 1932". *Britannica.com. Encyclopædia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 18 May 2015. Retrieved 29 April 2015.)

Gandhi protested by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. Following the fast, Congress politicians and activists organised joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yerwada. On 25 September 1932, the agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Ambedkar (on behalf of the depressed classes among Hindus) and Madan Mohan Malaviya (on behalf of the other Hindus). The agreement gave reserved seats for the depressed classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate. Due to the pact, the depressed class received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award earlier proposed by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. In the Poona Pact, a unified electorate was formed, but primary and secondary elections allowed Untouchables in practice to choose their own candidates.

In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party, which contested the 1937 Bombay election to the Central Legislative Assembly for the 13 reserved and 4 general seats, and secured 11 and 3 seats respectively. Ambedkar was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly as a legislator (MLA)

Ambedkar had twice become a member of the Parliament of India representing Bombay State in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament. His first term as a

Rajya Sabha member was between 3 April 1952 and 2 April 1956, and his second term was to be held from 3 April 1956 to 2 April 1962.

Dr. Ambedkar, rightly known as "An Architect of Indian Constitution" had this task to be accomplished and it was golden feather in his hat. He was indeed a constitutional expert who had studied the constitutions of 60 countries. The preamble of constitution describes the four major values of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that form the pillars of democracy in India. Social revolution, social liberation, equal opportunities to all, gender equality have had the utmost importance as the guiding principles of every sect of this legal document.

A Great Visionary:

Visions are of those who are extremely learned so much so that the knowledge extends from the past to future through the present. Dr. Ambedkar had studied so many aspects of India and its sociological, political, historical and economical features that he could think ahead of the times in any of these aspects. His thoughts, if not brought into practice then, but in later future they appeared on the horizon in the course of events. Reserve Bank of India was based on the ideas presented by Dr. Ambedkar to Hilton Young Commission also known as Royal Commission Indian Currency and Financing based on his book *The Problem Of Rupee*.

(<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/did-you-know-dr-ambedkar-had-a-role-in-rbis-conceptualisation-2455347.html> retrieved on 12th June 2019)

Dr. Ambedkar's book, "Thoughts on Pakistan" is a 400 paged tract which analysed all the socio-political and geographical aspects.

2. Epilogue

So, notwithstanding the Aristotelian concept of tragic hero; Dr. Ambedkar proves to be the real hero of all times who not only equipped himself with the highest education in this world but also paved a way for all those silent downtrodden people who dared not to imagine learning to read or write as majority. He shined like a star there in every front of India, be it a political or social. Today, there are seen the fruits of what he had sown decades ago in the form of spread of education though all the sects of society and natural justice accessible to everyone. The only and the major grief is that the heroic life of Dr. Ambedkar seems to be confined to only limit sections of the society although his contributions are for the welfare of all people in India. The recommendation in this article would be to propagate the work of Dr. Ambedkar on large scale and eliminate the boundaries of communities, labels of caste that are built around him.

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