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## **DR. AMBEDKAR AND THE FIGHT AGAINST CASTE DISCRIMINATION: THEN AND NOW**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The social justice movement received its most luminous figure in Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar who conducted an insurmountable pursuit against caste discrimination to reshape Indian society alongside global equality movements. The untouchable Mahar caste birthed Dr. Ambedkar in 1891 before he achieved status as India's leading figure who authored the country's Constitution. Through his complete career Ambedkar developed actual social justice and human dignity frameworks which continue to inspire modern global movements against discrimination.

During his early life Ambedkar experienced extremely challenging conditions which became the fundamental forces shaping his destiny. From the beginning of his life Ambedkar built his perpetual campaign against caste discrimination on the rude conditions of his childhood experiences. As a native of Mhow in Central India his young life brought understanding of organized prejudice based on caste. Being a school student involved separating him from other children and denying him access to the water pot utilized by higher caste persons while he faced frequent verbal and physical mistreatment. Bhimrao experienced as a young student how caste functioned as an evil system by observing teachers reject touching his notebooks and ultimately learn that caste stripped basic human dignity away. Barricades did not dissuade Ambedkar from continuing his educational journey because he demonstrated extraordinary drive. Through the backing of forward-thinking political leaders such as the Maharaja of Vadodara he obtained two doctoral degrees from Columbia University and the London School of Economics. His educational experience developed from individual progress to become an anti-caste suppression strategic tool. According to Ambedkar education stands as "the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The concept he developed here advanced to become his fundamental method of breaking the caste system.

## **Theoretical Foundations of Ambedkar's Anti-Caste Movement**

Ambedkar distinguished his anti-caste measures through his methodical explanation of how the caste system functioned in society. Ambedkar differentiated himself from other reformers by seeing caste as a complete social and economic system that penetrated every sphere of life unlike their view that caste was just a cultural practice. According to "Annihilation of Caste" (1936) he explained that caste functioned differently than labour division since it used birth instead of natural worth to assign social status. Understanding caste required Ambedkar to move past scriptural criticism so he could examine its economic system that became a wealth and education monopoly for privileged groups while enslaving others to perpetual servitude. The social structure of caste system serves as the single formidable entity which blocks your path regardless of your chosen direction according to him. From this foundation of understanding Ambedkar decided against reformist measures because he believed the systemic ideologies upholding caste hierarchy needed full-scale confrontation.

## **Political Strategies and Constitutional Revolution**

Ambedkar demonstrated brilliant intellectual leadership by converting his academic analysis into reality-based political strategies. He used various methods to drive social transition since he understood institutional and societal changes were necessary steps toward transformation.

A public protest against inequality involved Ambedkar lighting the Manusmriti to symbolically discard religious arguments for social discrimination. His most significant impact on society emerged when he took charge of drafting the committees which produced India's fundamental laws. Through this role he incorporated principles of equality together with liberty and fraternity directly into the new constitution. The Indian Constitution established Article 17 and affirmative action programs through reservations intending to eliminate untouchability because Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed political democracy needs social democracy first. According to Ambedkar constitutional morality exists separate from natural sentiments. It has to be cultivated. The insight showed him that formal legal equality needed transformation of social consciousness alongside basic equality protections. Through its new status the constitution shifted from pure legality to become a social tool that worked for societal reconstruction based on equality.

## **Beyond Hinduism: Religious Conversion as Emancipation**

The path Ambedkar walked through life made him doubt whether genuine equality could exist within Hinduism as a system of belief. He announced after a long battle that he would neither live nor die as a Hindu although he had started his life following Hindu traditions. He participated in a large Buddhist mass conversion ceremony in Nagpur together with hundreds of thousands of his followers during 1956. By choosing to convert to Buddhism he made a declaration which had religious but more importantly political implications against caste hierarchy. Ambedkar elected to follow Buddhism mainly because he viewed it as an authentic Indian faith that did not recognize social segregation. We call his version of interpretation which embraces social equality and rationality with compassion as "Navayana" or "Neo-Buddhism". Through conversion Ambedkar provided his followers with beginnings to recover their dignity and separate identity against the caste system hierarchy. He noticed that the established relationship between religion and caste constitutes the fundamental reason behind Hindu decline. His mission involved severing this connection to allow people to form different ideas about community structure.

## **Contemporary Manifestations of Caste Discrimination**

The extensive work and constitutional safeguards of Ambedkar have not eliminated caste discrimination in contemporary India where prejudice against Dalits has shifted into modern expressions. Proof from recent scholarly research shows that people formerly identified as "untouchables" encounter substantial difficulties when pursuing education and securing employment as well as obtaining social advancement. Inter-caste couples face honor killings while rural homes practice segregation and private urban employers discriminate against caste status thus showing that caste remains a living system in today's society. Caste discrimination operates in present times through elusive techniques that combine with economic status thus complicating detection and intervention. People of urban communities reveal their caste origins through questions related to their surname or regional ties or eating habits. Digital technology platforms provide fresh platforms where associates of different castes engage in political conflicts while simultaneously constructing their social group identities through social media. Caste discrimination has become a rising global issue which concerns scholars the most. Recent incidents at Silicon Valley business enterprises and American educational institutions showed how caste systems migrate through diasporic populations to generate discriminatory practices

in regions that lack or do not recognize caste bias protections

### **Anti-Caste Movements**

Ambedkar's Legacy Ambedkarite activism extends across various nations through a variety of anti-caste campaigns that consolidate his inclusive perspective. The Dalit Panthers movement in India formed during the 1970s through the inspiration of Black Panthers groups in America to defend Dalits against ongoing violence. Modern Dalit activists use literature and artistic expressions together with musical creation to fight against Brahminical cultural systems through the establishment of alternative cultural spaces. Political organization stays essential for the successful practice of anti-caste activism. The Bahujan Samaj Party has won substantial power through its intersocietal coalition between down caste groups. Reservations formulated by Ambedkar remain crucial for minority representation in educational institutions and political institutions despite ongoing difficulties in their execution. Digital activism stands as the most recent development within the realm of anti-caste activism. Yadav and other Dalits use Round Table India and Dalit Camera to foster representation that traditional media sources seldom champion. Social media campaigns establish direct links between caste oppression and worldwide discrimination efforts while building worldwide support networks.

### **Global Perspectives**

Caste as a Universal Human Rights Issue Caste discrimination currently receives growing worldwide acknowledgment because it qualifies as a fundamental human rights matter. Caste-based discrimination has gained international status as "discrimination based on work and descent" because the United Nations identified this systematic oppression of 260 million people worldwide. The worldwide approach to caste discrimination puts it within discussions about basic human rights and fundamental societal injustices and violent structures. Through anti-caste activism various meaningful alliances have been built with other social justice movements. The similarity between caste-based and racial oppression has established meaningful exchanges between Black civil rights activists and Dalit campaigners. According to feminist Dalit scholar Ruth Manorama Dalit women experience specific forms of discrimination because discrimination based on both caste and gender operates together. The emergence of international social connections follows the path laid out by Ambedkar to unite human rights movements with anti-caste activism. Through his well-known speech ("I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved")

Ambedkar showed his awareness about systemic connections between different types of discrimination and the need to address all forms of social injustice collectively.

**Conclusion: The Unfinished Revolution**

The revolutionary venture of Dr. Ambedkar ended when he passed away in 1956 although his enduring legacy guides modern battles against discrimination. The combination of educational initiatives constitutional safeguards political units and cultural changes provides a full system to tackle long-standing social ranking systems. The enduring caste discrimination proves Ambedkar correct when he argued that real equality demands emotional acceptance in addition to legal equality.