

P R E F A C E

Untouchability which is abolished by the Indian Constitution in 1950, was once an evil and inhuman practice in Hindu society. Untouchability, an Hindu's age-old social institution which condemned the so-called untouchables to sub-human social standard existed in the worst form in India as well as in Bombay Presidency since many years. The poor untouchables were the worst sufferers in Brahmin ruled Maharashtra. Their social slavery was worse than political slavery. The caste system was solid, unbreakable and enduring. Because the lower classes had no education, they had respected this mental slavery for ages.

But with the dawn of British rule in India as well as in the Bombay Presidency, liberal forces of the West started reacting with the stagnant social forces of uniform administration, rule of law and modern means of communication were irresistible forces that sufficiently pressurised the Indian society for change.

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The history of the nineteenth century is the history of Westernization of the world. The presence of the British in India brought about profound changes in the social and administrative conditions of the country and these in their turn reacted on the educational policy of Government.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the unchallenged leader of untouchables, spent his whole life for the liberation of downtrodden from the age old slavery that was going on in Hindu society since many years. Therefore, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was regarded as a saviour of untouchables and occupies an important place in the history of social reform movement of modern India.

However, before Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's rise, in Maharashtra, a slow movement was going on for the liberation of untouchables. After the fall of Peshwa (1818) the whole Maharashtra was came under the control of East India Company and Britishers introduced the rule of law and uniform administration. All were equal before law. New Western education was introduced in India. Thus, British rule in India was boon to downtrodden classes for thier upliftment.

Mahatma Jotirao Phooley, Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, Shahu Maharaja of Kolhapur, Karmveer V. R. Shinde, Gopal Baba Valangkar, Shivaram Janba Kamble etc. rendered great services for the cause of abolishing untouchability, prior to Ambedkarian era. Therefore, this is vital topic which I selected for my study and research.

Here an attempt has been made to study and give the survey of "Untouchables' Liberation Movement in Pre-Ambedkarian Era" in the Bombay Presidency with the help of original as well as secondary sources which are available to us.

In course of preparing this work I have received help and co-operation from many and I deem it my duty to express my deep gratitude to all of them.

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