

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

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Freedom struggle is a glorious chapter in the History of Pre-Independence India. The most meaningful aspect of this glorious chapter is strong social movement among Hindus for social equality and liberation. The social reform movement was for emancipation of backward classes and Indian women through education. Indian society was patriarchal society and women were given subordinate place that she could not heed up social activity; rather than household and looked after children only. She had not been given social justice equal to man.

This social evil that has been developed in Indian society, which was a blot on humanity, was to be wiped out. Many leaders and social reformers stood for emancipation of women in India. Liberation of women was sub-movement of Freedom struggle. It was an effect of English education that many developments occurred in social, economic, political and religious fields and day by day limitation in society became loose.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the movement for liberation of women took roots in India. Christian missionaries and British Government played important role in this movement. Firstly Raja Ram Mohan

Roy started the movement of women liberation in north India and then started the movement of women liberation of South India by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, and then it spread throughout India. Among the prominent leaders and social reformers who worked for the liberation of women who knew anguish and sorrow of them were Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, M.K. Gandhi, Dr. Anny Besant, Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai, Iravati Karve, Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve etc.

Social reformist tried to remove social evils and bad practices like untouchability, slavery, injustice with women, Sati system, child marriage, Johar, child sacrifice, Devadasi, Purdah system, prevention of widow-marriage etc.. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was one of those who have worked for the liberation of Indian women. He through his speeches and writings worked for awakening in the Indian society and Indian women.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was one of the greatest sons of India, a parliamentarian, scholar, constitutionalist of world repute. He has been universally acclaimed saviour of downtrodden, women in Indian society. As a great crusader of the Indian women, he waged a relentless struggle against the old social order which was based on injustice and was devoid of human dignity about Indian

women. He strove throughout his life to establish a new social order based on principles of liberty, equality and universal brotherhood.

Not only the depressed classes but Indian History as such owes a debt to this great humanitarian and social reformer for the awakening in the Indian women. Ambedkar always considered women's interest foremost and above the class in which he was born. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar occupies the pride of place among the great leaders who championed the cause of the Indian women and the weaker sections of society. But his ceaseless efforts and work, he inspired self-respect and dignity in the depressed people.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar occupies a place of pride among the great leaders, who dedicated their lives for establishing social and economic equality in our nation. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar became a pioneer of social awakening among Indian women and the depressed classes by his work which aroused self-respect and dignity in them. Dr. Ambedkar was a learned economist, brilliant and dynamic lawyer, and a legal luminary of international repute. He earned immense fame as the chief architect of the constitution of India. He possessed constructive outlook and was an action oriented politician and sociologist. Dr. Ambedkar made ceaseless efforts to secure

liberation of Indian women, downtrodden masses and untouchables, a place of pride.

According to Dr. Ambedkar the woman was free in Vedic time. He states that - "at one time woman was entitled to upanayan is clear from the Atharva Veda where, a girl is spoken of as being eligible for marriage having finished her Brahmachayra. From the Shruta Sutras it is clear that women could respect the mantras of the Vedas and that women were taught to read the Vedas. Panini's Ashtradhyaai bears testimony to the fact that women attended Gurukul (college) and studied the various shakhas (sections) of the Veda and become expert in Mimansa. Patanjali's Maha Bhashya shows that women were teachers and taught Vedas to girl students. Women are not to be free under any circumstances. In the opinion of Manu, day and night women must be kept independent by the males (of) their (families), and if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyment, they must be kept under one's control. 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. Woman must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations. However trifling (they may appear), if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families.

Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives. By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently even in her own house. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth in her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. She must not seek to separate herself from her father, husband or sons, by leaving them she would make both (her own and her husband's) families contemptible.

Women is not to have a right to divorce. The husband is declared to be one with the wife, which means that there could be no separation once a woman is married. Many Hindus stop here as though this is the whole story regarding Manu's law of divorce and keep on idealizing it by comforting their conscience with the thought that Manu regarded marriage as sacrament and, therefore, did not allow divorce.

The position of women upto Vedic time was good but later Vedic time, particularly the Rigvedic age, made the position of women lower. In the medieval time various restrictions on the women were imposed. But arrival of British in India started the various movements in the field of religious, political, social, economics

in India, which marked the change in the position that existed for ages.

Dr. Ambedkar, while comparing the Muslim society to the Hindu society says, -

*The Muslim have all the social evils that afflict the Hindu society. Indeed, the Muslims have all the social evils of Hindus and something more. That something more is compulsory system of Purdah (veil) for Muslim women. Among the Muslims Purdah has a religious sanctity; women in Islam are deprived of mental and moral nourishment owing to the Purdah system. This is a religious way implementing social segregation. As a consequence of the Purdah system, a segregation of the Muslim women is brought about. Being deprived of moral degeneration must and does set in. Being completely secluded from the outer world, they engage their minds in petty quarrels with the result that they become narrow and restricted in their outlook. Purdah women in particular become helpless, timid and unfit for any fight in life. A social system which cuts off all contact between the two sexes, produces an unhealthy tendency towards sexual excesses and unnatural and other morbid habits and ways". Such seclusion cannot but have its deteriorating effects upon the physical constitution of Muslim women. They are usually victims to anaemia, tuberculosis and pyorrhoea. Their bodies are deformed, with their backs bent, bones protruded, hands and feet crooked.*

*Ribs, joints and nearly all their bones ache. Heart palpitation is very often present in them. The result of this pelvic deformity is untimely death at the time of delivery.*

An impassional appeal to caste off the evil practices and customs among certain sections of the depressed classes was made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at the meeting at Damodar Thakersey Hall, Bombay, on Tuesday night. The meeting was largely attended by men and women belonging to the Devadasi, Potraj, Aradhi and Jogini sects and was held to accord support to the mass conversion move inaugurated at Yeola. Dr. Ambedkar made a fervent appeal, especially to the women, most of whom had come from Kamathipura. "Whether you change your religion along with us or not", said Dr. Ambedkar, addressing the women, "it does not matter much to me. But I insist that if you want to be with us, you must give up your disgraceful life. The Mahar women of Kamathipura are a shame to the community. Unless you are prepared to change your ways we shall have nothing to do with you and we shall have no use for you.

Dr. Ambedkar had moved a non-official resolution regarding the measures for birth control in the Bombay Legislative Assembly on 10 November, 1938. Dr. Ambedkar was the leader of the Independent Labour Party in the

Assembly during this period. Immediately after the introduction of the 1935 Act of India elections were outstanding during the period of the Assembly. He used the forum of non-official resolution to invite attention of the party in power to some of the fundamental problems in the country in general and Bombay Presidency in particular. The problem of birth control was one such problem. Gandhism and birth control. One of the distinguishing features of Dr. Ambedkar's leadership during this period is that he was probably the only political leader in India who had strongly advocated the cause of birth control. Gandhism was the most dominant political philosophy in those days in India and the thinking of a large number of legislators was naturally profoundly influenced by the Gandhian approach to the problem. Gandhism was opposed to any artificial measure for birth control. Mahatma Gandhi had faith only in the concept of self-control or abstinence. The legislative party in the Bombay Assembly was committed to Gandhian philosophy and, therefore, most of the members of the congress party in the Assembly were against the measures for birth control. The champions of Gandhian philosophy advanced a number of arguments to oppose the measures for birth control. Shri Morarji Desai, who was Revenue Minister, for example said, "what I want to ask you; all the while, is that people should

have self-control. Self-control is a very difficult thing. In this matter we do not expect that everybody will reach that high stage of Brahmacharya which M.K. Gandhi expects for himself and for others.

In short, M.K. Gandhi and Barrister Jinhah opposed to Dr. Ambedkar about family planning. Because M.K. Gandhi's faith on self-control and Barrister Jinhah's faith on Islam religion were well-known. There is easy divorce system and provision of four wives in Islam.

Dr. Ambedkar championed the cause of suffering humanity throughout his life. In the Indian social system women and untouchables were the two sections of people that suffered for ages together. Hindu religion condemned them as low born human beings and shouldered no responsibility of uplifting them. Dr. Ambedkar was one who struggled very hard to secure human right to them from social and political platform.

Dr. Ambedkar ultimately succeeded in safeguarding the rights of downtrodden and women in the constitution of India that was promulgated on 26 January 1950. Right from the beginning of his public career he raised his voice against the slavery of women in India. He felt that half the population of Indians is of women and they were kept out of education condemning them as

unqualified for education. Mother plays an important role in formative years of the children. Keeping the mother in slavery how can the society attain the level of culture. Therefore, while addressing in Mahad Satyagraha he asked the untouchable women to join his movement, because it is disgraceful that child that they gave birth to is condemned as untouchable. While giving evidence before the franchise committee in 1927, Dr. Ambedkar advocated that every woman must be enfranchised. He advocated the same in Round Table Conferences 1930-32. But Dr. Ambedkar's contribution towards Indian women liberation was the Hindu Code Bill, which he introduced as Law Minister. Dr. Ambedkar could not see the bill gone through in the Parliament. The Bill was passed in the subsequent years. According to Hindu Code daughter also was made the heir alongwith son. This was a great blow to the Indian tradition that considered male along as important and daughter was made to occupy the secondary position.