



## Ambedkar's Dream of Social Equality and Justice- A review

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**Abstract:** Throughout his childhood, Ambedkar faced the stigmas of caste discrimination. Hailing from the Hindu Mahar caste, his family was viewed as "untouchable" by the upper classes. The discrimination and humiliation haunted Ambedkar at the Army school. Fearing social outcry, the teachers would segregate the students of lower class from that of Brahmins and other upper classes. The untouchable students were often asked by the teacher to sit outside the class. After shifting to Satara, he was enrolled at a local school but the change of school did not change the fate of young Bhimrao. Discrimination followed wherever he went. After coming back from the US, Ambedkar was appointed as the Defence secretary to the King of Baroda but there also he had to face the humiliation for being an 'Untouchable'. Throughout his childhood, Ambedkar faced the stigmas of caste discrimination. Hailing from the Hindu Mahar caste, his family was viewed as "untouchable" by the upper classes. The discrimination and humiliation haunted Ambedkar at the Army school. Fearing social outcry, the teachers would segregate the students of lower class from that of Brahmins and other upper classes. The untouchable students were often asked by the teacher to sit outside the class. After shifting to Satara, he was enrolled at a local school but the change of school did not change the fate of young Bhimrao. Discrimination followed wherever he went. After coming back from the US, Ambedkar was appointed as the Defence secretary to the King of Baroda but there also he had to face the humiliation for being an 'Untouchable'. He received his PhD degree in Economics in 1927. On 8 June, 1927, he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Columbia.

**Key words:** untouchability, dalits, marginalised, massacre

### Review

After returning to India from the US, Bhimrao Ambedkar decided to fight against the caste discrimination that plagued him throughout his life. In his testimony before the South borough Committee in preparation of the Government of India Act in 1919, Ambedkar opined that there should be separate electoral system for the Untouchables and other marginalised communities. He contemplated the idea of reservations for Dalits and other religious outcasts. His reputation as a scholar led to his appointment as free India's first Law Minister and chairman of the

committee responsible to draft a constitution for independent India.

He dreamt of establishing a country without caste discrimination, a society with social equality and social justice. He incorporated all his ideas to liberate the dalits in the constitution too. Did his dream realise?

He hated Hindu society which looked down upon the dalits as untouchables and not as human beings. Dalits were treated as dogs and other animals. His popular statement 'I was born Hindu but I will not die a Hindu.'



Mahatma Gandhi's statement 'Untouchability is part of the Hindu society' is an evidence that they don't have the minimum concern for the establishment of social justice in the society. It was only on the insistence of Ambedkar that Gandhi was forced to rule against untouchability.

If the Hindu society had allowed us into temples those days we would not have had to look for another religion and we would not have had to hate Hindu religion.

It took so many years for the untouchability to be eradicated from the society completed.

Even today, many people of upper caste say that they have many friends from SCs and STs and they openly say that they dine with dalits and they don't have any differences and they say all castes are equal. But do they give their daughter in marriage to my son who is eligible in all respects with their requirements? Do they agree to marriage if their son falls in love with my daughter?

What did Chiranjeevi do when his daughter loved someone from a lower community?

They are ready to get marital alliances from other upper castes but not the dalits.

Nagarjuna's son married a Reddy, Nagarjuna's nephew married a Reddy and Chiranjeevi's son married a Brahmin. But none of them agree to marry a Dalit. But all their fans are from dalits mostly.

A recent atrocity in America is significant to mention here.

Only a few crimes are done against Indians in America and the Government of India has taken great concern and

reacted immediately. But there are many atrocities taking place in various places on dalits who are also Indians but none of the Govt representatives react. What an irony!

This also shows that they reacted only because the man suffered in America is from upper caste. If he happened to be from Dalit community the reaction may not have come from Govt, I presume.

Let's observe some of the atrocities from the past which are recorded due to the sensation. Of course there were many forgotten and ignored without coming into light without attention of the media.

In 1968 Kilvenmani massacre, 44 striking Dalit (untouchable) village labourers were murdered by a gang, allegedly sent by their landlords, as they were demanding higher wages. (Tamil Nadu,)

In 1981 Phoolan Devi case she belonged to lower community but none bothered when she was raped by Thakur men but criticised when she killed them. (Uttar Pradesh,)

In 1985 Karamchedu massacre which occurred in Karamchedu, Andhra Pradesh on 17 July 1985, many Madiga caste dalits were killed by Kammas the then ruling caste in 1985. Many people lost their lives in that tragic incident.

In 1990s Ranvir Sena, the group is based amongst the higher-caste landlords, and carries out actions against the outlawed Naxals in rural areas. It has committed violent acts against Dalits and other members of the scheduled caste community in an effort to prevent their land from going to them.

In 1991-Tsundur Andhra Pradesh, a mob of over 300 people, composed of mainly Reddys and Telagas chased down the



victims along the bund of an irrigation canal. This happened after police department asked locals to go aggressive against large number of eve teasing. In the trial which was concluded, 21 people were sentenced to life imprisonment and 35 others to a year of rigorous imprisonment and a penalty of Rs. 2,000 each, on the 31 July 2007, by special judge established for the Purpose under SC,STs Atrocities(Prevention) Act. But in a recent judgement all of them were acquitted.

In 1996 Bathani Tola Massacre, Bihar, 21 Dalits were killed by the Ranvir Sena in Bathani Tola, Bhojpur in Bihar on 11 July 1996. Among the dead were 11 women, six children and three infants. On 17 April 2012, the Patna High Court acquitted 23 men convicted of the murders.

In 1997 Laxmanpur Bathe Carnage, Bihar, on 1st December 1997, Ranvir Sena gunned down 58 Dalits at Laxmanpur Bathe.

1997 Melavalavu Massacre, Tamil Nadu, Melavalavu in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, was declared a reserved panchayat for dalits in the October 1996 local election. Dominant and upper castes did not take this lightly and the elections could not be held. There was a second attempt to hold elections, but violence and booth capturing foiled it. Elections were eventually held on 30 December 1996. Upper castes boycotted it. Dalit candidates got elected to the president and vice-president posts, among others. Yet they weren't allowed to enter the panchayat office by the dominant castes. On 30 June 1997, the president and vice-president, along with three others, were murdered in broad daylight 1997

In Ramabai killings, Mumbai, On 11 July 1997, a statue of B.R. Ambedkar in the Dalit colony of Ramabai was desecrated by unknown individuals. The peaceful protest turned violent by the police, killing ten people in police firing, including a bystander who had not been involved in the protests. Later in the day, 26 people were injured when the police carried out a lathi charge against the protesters

In 1999 Bant Singh case, Punjab, in January 1999, four members of the village panchayat of Bhungar Khera village in Abohar paraded a handicapped Dalit woman, Ramvati devi naked through the village. No action was taken by the police, despite local Dalit protests. It was only on July 20 that the four panchayat members and the head Ramesh Lal were arrested, after the State Home Department was compelled to order an inquiry into the incident.

On the evening of January 5, 2006 Bant Singh, Mazhabi, Dalit Sikh, was attacked by unknown assailants. His injuries necessitated medical amputation. He alleges that this was in retaliation for actively working to secure justice for his daughter, who was gang raped by upper caste members of his village in Punjab five years earlier.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

A 55-year-old Dalit Sikh woman, Sawinder Kaur has been tortured, stripped and tied to a tree in Ram Duali village of Punjab because her nephew eloped with a girl from the same community. The police arrested four persons for allegedly committing the crime on 9 September 2007.

In 2000, Caste violence in Karnataka, Eight people were killed in Karnataka in an outbreak of caste violence.



In 2003 Muthanga Incident Kerala, on 19th Feb 2003, the Adivasis/Tribals gathered under Adivasi Gothra Mahasbha (ADMS), at Muthanga and they faced 18 rounds of police firing in which 2 fatal casualties were confirmed officially. The Tribals gathered in protest to the Government's delay in allotting them land, which was signed in October 2001. Later, the casualty toll had reached 5 deaths among the Tribals. Vinod, a Police Constable who died, was also a Dalit.

In 2006 Khairlanji massacre Maharashtra, On September 29, 2006, four members of the Bhotmange family belonging to the Mahar community were killed by a mob of 40 people belonging to the Maratha Kunbi caste. The incident happened in Kherlanji, a small village in Bhandara district of Maharashtra. The Mahars are Dalit, while the Kunbi are classified as an Other Backward Class by the Government of India. The Bhotmanges were stripped naked and paraded to the village square by a mob of 40 people. Initial reports suggested that the women of the family, Surekha and Priyanka, were raped,

In 2006 Dalit protests in Maharashtra, in November–December 2006, the desecration of an Ambedkar statue in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) triggered violent protests by Dalits in Maharashtra. Several people remarked that the protests were fueled by the Kherlanji Massacre. During the violent protests, the Dalit protestors set three trains on fire, damaged over 100 buses and clashed with police. At least four deaths and many more injuries were reported.

In the Indian province of Rajasthan, between the years 1999 and 2002, crimes

against Dalits average at about 5024 a year, with 46 killings and 138 cases of rape

In 2011 in Mirchpur, Haryana, dalits were killed by jats in Mirchpur village in Narnaund, Sub District of Hissar. The houses of dalits were burned prompting them to flee the village.

In 2012 Dharmapuri violence, approximately 268 dwellings – huts, tiled-roof and one or two-room concrete houses of Dalits of the Adi Dravida community near Naikkankottai in Dharmapuri district of western Tamil Nadu were torched by the higher-caste Vanniyar most dominant caste group

In 2013 Marakkanam violence, Tamil Nadu, violence broke out between the villagers along East Coast Road near Marakkanam.

In 2014 Javkheda Hatyakand, Maharashtra, 3 dalits were murdered in Javkheda, Maharashtra

In 2015 Jat-Dalit violence in Dangawas, Rajasthan, clashes between Jats and Dalits in Dangawas village of Rajasthan's Nagaur district left 4 people dead and 13 injured.

2016 Rohith Vemula Suicide in Central University of Hyderabad on 18 January 2016 sparked protests and outrage from across India and gained widespread media attention as an alleged case of discrimination against Dalits and backward classes in India in which elite educational institutions have been purportedly seen as an enduring vestige of caste-based discrimination against students belonging to "backward classes"



A recent shameful incident in Rajasthan that was not even brought to light by the media is shocking. The lower caste women who went to fetch water from taps where upper caste women collect water were stripped of their clothes and were beaten by the upper caste women. What an ignominious incident that should attract the attention of the world. But it is kept in the dark. The video goes viral in the net but nobody cares and reacts or comments!

The media is ever ready to project any small incident of importance to limelight has not cared to air this incident at all. Perhaps this may not in any way add to their TRP ratings! (Television Rating Point (TRP) is a tool provided to judge which programmes are viewed the most). I believe the media is in the hands of the upper caste business magnates. A recent revelation in the whatsapp showed that 99% of all the print and electronic media is owned by upper caste barons or the political parties.

This did not appear even in the internet while I was browsing!

The video came out from an individual who captured this incident out of his interest.

Is this not a clear evidence of violation of human rights? Are we still in age of untouchability? Can't the lower caste women draw water from any tap in India? Are they banned from this by any law in India?

The lower caste women were simply blamed of theft by the upper caste women just to cover their fault.

During Independence movement Ambedkar asked for a referendum only after ten years whether to continue the reservations or not (forced by Gandhi).

He was right when proposed referendum for twenty five years because we see clear incidents of caste discrimination in remote villages unconsciously as well as in cities consciously.

What Ambedkar presumed was true in the case of reserved constituencies. Though the reserved constituencies produce candidates from reserved categories they will be bound by the code of conduct of the party. He cannot do anything beyond the party constitution. If an incident like the above (atrocities on Dalit) takes place in a reserved constituency, the reserved MLA or MP from that constituency may not be able to react or comment unless he knows the pulse of the party chief. He has no free will. He cannot help his own people without the consent of the high command of the party.

In 1932, the British announced the formation of separate electorates for the 'Depressed Classes' in the Communal Award. Gandhi was in for a toss. He decided to fast unto death to overturn the decision. On the eve of his now 'historic' fast unto death at Yervada Central Jail in Pune, Gandhi wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India. The question of separate electorate is still relevant today.

Ambedkar wrote later on Gandhi and his fast thus: There was nothing noble in the fast. It was a foul and filthy act. The Fast was not for the benefit of the Untouchables. It was against them and was the worst form of coercion against a helpless people to give up the constitutional safeguards.

The conditions are no way different today.



Ambedkar's dream of social justice and social equality will not be completely realised in near future.

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