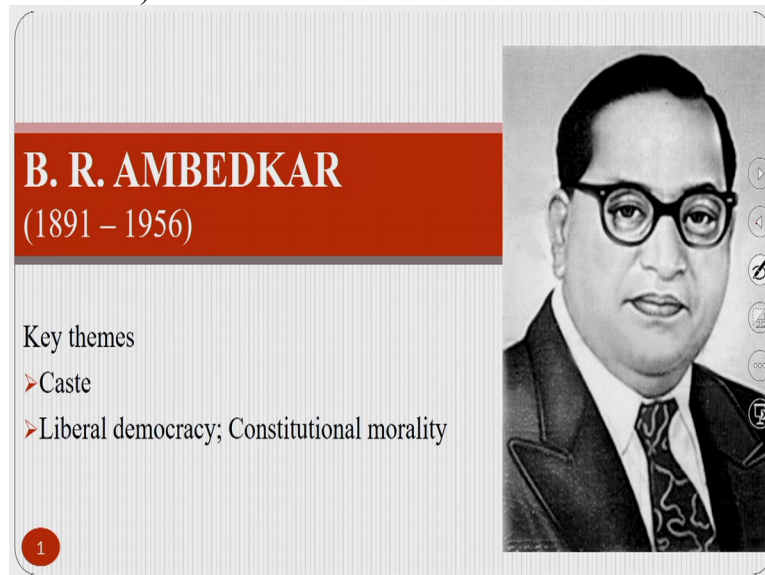


Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought
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Lecture – 22
B.R. Ambedkar: Introduction

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Hello and welcome friends to this lecture on B.R. Ambedkar and from B.R. Ambedkar we will be focussing basically his thought on caste and also his views on liberal democracy and constitutional moralities.

So, we will have three lecture on B.R. Ambedkar; today we will discuss his views on his personal, political life, his engagement with untouchable questions and his difference with Gandhi and congress and also his views on partition very briefly and then will conclude today's lecture.

In the next two lecture in the second lecture; we are going to discuss his views on caste through his text annihilation of cast. And also his debate with Mahatma Gandhi on the question of eradicating or using his word annihilation of caste and in final concluding lecture we will discuss his views on liberal democracy and constitutional morality.

So, if we look at Ambedkar and his appropriation and misappropriation, his symbolic use by many political parties not necessarily sharing the substantial argument that he is making about restructuring Indian society or the hierarchical relationship embedded in

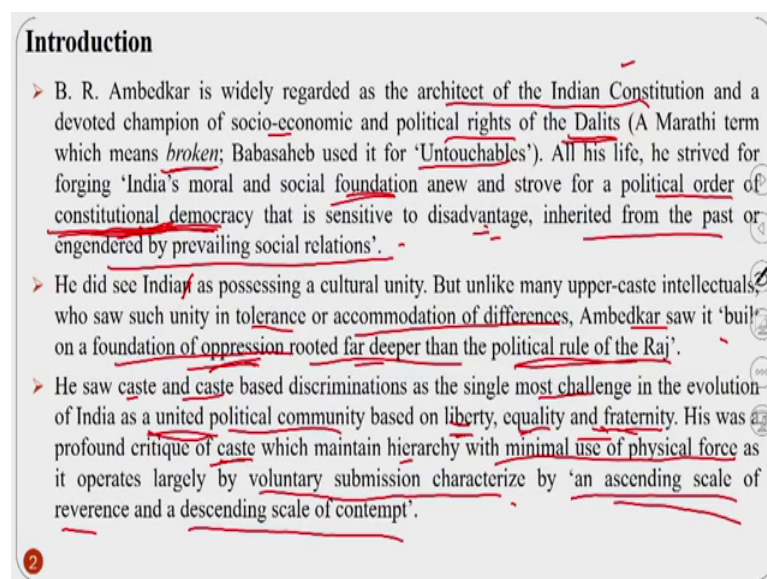
Hinduism and how to eradicate. So, they may or may not necessary share with the substantial arguments Ambedkar is making a burden.

But in contemporary times we will find all parties universally almost right to use Ambedkar and his works at least symbolically to mobilize the public support or especially the wood from the depressed classes. And therefore, there is a kind of absence of serious engagement which with his thought and philosophy.

So, you may also find the almost common sensical understanding of Ambedkar merely as a leader of Dalits or at based constitution maker. But Ambedkar also dwell upon a lot of issues social and political issues and develop his on thought thought about that. And his visionary thinking or prophetic predictions has resonated in many of the post colonial politics that is unfolding certainly from 1980s and 90.

So, there is a kind of revisiting or reengagement with Ambedkar in our contemporary times and there are many political parties explicitly appropriating Ambedkar's and many groups using Ambedkar as a icon of empowerment as a liberation and the crick and many parties trying to appropriate Ambedkar symbolically and use Ambedkar's icon to kind of start alternative politics. But there are also serious limitation in such appropriation and miss appropriation with the critically thinking or analysing Ambedkar's; Ambedkar son which we will discuss during the course of our three lectures.

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Introduction

- B. R. Ambedkar is widely regarded as the architect of the Indian Constitution and a devoted champion of socio-economic and political rights of the Dalits (A Marathi term which means *broken*; Babasaheb used it for 'Untouchables'). All his life, he strived for forging 'India's moral and social foundation anew and strove for a political order of constitutional democracy that is sensitive to disadvantage, inherited from the past or engendered by prevailing social relations'.
- He did see India as possessing a cultural unity. But unlike many upper-caste intellectuals, who saw such unity in tolerance or accommodation of differences, Ambedkar saw it 'built on a foundation of oppression rooted far deeper than the political rule of the Raj'.
- He saw caste and caste based discriminations as the single most challenge in the evolution of India as a united political community based on liberty, equality and fraternity. His was a profound critique of caste which maintain hierarchy with minimal use of physical force as it operates largely by voluntary submission characterize by 'an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt'.

If we look at B.R. Ambedkar who is widely regarded as the architect of Indian constitution or the maker of Indian constitution; so, the famous icon or statue of Ambedkar carrying Indian constitution in one hand and showing the with the other hand; have become a kind of symbolic image to those who cannot read or write constitution and yet they can affiliate or they can associate themselves with the constitution and the rights (Refer Time: 04:44) therein.

So, the statue of Ambedkar in different parts of the country have used in a way by the Indian state to at least symbolically send across our put across the message, about the role of constitution as the basis of governance or the institutionally structured in India.

So, B.R. Ambedkar who is who was the chairman of the drafting commission is rightly regarded or widely regarded as the architect of Indian constitution. Beside that he was also a devoted champion of socio economic and the political rights of the Dalits. Now this word Dalits is used by Ambedkar and in Marathi this word is mean broken; and for Dalits the word untouchables was also very much used in the political discourse of colonial India. And all his life he strived for forging India's moral and social foundation anew and strove for a political order of constitutional democracy; that is sensitive to disadvantage inherited from the past or engendered by the prevailing social relation.

So, Ambedkar despite of his devotion to the interest or to the causes of socially, economically and historically depressed classes of Dalits; he was equally involved in forging a kind of moral and political bond or foundation of a new India, which would be a kind of political order of constitutional democracy; that is sensitive to the disadvantage inherited from the past or because of the prevailing social hierarchy.

So, Indian society was or is divided on the caste line, religious line, linguistic lines and the caste discrimination which is there for thousands of years and there have been different movement resistance to such caste hierarchy start from Buddhism, Jainism to the Bhakti movement of mediaeval India. And also in modern times when Jyotiba Phule and many others were arguing or Nanak and many others were arguing about equality social equality.

Ambedkar developed it further to make untouchability as the central question of political discourse. So, he differs with many contemporary leaders and parties including Congress, Gandhi and Nehru on the question of untouchability. So, how one can form a

political unit or Indian nation as a political community based on certain principles, when the society is deeply divided on the basis of caste.

So, without eradicating or annihilating the cast and this discrimination and humiliation on the basis of caste he has experienced; throughout his life. So, he was arguing that without the eradication or annihilation of caste; one cannot really pause a nation or a political committee based on the principle of equality, fraternity and liberty. So, he was also trying to envision or forge a kind of political and moral foundation; based on constitutional democracy and not on the basis of the whims and fancies or the particular culture or religious worldview, but the constitutional democracy he was (Refer Time: 08:17).

We will discuss more on this and we will discuss his views on liberal democracy and constitutional morality. But he was trying to envision a political and moral foundation of new India which would be based on a constitutional democracy that will be sensitive to the disadvantage, which they have inherited from the first or their in general by the prevailing social relations. He did not see India has possessing a cultural unity; especially when he was studying in Columbia university or had engaged or was trying to make sense of India from a distance; then he saw it as a cultural unity.

But his sense of seeing India as a cultural unit was very different from many of his contemporaries especially those who came from the upper caste intellectuals. So, many upper caste intellectuals talks about diversity or heterogene actigene India and also the unity that encompasses those diversity and heterogeneity and that unity for them the upper caste intellectual was the tolerance and accommodation of the difference. So, that is what gives unity to India; the tolerance or accommodation of difference according to the upper caste intellectual.

Contrary to their understanding of this unity; Ambedkar thoughts and there he says with many scholars were sceptical of the feasibility of Indian nation would or India or as a single political unit. For Ambedkar saw this unity built on a foundation of operation rooted far deeper than the political rule of the raj. So, here it is also perhaps necessary or important to understand the question of political freedom or the social reforms movement.

And in many of my lecturers previous lectures I have discussed this question; that how a modern (Refer Time: 10:28) Indian renaissance that we call; it started with social and religious reforms movement and how over a period of time the political freedom or the struggle against the British to attain independence was considered prior to this say social reforms and other.

So, within the Congress; within the political public discourse during the colonial times this question of social reforms on the one hand and attaining political freedom from the British rule which was the root cause of India's degrading a status. So, there many leaders were arguing that one can attain the independence and then after attainment of independence one can reform the social issue and social (Refer Time: 11:16).

But of course, there are exception to that rules certainly Gandhi in mid 1930s beginning to take or engage with this question of untouchability very seriously. And especially after 1911 census about caste and community which provided the basis of such kind of political discourse and seriousness to engage; with the question of untouchability and eradicate the social hierarchy, that exists within the Hindu society was something many leaders began to take seriously.

And from 1920s the question of untouchability becomes the major question during the anti colonial movement. And Ambedkar provided the solid leadership durable different organisations and they differed from each other about how to reform society how to bring equality and remove hierarchical relationship. But Ambedkar provided the intellectual as well as the political leadership to the question of untouchability and represented himself and there was a kind of conscience; there was a kind of acceptance of him as the representative of the excluded community or the bahisrit bharat as one of his magazine call.

So, for Ambedkar the operation or the exploitations that a majority of Indian population has to undergo; is not just because of the political rule or the exploitation of the British, but it has a deeper root in the Hindu caste society, which excluded a vast number of a number of their own followers or their own fellow member from accessing the public tanks or wells or temples.

And he began to conceptualize and articulate the root cause of such operation or such discrimination against the untouchables or the Dalits as he called them. So, for them the

unity of this India is based on the foundation of operation, which is rooted much deeper than the political rule of the raj.

And therefore, for him the question of social and economic equality of depressed classes or the untouchables become the central question of political movement and activities. And therefore, he saw caste and caste based discrimination as the single most challenge in the evolution of India as a united political community based on the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity.

And in this for him the fraternity treating the other with dignity or with respect other the mutual love and respect for the fellow feelings which is the basis of all political community as a single unit is lacking in India because there is the prevalence of caste or caste based discrimination. And before eradicating this impediments; it is difficult or it is impossible for India to evolve as a political community, where there is a respect for the principle of fraternity equality and liberty.

So, his philosophy or thought was a profound critique of caste which maintain hierarchy with minimal use of physical force. It operates largely why voluntary submission characterized by an ascending a scale of reverence and a descending a scale of contempt.

So, Ambedkar perhaps understood the basis or the foundation of this caste based discrimination which is so prevalent, so widely internalized by different sections of Indian society; that it does not require the use of physical force to reproduce itself. So, it reproduce itself by voluntary submission and that voluntary submission is there is so much of socio economic and political privilege attached to a particular caste; that different layers of caste because of their different level of privilege that that is given; they do not come together to eradicate the whole system as such.

So, they faced discrimination; they faced different level of privilege or deprivation, but they did not come together to eradicate it or sheet as a common problem. So, he beautifully narrate it this is a caste this voluntary submission characterized by ascending a scale of reverence. So, the lower caste having reverence for the upper; immediate upper caste that intermediary caste having reverence to the upper caste and so on and so forth and in reverse order also the contempt for the lower and lower reverence.

This is the way in which caste continuously reproduce itself without the use of sheer violence or physical force. So, caste in India is something, which is rooted much beyond the mere social or political discrimination. But it has a rooted in the psychology or in the sense of selfhood or subjecthood among different sections of Indian society.

And there the discrimination is layered not one against the other because so many heterogeneities within the depressed classes or depressed caste that exist; that it becomes difficult for them to come together and fight this common problem or common impediments for this enrich. This perpetuates not just discrimination, but also the humiliation and that becomes the basis of many new kind of civilization about understanding in society through this concept of humiliation in the contemporary worlds.

But for Ambedkar he first understood what sustains the caste even when there is the minimal use of physical force. And why people continuously justify the caste system or sustain it; even when they are trying to forge a nation which will be based on the question of equality, liberty and fraternity; so some of these questions remain very profound in his thought and thinking.

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Personal and political life

- Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 into an untouchable caste; Mahar who were recruited by the Britishers in the military for their loyalty. His father Ramji Sakpal was the instructor in local military school.
- Ambedkar studied in a school in Satara, where influenced by his intellectual abilities a Brahmin teacher changed his surname from 'Ambavadekar' to 'Ambedkar'. Ambedkar completed his high school in 1907 and graduated from prestigious Elphinstone College in 1912 where he studied English and Persian.
- He received one of the two scholarships, Maharajah of Baroda, Sayaji Rao III; an active supporter of social reforms, instituted for the backward caste students to study abroad and joined Columbia University in 1913. Here Ambedkar completed his Masters and earned a PhD on National Dividend: A Historical and Analytical Study. Here, he also wrote a major paper on "Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development".

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Now to look at the personal and political life of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar; some of the basic facts about his life is that he was born on 14th April 1891 into an untouchable caste Mahar. And this caste in western India where recruited by the Britishers in the military for their loyalty or for their commitment to the work and diligence.

So, his father Ramji Sakpal was the instructor in the local military school and he was influenced by Jyotirao Phule and many progressive groups or social reforms movement that was emerging in western India. So, Ambedkar was influenced by his father in a sense to understand in the very childhood the question of untouchability and how to fight untouchability or attain the respect or dignity in the eyes of others. So, Ambedkar studied in a school in Satara, where influenced by his intellectual abilities a Brahmin teacher; changed his surname from Ambavadekar to Ambedkar. And Ambedkar completed his high school in 1907 and graduated from prestigious Elphinstone College in 1912, where he studied English and Persian.

So after graduating, he received one of the two scholarships which Maharaja of Baroda Shivaji Rao III, who himself was an active supporter of social reforms instituted for the backward caste students to study abroad. And after receiving one of that scholarship; Ambedkar joined Columbia University in US and he went there in 1913. Here Ambedkar completed his Masters and earned a PhD on National Dividend; A Historical and Analytical Study.

And he also wrote a major text which form is thought or his engagement with the cast question which is entitled; Caste in India, Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development. So, despite of his interest in economics, laws or the monetary policies or the welfare issues; Ambedkar also remained deeply involved with this question of caste and the justification, the basis of this caste system and how it can be eradicated and how it has also continuously practiced in contemporary India as well.

So, this question of caste remains very central to his political life. So, after he completing his MA and PhD from Columbia University, Ambedkar moved to London and joined London School of Economics in 1916 for another doctorate.

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- Ambedkar moved to London and joined London School of Economics in 1916 for another doctorate. But he had to interrupt his studies and come back to India in 1917 to serve in the administration of Baroda state. However, the caste discriminations and humiliations, he faced there, led him to quit that job and move to Bombay.
- He was appointed as a Professor at the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay but there too he suffered caste discriminations from the other faculties. It was at this time that he began to campaign earnestly for Dalit's socio-economic and political rights. In 1919, he gave evidence to the British in favour of separate electorates and reserved seats for Untouchables and religious minorities ahead of the Government of India Act 1919 which laid the foundations for Indian self-government.
- In 1920, he started a weekly Marathi paper *Maanavak*, which strongly criticized the caste hierarchy and called for a Dalit awakening and mobilization against inequality. Along with Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur he organised First All India Conference of the Depressed Classes in Nagpur, where he stressed upon the fact that depressed classes in India had to fight their own battle.

And there was also a time that UK and education or higher education that one attains in UK was considered as if with more respect than a degree that one earns from say US or some other foreign University.

So, he also went to London for another degree, but he had to interrupt his studies and come back to India in 1917 to serve in the administration of Baroda state. However, the caste discrimination and the humiliation he faced there because no landlord was willing to lend their home to him because he comes from an excluded community or the untouchable community.

So, this humiliation and discrimination that he faced there forced him to quit the job and move to Bombay which is now Mumbai and he was appointed as a Professor at Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, which was established on line with London School of Economics at Bombay. But whatever he also suffered or faced the caste based discrimination there from the other faculties of the college. So, it was at this time; that he seriously began to campaign for Dalits socio economic and political rights and in 1919 he gave evidence to the British in favour of separate electorates.

Then he gradually develop a; sense that untouchables have to fight their own struggle. So, the congress or the British cannot fight on their behalf; so, they began to seriously articulate this question of caste and also began to involve in the practical politics or the; electoral politics to secure the rights of Dalits and or depressed classes. So, in 1919 when

remember there was this almost every ten year new reforms act or constitutional development to Indianised Indian administration or Indian bureaucracy. So, to say in 1919 there was such attempt and he gave the evidence to the British administration for the separate electorates of the untouchables and results it for them and religious minorities much before Government of India Act, 1919, which laid the foundation of self government or local self Government in India.

In 1920s he started weekly Marathi paper called Mooknayak, which strongly criticize the caste hierarchy and called for a Dalit awakening and mobilization against the inequality or the discrimination that they face in their everyday life in accessing the public space or public places or water resources or temples and such day to day discriminations and hierarchy; that they had they had to face.

So, the Mooknayak was one of the first journal he started in 1920s to express the anguish the demands or to mobilise the public opinion; especially among the depressed class to make them aware or politically aware about their rights in rights on public resources like tanks, wells and temples etcetera. So, he also along with Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur organised first all India conference of the depressed classes; in Nagpur where he stressed upon the fact that the depressed classes in India had to fight their own struggle.

So, for Ambedkar his lifelong politics was to enable or to empower the depressed classes or the untouchables through education, through awareness, through public activities, through satyagraha of different kind to fight for their self respect, to fight for their dignity and to fight injustice or the discrimination that they are subjected to in their daily life. So, they he was articulating a struggle for untouchables which would be which would be independent.

From say the politics or the movement done by done by congress and its leadership, and also the left parties and others. So, he realised that the depressed classes has to fight their own struggle in India and he was very concerned about the status or the rights of untouchables or depressed classes in free India. And from 1920s till 1940s almost for 2, 3 decades he constantly or continuously through different mechanisms, through his writings, through his public activities by organising different groups, by launching some protest movements or satyagraha; he was trying to actually mobilize the excluded

community or to give them a sense of empowerment to fight injustice and discrimination.

And also invite them or to convince them that they had to fight their own struggle and it is not or it cannot be done by the congress and Gandhi or any other party. However, in 1920s Ambedkar went back to London to resume his studies.

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- In 1920, Ambedkar went back to London to resume his studies. His DSc thesis was on 'The Problem of the Rupee'. He spent few months in Germany and went back to England to qualify as a Barrister at Grey's Inn, London. He returned to India and began his legal practice at Bombay High Court. He also taught mercantile law at Batliboi's Accountancy Training Institute, Bombay from June 1925 to March 1928. He also taught law at Government Law College, Bombay for about a year in 1928-1929.
- In 1924, he started a society to spread education among the Depressed Classes. Same year, Ambedkar intensified his campaign for social reform by establishing the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (Group for the Wellbeing of the Excluded) to promote socio-political awareness among the Dalits and raise public awareness about their grievances. In 1927 he led famous Mahatma Satyagraha to assert the rights of 'untouchables' to access public tanks and wells. It was confronted by caste Hindus. Ambedkar and his followers publicly burnt 'Manusmriti' to defy religious and ritual confinements upheld by caste Hindus. In 1927, He also started a fortnightly journal, Bahishkrit Bharat.
- He was appointed as a member of Legislative Assembly of Bombay in 1927 for five years and since then took legal and administrative routes to promote and protect the interest of the depressed classes. Over the next twenty years he played a key role in organising the Untouchables.

And his DSc thesis was The Problem of the Rupee and he spent few months in Germany and went back to England to qualify as a Barrister at Grey Inn in London and he returned to India and began his legal practice at Bombay High Court.

He also taught mercantile law at Batlibois Accountancy Training Institute Bombay from June 1925 to March 1928. And he also taught law at Government Law College, Bombay about a year in 1928-29. So, in 1924 he started a society to spread education among the depressed classes. So, Ambedkar besides his public activities or the political movement or negotiation with the British to safeguard the interest of the Dalits; he was equally focusing on the education as the mechanism to fight injustices or fight discrimination.

And Ambedkar himself was consists of the role of education in terms of developing the sensibilities; against any form of injustices or discrimination and also to fight such discrimination and injustices; so education for Ambedkar is central in the emancipation

of the depressed classes or untouchables. And he emphasize on the rule and a spread of education especially among the depressed classes.

Same here he intensified his campaign for social reform by establishing Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha or group for the well being of the excluded. So, for him in India there is a two category; two India in a sense of one upper caste India or privileged India and the other is the excluded India or the silence or a majority of publision, who is subjected to a kind of psychological condition where they submit to the caste discrimination and caste hierarchy even without realising it; forget about resisting or fighting such discrimination and injustices.

So, Ambedkar was fighting for such empowerment for the depressed classes not just to fight them that will come after the education after the awareness, but to realise that their description and their differences. So, in the sense Ambedkar was most radical and revolutionary in his approach to polities about social reforms and also about the formation of political community. So, he intensified his campaign for social reforms by establishing Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha to promote socio political awareness among the Dalits and raise public awareness about their grievances.

So, he constantly through his writings, through his petition, through his engagements with the British and officials and also through phase like Mooknayak and later on mini a journals; he started he developed or made in a sense the question of untouchability as the central question in Indian political movement. And certainly Gandhi began to take this question of untouchability very seriously after such mobilization or articulation of their grievances and their status by Ambedkar.

In 1927 he led this famous Maha Satyagraha to assert the rights of untouchable to access public tanks and wells. So, as the public property or public resources were inaccessible to certain community such as temples, tanks or wells against such restrictions in 1927 Ambedkar famously led this maha satyagraha to assert their access or their right to access public tanks and well. However, this satyagraha was confronted by the caste Hindus and Ambedkar and his followers publicly burnt Manusmriti to defy religious and rituals confinements upheld by the caste Hindus.

So, Manusmriti is a text or a code of law which sanction this kind of discrimination or this kind of injustices. So, Ambedkar was aware or the understood the root cause of the

caste discrimination is based in the Hindu rituals or Hindu religious text. And he publicly along with many of his followers burnt this text and which becomes a kind of symbolic assertion of their; defines of rituals and religious practices or texts which is discriminatory, which sanction such practices of discrimination (Refer Time: 33:01).

And it is also an act of political assertion and empowerment that they are no longer submitting to those text, those rituals or practices which justify such discrimination or injustices. So, this was a public act of defiance against such religious and ritual confinements which was upheld by the caste Hindus.

And in this understanding he was very radical from a kind of relaxed approach in Gandhi towards the Hindu orthodox, which justified which reproduce such discrimination and injustices. And therefore, that discrimination; so, both of them wanted to reform society to build a stronger India to a strengthen the unity of India, but the approach to eradicate such social problems or caste hierarchy was very different and so, objective may be similar as now there is a kind of re engagement with the thought of Ambedkar and Gandhi which we will discuss certainly in the next class.

But the approach differ very much from each other where Gandhi seems to be more accommodative of Hindu orthodoxy, whereas Ambedkar was very critical of such orthodoxy among the Hindu or caste Hindu. So, in 1927 he also started a fortnightly which becomes them vehicle of oppressed class or depressed classes and there is which we call Bahishkrit Bharat.

He was appointed as a member of legislative assembly of Bombay in 1927 for 5 years and since then he took legal and administrative routes to promote and protect the interest of depressed classes or untouchables and over the next 20 years, he played a key role in the organising of untouchable. So, also because of the popular movement or popular mass movement led by congress and Gandhi was for the freedom a struggle. And Ambedkar realise that the protection of untouchable interest and their rights may not be necessarily done through a political or public mobilization alone.

He was organising many satyagraha many protest, but he also took the legal or administrative route as a viable means to protect and promote their interest of untouchables. And this he continued to do for the next 2-3 decades at least.

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- He took the opportunities presented by the British government to petition for political rights of Dalits and excluded, even when the Indian National Congress chose to boycott the constitutional reform discussions, such as during the Simon Commission visit to India. He gradually develop a difference with congress and its leaderships.
- He founded three political parties to fight for the rights of Dalits. In 1936, Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party to fight the elections mandated under the new Government of India Act. He formed the Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942 that was intended to unite all untouchables in India. The Republican Party of India was conceived in 1956 to unite all the dispossessed untouchables.
- In June 1942 he was nominated to the viceroy's Executive Council. When India became independent in 1947, Ambedkar was made Minister of Law and Justice. He introduced several progressive legislation including Hindu Code Bill to effectively remove hierarchical relations in Hinduism. But he faced enormous opposition from Hindu orthodoxy and resigned from the cabinet in September 1951. By then he had become deeply attracted to Buddhism. And, in October 1956 he along with his millions of follower converted to Buddhism. Six weeks later he died in New Delhi.

So, he took the opportunity presented by the British Government to petition for the political rights of the Dalits and excluded, even when the Indian National Congress chose to boycott constitutional reforms discussion such as Simon Commission visit to India.

And he gradually develop a difference with congress and its leadership on this question of untouchability and how to remove caste or eradicate caste and remove the practices of untouchability in India. So, he found three political parties to fight for the rights of Dalit. In 1926; he found Independent Labour Party to fight the elections before the elections and 115 seats also. He found the Schedule Caste Federation in 1942; that was intended to unite all untouchables in India and also the Republican Party of India was conceived in 1956 to unite all the dispossessed untouchables.

So, he also when fighting against the caste Hindus; he was also simultaneously trying to mobilize or unite the depressed classes which was not an easy task we which he himself express when it is said that caste privilege; that is associated to different layers of the different layers of Indian caste society. It is very difficult to unite them or to create a united front to fight the common practices of caste because of the relative privilege that is associated and different caste groups are entitled to.

So, he constantly tried to mobilize or unite them by forming different political parties and also collaborating with other parties and groups as well. In June 1942, he was

nominated to the viceroy's Executive Council and when India became independent in 1947; Ambedkar was made Minister of Law and Justice and he introduced several progressive legislation to create an egalitarian society or to remove caste and gender based hierarchical structure of Hindu society.

Such as Hindu Code Bill and which becomes a very contested bill and faced enormous opposition from the Hindu orthodoxy on which he resigned. So, he was fighting for an egalitarian society or a society based on the principle of fraternity and equality not just political and legal, but also social and economic. And he was fighting it outside the congress from the 1920s till his appointment as the first Law Minister of India.

But once he compromised with the congress and helped in shaping the constitution protecting certain rights or safeguards for minorities or also the depressed classes or articulating some of the concepts and convincing the members of constituent assembly about many of the contested issues in the constitution.

Ambedkar was also trying to create an egalitarian society from within, but when even that fails he resigned from the Ministership in September 1951 and by then he also developed a deep attraction or attachment with Buddhism and he regarded Hinduism as the root cause of the social hierarchy or the caste based discrimination that exist.

And this he began to develop from the 1930s onwards, but he also had a kind of comparative study of different religions and finally converted to Buddhism in 1956 with his millions of followers and 6 weeks later he died in New Delhi.

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His differences with Congress and Gandhi

- Ambedkar was of the opinion that that reform could come only through the purposive action of the state. In his testimony to the Simon commission, Ambedkar argued that the Depressed Classes should be treated as 'a distinct, independent minority'—as separate from the Hindus. He also advocated direct action for the fulfillment of their rights, launched satyagrahas to allow Untouchables to drink water from tanks and to enter temples from which they were excluded and he asked for greater representation of the Depressed Classes at all levels of public service.
- In the 1930s and 1940s, Ambedkar wrote a series of tracts criticizing Gandhi and the politics of Congress. In 1930s the relationship between the two became increasingly fractious: Ambedkar saw Gandhi's attempt to persuade Hindus to reform, rather than reject the caste system as ineffectual and a barrier in Dalit's emancipation and in protection of their socio-economic and political rights.

Now, to look at his differences with congress and Gandhi; we find it Ambedkar was of the opinion that the reform could come only through the purposive action of a state.

So, the role of state along with Nehru and the Ambedkar is very much central. So, they advocated for the state which should be a strong enough that no community from the no community should dominate the functioning of a state. So, in the sense state should have an interventionist role; orthonomous role in society to create more evaluated in society according to the a laws and constitution. So, he was of the opinion that reform is possible only through the purposive action of the state.

So, in his testimony to the Simon Commission; Ambedkar argued that depressed classes should be treated as a distinct independent minority as separate from the Hindu. And he also advocated direct action for the fulfillment of their rights and launched satyagraha to allow untouchables to drink water from tanks and enter temples; from which they were excluded and he asked for greater representation of the depressed classes at all levels of public services.

So, he continuously tried to protect the interest of depressed classes; not just against the upper caste or caste Hindus, but also while negotiating with the British administration or the British rule and wanted depressed classes to be treated as a secret identity along with same a Hindu and Muslims. And he was also trying to create the political speech for

depressed classes along with Muslims and Hindus in India Indian negotiation with the British.

And in 1930s and 40s Ambedkar wrote a series of tracks criticizing Gandhi and the politics of congress. So, in 1930s the relationship between the two become increasingly fractious Ambedkar saw Gandhi's attempt to persuade Hindus to reform rather than reject the caste system as ineffectual and a barrier in Dalit's emancipation in the protection of their socio economic and political right. And therefore, his understanding of the causes of the caste system and how to eradicate it was very radical very different from the Gandhian approach by nearly appealing to the caste Hindu story to reform and all.

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➤ As a representative of the depressed classes Ambedkar attended all three Round Table Conferences in London. It is here at second Round Table conference he seriously differed with Gandhi which continued till Gandhiji's death in 1948. His differences with Gandhi on caste and Hinduism is discussed in the next lecture.

➤ Ambedkar was successful in his negotiations with British which resulted in 1932 as Ramsay Macdonald award also known as Communal Award which provided separate electorates for minorities including the Untouchables. In protest Gandhi went on to a fast unto death. Later a compromise was reached with Ambedkar (known as the Poona Pact) whereby it was decided that a joint electorate would remain for Hindus, but with greater seats for the Depressed Classes. No side was happy with this arrangements and Ambedkar termed it as "The Communal award was intended to free the Untouchables form the thralldom of the Hindus. The Poona Pact is designed to place them under the domination of the Hindus".

➤ Although, he was critical of British colonial government, Ambedkar was often at odds with Congress and the nationalist movement, predominantly because they clashed over how to address the issue of Untouchability.

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So, as a representative of different classes Ambedkar attended all the three round table conferences in London. And it is here at the especially at the second round table conference that he began to seriously differ with Gandhi and his views on caste in India.

And he continued to argue or respond to Gandhian position till Gandhiji death in 1948 and we will discuss it in the next lecture as well. So, Ambedkar here with this representation and his oratory skill and use of argument had a successful negotiation with the British, which resulted in 1932; Ramsay Macdonald award, which is also known as Communal Award which provided separate electorates for minorities including the untouchables.

And this became like a bomb for the Congress or many Indians and in protest Gandhi started a fast unto death. Later a compromise was reached with Ambedkar known as the Poona Pact, whereby it was decided that a joint electorate would remain for Hindus, but with greater seats for the depressed classes; however, with this arrangement nobody was happy.

So, many of the Gandhis and the Gandhiji and his followers thought that Gandhiji considered too much to Ambedkar to give more seats to the depressed classes. On the other hand Ambedkar and his followers thought that they lost a great opportunity to emancipate themselves to fight for their rights and they were subjected to the domination or the unjust practices of the caste Hindu.

So, Ambedkar writes it like that the communal award was intended to free the untouchables from the thralldom of the Hindus. However, the Poona Pact is designed to place them under the domination of Hindus, so, the Poona Pact of course, was a kind of compromise and maintain the unity within the Hindu community; yet we have we continue to see in our post independent India or even in contemporary times, here the whole logic of Ambedkar is in a way inverse.

So, now the question is no longer about annihilations of caste but a state and its policy itself treat caste and the provision associated with caste as something which is going to stay and it includes newer and newer communities within different categories for affirmative actions and the welfare policies of the state. However, Ambedkar was imagining a society which will be free from any caste discrimination; so, any relation he was talking about not the sustenance or continuity of the caste discrimination.

Although he was critical of British colonial government Ambedkar was often at odds with Congress and the nationalist movement predominantly because they clashed over how to address the issue of untouchability. So, we have seen Ambedkar's approach more radical and revolutionary than the nationalist or the Congress position on the question of caste.

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- Despite Ambedkar's differences with Congress, when India became independent in August 1947, Prime Minister Nehru invited him to be the first Minister of Law and Justice. Shortly after, the Constituent Assembly appointed Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.
- Ambedkar's influence can be seen in many aspects of Indian Constitution such as the strong emphasis on liberal democracy, the federal structure, and the provision and safeguards for minorities alongside the emphatic abolition of Untouchability and protection of their socio-economic and political rights.
- Ambedkar argued that political democracy is meaningless without social and economic democracy. However, he remained confident that the new Constitution provide a solid foundation for such transformations in new India.

So, despite Ambedkar's differences with the congress; when India became independent in august 1947; Nehru invited him to be the first Minister of Law and Justice. And shortly after the constituent assembly appointed him as the Chairman of the Drafting Commission and that was his major role in shaping the constitution or drafting the constitution of free India. Ambedkar's influence can be seen in many aspects of Indian constitution such as the strong emphasis on liberal democracy which we will discuss in one of our lecture.

The federal structure of a governance and the provisions and safeguards for minorities alongside the emphatic abolition of untouchability. So, it is perhaps because of his influence that constitutionally untouchability is banned or prohibited or is subjected to punishment; if it occurs in any part of the country against anyone. So, constitutionally untouchability is abolished and protection of their social economic and political rights in the form of affirmative actions or what we called reservation is also protected through constitution.

However, Ambedkar thought of it a for (Refer Time: 46:51) years as a temporary mechanism and he was thinking about a society which will be free from any kind of discriminations or any kind of preferential treatment or a kind of patronizing approach to solve some problem.

But it has taken a new turn which we will in the final lecture why it is so? Ambedkar realised and he argued that the political democracy is meaningless without social and economic democracy. However, he remained confident that the new constitution provided a solid foundation for such transformation of political democracy into a social and economic democracy which he thought post independent India will achieve.

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Views on partition

- Dr Ambedkar was convinced that the demand of partition was not just a result of 'political distemper' and it was not a passing phase. He was convinced that the very characteristic of Hindus and Muslims was culturally different and their co-existence will depend on their struggle to survive the existing forces in the Indian society.
- The demand for a separate nationhood for Muslims was put forward by many leaders especially Muslim League and therefore Ambedkar made an attempt to understand its implications, sensibly and intelligibly. He argued for the partition of India even before the independence. He wrote a book titled '*Pakistan or Partition of India*' in 1945 where he argued in favour of partition.

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Now, if we look it very briefly his views on partition; Ambedkar was convinced that the demand of partition was not just a result of political distemper or differences between the two community.

When identity become the basis of their political demands or the political unity; then one has to concede on many pragmatic or political bronze and he also (Refer Time: 48:09); it was not a passing phase he was convinced that the very characteristic of Hindu and Muslims was culturally different and their coexistence will depend on their struggle to survive the existing forces in Indian society. So, the demand for separate nationhood for Muslim was put forward by many leaders especially Muslim league, Gennai, Iqbal and many other prominent leaders. And therefore, Ambedkar made an attempt to understand its implication sensibly and intelligibly.

He argued for the partition of India even before the independence and he wrote a book title Pakistan or Partition of India in 1945, where he argued in favour of partition.

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➤ Ambedkar elaborately presented facts in favour of his arguments on partition. He took into account perspectives of Defense, Muslim sentiments, financial resources, communal peace and exchange of population for his defence of two nations arguments.

Concluding Remark

➤ One of the most educated men and thinker of his generation, it is inappropriate to engage with him and his thought merely as a leader of Dalits or 'untouchables'; as a 'maker' of Indian constitution. He closely studied and critically analyzed Indian society and politics and was prophetic in his predictions about the structure and functioning of Indian democracy and constitution.

➤ And this is perhaps the reason, his stature as the hero of modern India has undoubtedly grown over the years especially in the last two decades.

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Ambedkar elaborately presented here the question of self determination and in what political socio economic consists such a right to self determination should be sanctioned. And he also elaborately presented facts in favour of his arguments on partition and he took into account perspective of Defense, Muslim sentiments, financial resources, communal peace and exchange of population for his defence of two nations arguments.

So, in the sense he has very pragmatic political approach to this question of partition supported by the question of self determinations. So, Ambedkar also articulating about the political space for the depressed classes alongside Hindu and Muslims; in their negotiation with the British or when there was a moment of transfer of power or inevitable transfer of power from the from the British to them to the Indians.

And Ambedkar was worried about the future of depressed classes in India and therefore, he was trying to protect the interest and constantly compromises on many of his beliefs or many of the principles he stood for; when he joined the congress he joined the congress led government and became the Law Minister, took the responsibility of drafting the constitution, became the chairman and also expressed his thought and faith in the constitution or in the liberal democracy that he envisioned for free India.

And through that the social and economic transformation or a democracy that he wanted India to achieve. His views on caste and partition we have touched briefly, tomorrow in the next lecture we will discuss his views on caste especially through his text on

annihilation of caste and also we engage with his views on religion or how Hinduism or Hindu text justify or sustain this discriminative practices; then we will discuss his engagement with Gandhi.

Now, to conclude this lecture, we find Ambedkar as one of the most educated man and thinker of his generation. It is inappropriate to engage with him and his thought nearly as a leader of Dalits or untouchables or as a maker of Indian constitution. He closely studied and critically analysed Indian society and politics and was prophetic in his predictions about the structure and functioning of Indian democracy and constitution. So, it is now a kind of clisit to use or appropriate Ambedkar symbolically or present him as a leader of untouchables or the masaya or liberator of the depressed classes and also as a maker of Indian constitution.

In the process, we tend to restrain from seriously engaging or critically engaging with his thoughts and its various aspects, which was vary remarkable or prophetic in so many ways. And his observation of Indian society and functioning of Indian society and the role of constitution and possibility of its misuse by the caste society was also something which we need to seriously engaged with when we discuss Ambedkar and not merely use him symbolically for alternative politics or for the constructive politics or whatever.

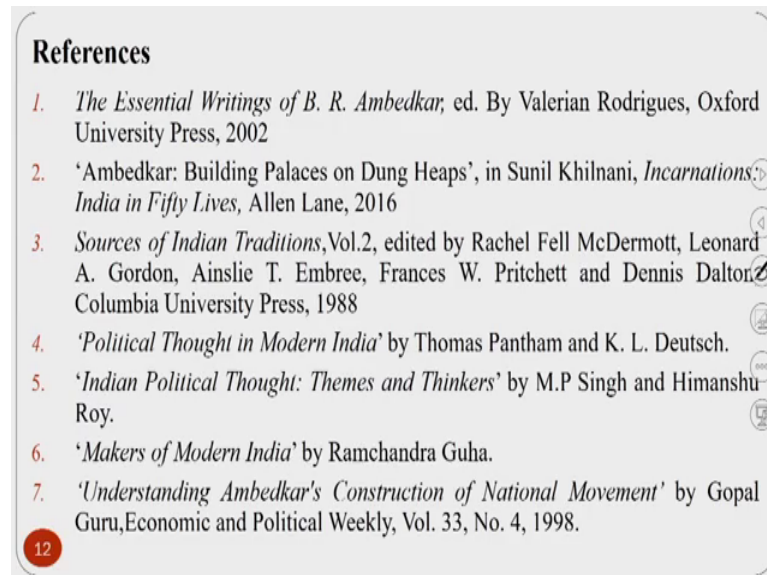
So, this symbolic use or appropriation of Ambedkar is perhaps the reason his stature as the hero of modern India. There is a kind of limitation in engagement with his thoughts and ideas because of this reduction or symbol is use of Ambedkar; either as a leader of depressed classes or as a maker of Indian constitution, we need to think a more critically or engage more critically about various sites of his writings or activities.

That is also perhaps the reason why in contemporary times there is a kind of universal acceptance of Ambedkar and his thought across the party from left to the right to the centre to the parties which subscribe to Ambedkar and his views like both Jaiswal party and many others or even the radical dalit politics that is immerging in contaminate India.

So, this is perhaps the reason his stature as the hero of modern India has undoubtedly grown over the years; especially in the last 2 decades after 1990 certainly. So, Ambedkar has become a kind of hero or a kind of thinker which provide a kind of universal reference point to different party across the political or ideological a spectrum.

And there is now re surgeons of works on or around the ideas of Ambedkar which we need to seriously engage with.

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References

1. *The Essential Writings of B. R. Ambedkar*, ed. By Valerian Rodrigues, Oxford University Press, 2002
2. 'Ambedkar: Building Palaces on Dung Heaps', in Sunil Khilnani, *Incarnations: India in Fifty Lives*, Allen Lane, 2016
3. *Sources of Indian Traditions*, Vol.2, edited by Rachel Fell McDermott, Leonard A. Gordon, Ainslie T. Embree, Frances W. Pritchett and Dennis Dalton, Columbia University Press, 1988
4. 'Political Thought in Modern India' by Thomas Pantham and K. L. Deutsch.
5. 'Indian Political Thought: Themes and Thinkers' by M.P Singh and Himanshu Roy.
6. 'Makers of Modern India' by Ramchandra Guha.
7. 'Understanding Ambedkar's Construction of National Movement' by Gopal Guru, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1998.

Now on this lecture we have had today, you can look at some of this texts; this text the essential writings of B.R. Ambedkar by Valerian Rodrigues is one of the crucial text which compile the essential writings of Ambedkar.

This book you can refer to and also the Ambedkar Building Palaces on the Dung Heaps from Sunil Khilnani, *Incarnations India in 50 lives*; you can refer to. And also some of the texts which we have been referring in our courses, you can refer to understand Ambedkar and his thought. So, thanks for listening; thanks for your patience.

Thank you.