

The Impact of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar on Jadhav's Untouchables: My Family Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India

Dr.V. HANUMANTHAIHAH

M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Principal

Veda and Sanskrit College, Mulapet, Nellore-524201,
SPSR Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

Abstract

As Narendra Jadhav rightly observes, "Every sixth human being in the world today is an Indian, and every sixth Indian is an untouchable. For thousands of years, the untouchables or Dalits, the people at the bottom of the Hindu caste system, have been treated as subhuman" (Untouchables, 1). 'Dogs and Donkeys' were the only wealth that Shudras and Dalits were permitted to own, according to ancient Hindu law texts like Manu Smruti and Goutama Dharma Shastra. Since they believed that a Shudra had no right to learn, the door to education was closed. Their ignorance and lack of literacy are the main causes of their suffering. Therefore, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar vehemently contends that long-standing racial or cultural disparities, disdain, and hostility, together with a strong economic reliance on the Hindu caste, are the main causes of untouchability. The influence that a culture has on a man's life, his dreams and goals, and ultimately his thought process is quite evident. The present article is discussed about the impact of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar views on Jadhav's Untouchables

Key words: Untouchables, Dalits, Racial Differences, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sanskrit term "Dalit" implies "ground," "suppressed," "crushed," or "broken to pieces." In the nineteenth century, Jyotirao Phule used it for the first time in reference to the tyranny that the once-'untouchable' castes endured at the hands of the twice-born Hindus. The progenitors of the untouchables were referred to by Dr. Ambedkar as "broken men," which is the English translation of Dalit.

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The influence that a culture has on a man's life, his dreams and goals, and ultimately his thought process is quite evident. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's keynote speech awakens all of India's underprivileged communities from their sleep. In his book Untouchables, Narendra Jadhav presents him as a driving force behind their revolutionary existence. He is a model academic, and his educational philosophy has greatly expanded the opportunities for Dalit advancement. Damu, father of Narendra Jadhav, declares, "I want my children to grow up and have a dignified life, I want them to be respected, and I am sending them to school just as Babasaheb has said." (Untouchables, 210).

Among those who place the most value on castes, Dama, the main character, fights valiantly to live with honor and dignity. In addition to being an untouchable, he also defies any sort of injustice committed in the name of caste, religion, or social standing. The Dalit people are inspired by his unwavering determination to defend his identity. Despite his poor standing, he never compromises his uniqueness.

In his Author's Note" Jadhav remarks, "Around 165 million today are Dalits. This large mass of humanity is trying to find self-expression denied to them for hundreds of years. In this struggle against caste discrimination, illiteracy and poverty, their weapons are education, empowerment and democracy. This is a story of one such family, my own family" (Untouchables). He hears Ambedkar's clarion call, "Educate, Unite and Agitate", which initiates him to action. Another character in this autobiography is Sonu, Damu's dear wife, who is also an illiterate woman.

During that time, many of Dalits like Damu were greatly inspired by Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, who was a Mahar himself. Following Ambedkar's initiations, the Dalits felt they had a capable leader to guide them. In

fact, in this. In reality, Ambedkar is the hero. He inspires a lot of Dalits. He takes on obstacles, which makes his political career unique. He disagrees with Gandhi's affectionate word for the "Untouchables," "Harijans." According to him, the name captures the religion that influenced them for many years.

Ambedkar's ideas had a big impact on Damu. Despite his lack of literacy, he is able to understand the spirit of Ambedkarism and the justification for the conversion. Despite having different philosophical philosophies, Gandhiji and Ambedkar were the two most influential individuals who did motivate the public. Without delving too far, Damu may infer that Dalits favor Baba Saheb because they can more easily identify to him. Damu, however, never believes Gandhiji opposed the Dalit cause. Take a look at Damu's response to taking part in a black flag protest against Mahatma Gandhi in 1931.

In *Outcaste: A Memoir*, Narendra Jadhav presents Dr. Ambedkar as a social reformer who explains the Dalits' discrimination by the higher castes. Damu is inspired by Ambedkar's speeches which intensely touch many of the Dalits' lives and help them come out of their struggles. In his Nasik Movement to enter Kalaram temple Ambedkar said: "We will not die if we aren't allowed into the temple, nor are we going to be immortalized by gaining entry. We are fighting for equal rights as human beings, and we are not going to accept anything less." (128).

Ambedkar has a lot of concern for Dalit children. He inspires and motivates them to get the best possible education. In this context, Narendra Jadhav narrates his personal experience:

"After the speech was over, Dada clutched my brother's shoulders and shoved them past every one towards Dr. Ambedkar. They were terrified.... but Dr. Ambedkar patted my brothers on the back, and asked my father, 'Are these your sons, Damu? Send them to school.... Give them a good education....They will surely rise to make big names'". "(Untouchables, 241).

Actually Ambedkar's vision is to educate all Dalits, to eradicate poverty among them and to create a just and equal and equitable society where everyone participates in social activities without any bias with regard to caste, religion or creed. Damu explains Ambedkar's wishes about Dalits: "The sentiments that I heard expressed by our leaders in their speeches had a great impact on me. One of the leaders urged us to get over the loss and ensure that we always kept 'Baba sahib's image in our hearts and continued on the path charted out by him". Babasaheb has tried to create a legitimate place for Dalits in Hindu society. As we see the upper castes have not budged and his patient efforts have been in vain. Out of sheer frustration, he is seriously contemplating a change of religion. He is convinced that Dalits cannot attain our full potential while crushed under the Hindu system. What is required is a new religion that will welcome us and restore our pride.

In his "Authors note," Jadhav describes Damu, the central character of his memoir, in these words:

"Damu was not a leader...but he refused to define himself by circumstances and aimed at shaping his own destiny. Damu had no formal education...yet he steered his children to educational heights and inculcated in them the spirit of excellence. Damu was not a guru... but he taught his children to believe in themselves and reclaim human dignity. Damu was often humbled...yet he maintained, 'Goats are sacrificial offerings, not lions'. Damu was an ordinary man, they said...but he did an extraordinary thing: he stood up against the tyranny of the caste system." (xi-xii).

Ambedkar's call for equal rights for women on a par with man has given a new dimension to feminism. He states: "Education is as necessary for females as it is for males." (S.N. Mandal, *Ambedkar's Work and Mission*, Ambedkar and Social Justice, 195) Women who belong to the weaker section of society such as Dalits and Adivasis have realized their double exploitation, double inequality and double injustice. There is nexus, though weak, between the Dalit problem and the women's problem, at least in Indian society. Both problems are products of Chaturvarna. Manusmriti denied education to women; it did not allow them to even touch Vedas. Women were not Dwija like the Shudras.

Narendra Jadhav's auto-biographical novels, *Untouchables* and *Outcaste: A Memoir* pictorially portray the struggle when the will of a Dalit to protest against the age old unjust treatment meted out to the low born and equally strongly delineates the Dalit exercise of freewill to chart out his own career without helplessly depending on the arms dolt out by the caste Hindus. Jadhav's *Untouchables* has for its focus the rise of the Dalit through urbanization and education as the tools. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar through his speeches inspires and motivates the Dalits to free themselves from the fetters of the rigid caste structure and thus scale the social ladder to leave their impress on the society at large.

Ambedkar had intimate touch with dalits. The way he touched and advised Damu determination in Damu to raise his children up with a good education. It inspired both Damu and his children.

"As participants and an observer in the social movement, my father was the veritable symbol of new spark of self respect ignited among the untouchables by Dr.Ambedkar. Damu would come home electrified by

Babasaheb's thinking, and talking about it to us every day. We are so influenced by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's personality that we subconsciously designed our father in his footsteps".(Outcaste:Memoir,211)

II. CONCLUSION

Generations of Dalits have been motivated by Dr. Ambedkar's crucial contribution to the Dalits' ascent and advancement. He is rightfully referred to as a friend, philosopher, and mentor to the downtrodden and oppressed throughout history. Ambedkar steadfastly promotes education as a means of enlightenment and empowerment.

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