

Life sketch of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Dr B R Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was one of the architects of the Indian Constitution. He was a well-known politician and an eminent jurist. Ambedkar's efforts to eradicate the social evils like untouchability and caste restrictions were remarkable. The leader, throughout his life, fought for the rights of the downtrodden and other socially backward classes. He was appointed as the nation's first Law Minister in the Cabinet after Independence. He was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 1990.

Life

Dr. Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. After the retirement of his father in 1894, the family moved to Satara. Four years later they shifted to Bombay, where he cleared his matriculation in 1908. Babasaheb struggled against caste discrimination. In 1908, Ambedkar got the opportunity to study at the Elphinstone College. Besides clearing all the exams successfully, Ambedkar also obtained a scholarship of twenty five rupees a month from the Gayakwad ruler of Baroda, Sahyaji Rao III. Political Science and Economics were the subjects in which he graduated from the Bombay University in 1912. Ambedkar decided to use the money for higher studies in the USA.

Further Education

In 1913, he moved to the United States. He had been awarded a Baroda State Scholarship for three years under for postgraduate education at Columbia University in New York City. He passed his M.A. exam in June 1915, majoring in Economics, and other subjects of Sociology, History, Philosophy and Anthropology. He presented a thesis on the subject of "Ancient Indian Commerce."

In 1916 he completed his second thesis, "National Dividend of India-A Historic and Analytical Study" for another M.A., and finally he received his PhD in Economics in 1927 for his third thesis, after he left for London. On 9 May, he read his paper- "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development" before a seminar conducted by the anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser.

In October 1916, he enrolled for the Bar course at Gray's Inn, and at the same time enrolled at the London School of Economics. He completed a master's degree in 1921. His thesis was on the "The problem of the rupee: Its origin and its solution". In 1923, he completed a Doctorate in Economics.

Movement for downtrodden

Bhimrao was the saviour of the oppressed, women and poor and he fought for them throughout his life. In 1923, he set up the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha' (Outcaste Welfare Association) which was devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden, improving the economic status and raising matters concerning their problems in the proper forums to focus attention on them and finding solutions to the same. The problems of the downtrodden were centuries old and difficult to overcome. Their entry into temples was forbidden. They could not draw water from public wells and ponds. Their admission in schools was prohibited. In 1927, he led the Mahad March at the Chowder Tank at Colaba, near Bombay, to give the untouchables the right to draw water from the public tank Ambedkar began

to find ways to reach to the people and make them understand the drawbacks of the prevailing social evils. He launched a newspaper called "Mooknayaka" (leader of the silent).

Father of Constitution

Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the chairman of the constitution drafting committee. He was also a noted scholar and eminent jurist. Ambedkar emphasized on the construction of a virtual bridge between the classes of the society. According to him, it would be difficult to maintain the unity of the country if the difference among the classes were not met. He is known as the architect of Constitution of India. The hard work done by him in the drafting of the Constitution, made it a powerful tool for social and economic empowerment of the downtrodden, which is praiseworthy. Dr. Ambedkar ensured that there are appropriate checks and balances in the democratic system of Government and ensured that the three wings of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, function independently with accountability to one another and the nation at large.

Writings

Dr. Ambedkar was a profound writer. He had written a number of books, thesis and essays on the social, economic, political aspects of India and the world. Some main writings of Dr. Ambedkar include Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability, The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, The Annihilation of Caste, The Buddha and his Dhamma, Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development and 11 Other Essays, Philosophy of Hinduism etc. He also wrote, "The Buddha and Karl Marx".

Mahaparinirvan

Three days after completing his final manuscript *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar died in his sleep on 6 December 1956 at his home in Delhi. Since, Ambedkar adopted the Buddhism as his religion, a Buddhist-style cremation was organized for him. The ceremony was attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters, activists and admirers.

Conclusion

Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts and ideas are of even greater relevance in the context of today's resurgent India which is poised for a stronger economy, industrial diversification and skill development, empowerment of women and guarantee for the socially vulnerable classes, a world of equal opportunities.
