



Pedagogical Significance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma*

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Abstract :

If world knows India as nation, the Buddha has lion's share. The great Buddha is the reason for keeping logic, scientific temperament, rationality, democratic values, human rights and secularism alive. *Buddha and His Dhamma* is the culmination of Dr. Ambedkar's writings. Dr. Ambedkar dared to raise many questions and tried to give answers aiming to provide a clear and consistent statement on the life and teaching of the Buddha. He sincerely and impartially tried to find out the truth and link the lost episode of history together. Unfortunately the book is still non-canonical. In other words, so called educationists never allowed this book to be the part of main stream literature, nor introduced this book, wholly or partially as a part of compulsory syllabus at any level. The reasons are clear. The introduction of *Buddha and His Dhamma* shall demolish the orthodoxy prevailing in this country. It will curb all that is illogical. It will be a great threat to all religions that are anti-democracy. This book will expose and shut the shops of hypocrisy. This book will definitely pose a challenge and separate milk and water. The academicians perhaps can not take such risk. If the students read this and start asking various questions, it will be a great challenge for the rest. They do not want to let this happen. But how long shall you hold the sun in thy fist? The light will come out cracking your fist. Negligence of pedagogical importance of *Buddha and His Dhamma* is not affordable. The research paper intends to underline significance of questioning in such circumstances where questioning has been a crime. It is necessary to revisit Buddha via Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar so that we are not illogical and irrelevant.

Key words : *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, pedagogical, asceticism, fanaticism and megalomania



Introduction:

Educational perspective of *The Buddha and His Dhamma* underlines the pedagogical importance of the book. Dr. Ambedkar contributed the field of education as a first rank educationist of India. As Dr. Ambedkar is very selective in episodes of Buddha's life in *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he has also tried to give educational value to his literary work. Dream of Education became fact to millions of untouchables in India only due to the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar's uses *The Buddha and His Dhamma* as a tool to impart educational views of Buddha among the masses.

The lives of the Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar are the best example of the quest for Knowledge. Therefore education at all level has always remained the centre of Buddha's preaching and Dr. Ambedkar's teaching. Their personal experience have great pedagogical value. The Buddha reflected in various anecdotes and Dr. Ambedkar's reflect in *The Buddha His Dhamma*. The book itself is the great ideal for the research students to understand how should a book be like? The book reveals the teaching of Buddha that extreme asceticism is useless and he Siddhartha proved it that supreme knowledge also can be achieved through Middle Way. The very realization also can be the foundation of Indian Education system. As today students are taught about gross national income, the Buddha's philosophy teaches gross national happiness.

Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism itself suggests that age old useless knowledge should be replaced with new one. He is known as one of the most highly educated men of the 20th century. A highly qualified economist and lawyer, and an accomplished politician, he brought about considerable social changes for the benefit of his untouchable brethren and other socially disadvantaged groups through education. And therefore his views reflected in *The Buddha and his Dhamma* have its own importance. The book promises ethical, psychological, economical and moral education. In Kathmandu in November 1956 at a conference on Buddhism and Communism he said, "The greatest thing that the Buddha has done is to tell the world that the world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of man, and the mind of the world." (*Das Bhagawan ed., Thus Spoke Ambedkar, Volume four, p. 27*)



Pedagogical importance of The *Buddha and his Dhamma*:

Buddhism has capacity to influence the education system of the world which can prepare the individuals more effective for the today's world. Buddhism allows questioning which is must for today's modern generation. It does not insist any tradition or custom, rather it connect knowledge with experience. This what today's education requires. Today we are also facing the problem of jingoism, religious fanaticism and megalomania due to influence of unwanted religious traditions. Young generation react against any religious tradition and it creates havoc for the democracy. So, there is need to allow them to ask the question and to rectify the religious and historical blunders. This openness of Buddhism is illustrated by the Buddha's

Exhortation to the Kalamas:

“Now, Kalamas, do not ye go by hearsay, nor by what is handed down by others, nor by what people say, nor by what is stated on the authority of your traditional teachings. Do not go by reasoning, nor by inferring, nor by argument as to method, nor from reflection on or approval of an opinion, nor out of respect thinking a recluse must be deferred to. But, Kalamas, when you know, of yourselves: ‘These teachings are not good; they are blameworthy; they are condemned by the wise; these teachings, when followed out and put into practice, conduce to loss and suffering’ – the reject them.” (Woodward, F. L. Some Sayings of the Buddha, p 188) This address by the Buddha is the essence of Buddhism.

While preaching on education the pathetic situation of Education system in India, the great Buddha explains the fourth rule of Chaturvarna. He says, “The fourth rule of Chaturvarna related to the right to education. The pattern of Chaturvarna gave the right to education to the first three classes, the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The Shudras were denied the right to education. This rule of Chaturvarna did not deny the right to education to the Shudras only. It denied the right to education to all women including those belonging to the class of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.” (BHD-p.88)

Dr. Ambedkar further illustrates the consequences warning that when a tree is burning with fierce flames, the birds therein also can not remain unaffected. Criticizing Brahmanical education system, Dr. Ambedkar further lashes that The Brahmins put all their emphasis upon knowledge. They taught that knowledge was the be-all and end-all of everything. Nothing further was to be considered. The Buddha was on the other hand an



upholder of education for all. Besides, he was more concerned with the use of knowledge a man is likely to make than with knowledge itself.(BHD p.272)

Conclusion:

The preaching of the great Buddha and teaching of is for well being of all and ill-being of none. This ground underlines the pedagogical importance of *The Buddha and his Dhamma*. There is a need to remove pre-acquisition of faulty knowledge which has limited the free play. What the great Buddha believed that all women, no matter whether they belonged to the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishyas, and all Shudras, both males and females, should never be prohibited from acquiring knowledge, even from acquiring literacy. It should not be too late to realise the importance of this great work.

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