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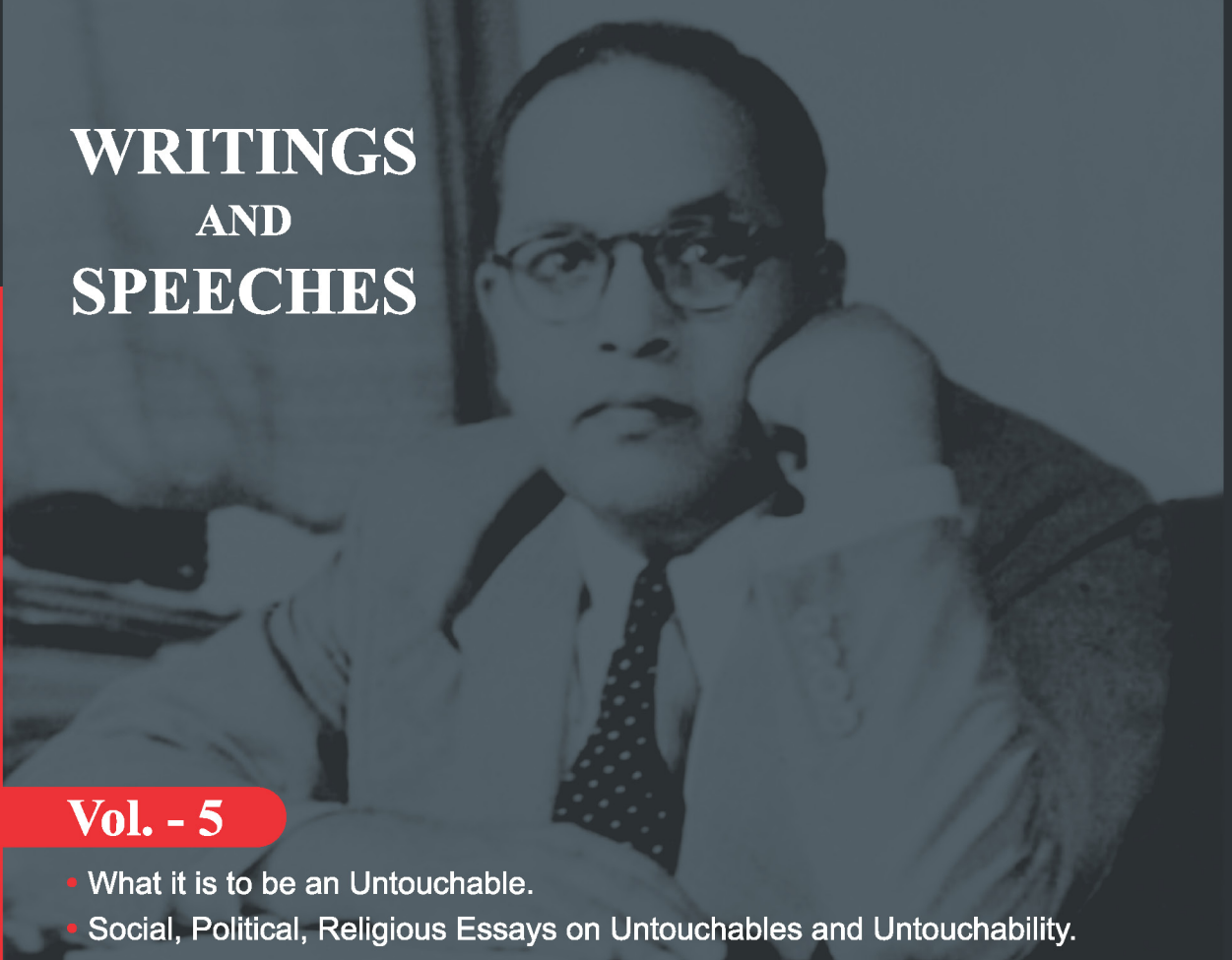
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DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR



DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

WRITINGS AND SPEECHES



Vol. - 5

- What it is to be an Untouchable.
- Social, Political, Religious Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability.

DR. AMBEDKAR FOUNDATION

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



WRITINGS AND SPEECHES



Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(14th April 1891 - 6th December 1956)

DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR
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MESSAGE

Babasaheb Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, the first Law Minister of Independent India and the Chief Architect of the Indian Constitution, is also remembered and admired as a nationalist, statesman, sociologist, philosopher, anthropologist, historian, economist, jurist, a prolific writer and a powerful orator.

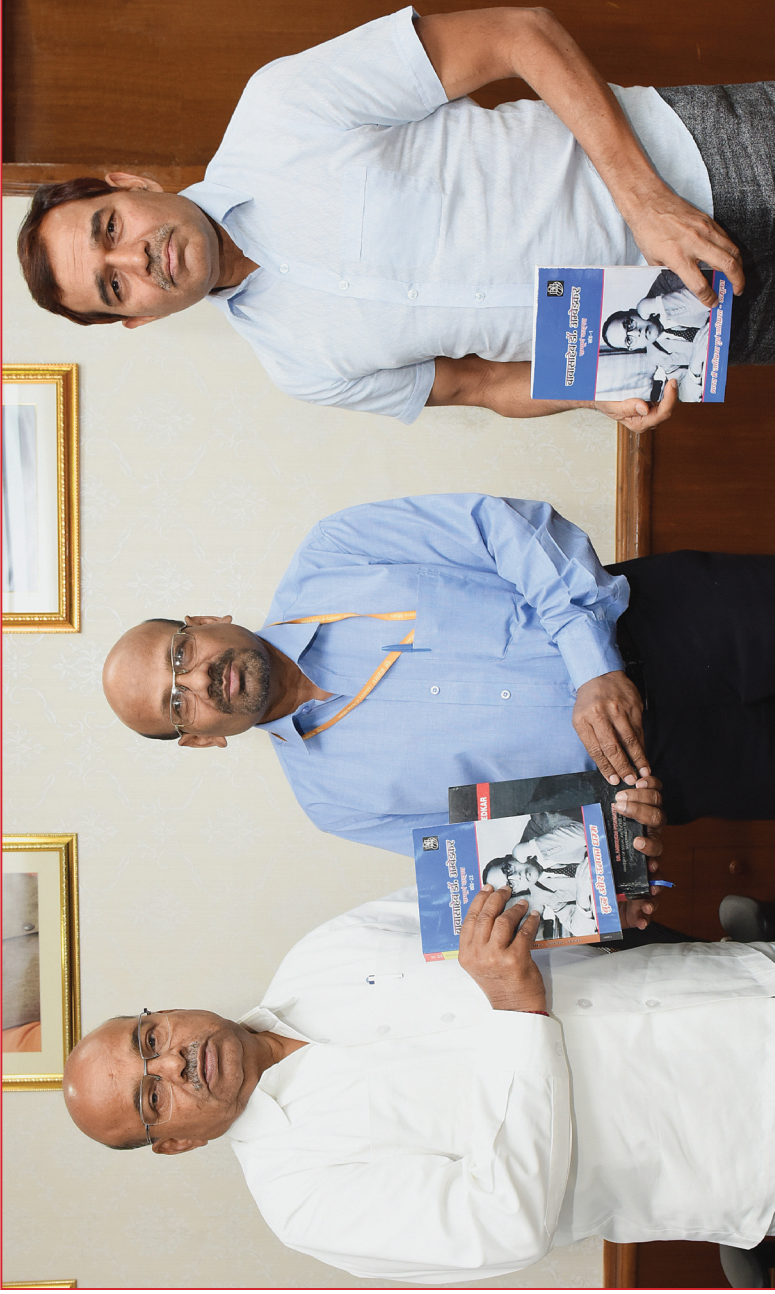
To celebrate Birth Centenary of Babasaheb Dr. B.R.Ambedkar in a befitting manner, a National Centenary Celebrations Committee was constituted during the year 1990-91 with the then Hon'ble Prime Minister as its Chairman. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation was established by the Government of India under the aegis of the then Ministry of Welfare (now Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment) with the objective to promote Babasaheb's ideals and also to administer some of the schemes which emanated from the Centenary Celebrations.

During these Celebrations, the Ministries and Departments of Government of India and State and Union Territory Governments had organized number of Programmes and had announced various Schemes. The Government of Maharashtra had also organized number of Programmes/Schemes and gave fillip to its project on compilation of Dr. Ambedkar Works viz. 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches'. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation was also entrusted with the project of translation and publication of Dr. Ambedkar's Works by Government of Maharashtra, into Hindi and various regional languages. The Foundation also brought English versions of CWBA Volumes and keeping in view the demand for these Volumes (English), they have now been re-printed.

Dr. Ambedkar's writings are relevant today also as they were at the time these were penned. I am sure, the readers would be enriched by his thoughts. The Foundation would be thankful for any inputs or suggestions about these Volumes.

(Dr. Thaawarchand Gehlot)

CWBA VOLUMES RELEASE



The Complete Sets of Collected Works of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, popularly known as CWBA / सम्पूर्ण बाड्मय, in Hindi and English, being released by Dr. Thaawarchand Gehlot, Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India and Chairman, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation at New Delhi. Dr. Debendra Prasad Majhi, Director of the Foundation and Sh. Surendra Singh, Member Secretary were also present on the occasion. The Volumes in Hindi (Vol. 22 to Vol. 40) have been published for the first time in 2019.



डॉ. अम्बेडकर प्रतिष्ठान
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PREFACE

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was an erudite personality, a symbol of knowledge and a great son of India. He was a public intellectual, social revolutionary and a prolific communicator. He has left behind thought provoking writings and speeches bearing interdisciplinary perspectives, with insightful analysis of socio-political situations which evoke intellectual reasons and emotions. His writings are having profound sense of justice manifested in emancipation of marginalized masses. He not only dedicated his life for ameliorating the conditions of deprived sections of the society, but his views on inclusiveness and “*Samajik Samrasta*” continue inspiring national endeavor. It is expected that these Volumes may provide contemporary relevance of his thought and open up the possibilities of rethinking Dr. Ambedkar in the present day context.

The mandate of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, inter-alia, include implementation of programmes and furthering the ideology and message of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar among the masses in India as well as abroad. It is a matter of great happiness that consequent upon a decision by the Governing Body of the Foundation Chaired by Hon’ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, the Foundation is getting the third edition of Collected Works of Babasaheb Ambedkar (CWBA) Volumes, reprinted on popular demand of the readers.

It is informed for the benefit of all concerned that the Foundation always endeavors to make the Volumes available to the readers at an affordable price, and accordingly, it has also been decided to continue with the discount policy as per the past practices on Sale of Volumes. The discount policy of the Foundation has been annexed with each Volume. It is hoped that the Volumes will continue to be source of inspirations for the readers.

15, Janpath,
 New Delhi

(Dr. Debendra Prasad Majhi)

No one can hope to make any effective mark upon his time and bring the aid that is worth bringing to great principles and struggling causes if he is not strong in his love and his hatred. I hate injustice, tyranny, pompousness and humbug, and my hatred embraces all those who are guilty of them. I want to tell my critics that I regard my feelings of hatred as a real force. They are only the reflex of the love I bear for the causes I believe in.

—*Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*
in his Preface to
'Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah

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BOOK 1

Untouchables or The Children of India's Ghetto

This is a 208-page MS (Second copy) under the title "Untouchables or The Children of India's Ghetto". The whole MS forms an independent book by itself. It has a 'Table of Contents' divided into 4 parts, which are further sub-divided into 14 chapters. Slight modifications had to be made in the arrangement of the chapters to bring them in conformity with that of 'Table of Contents'. Except few corrections in the titles of the chapters, the text is untouched by the author.—Ed.

PART I

What it is to be an Untouchable

CHAPTER 1

UNTOUCHABILITY—ITS SOURCE

It is usual to hear all those who feel moved by the deplorable condition of the Untouchables unburden themselves by uttering the cry “We must do something for the Untouchables”. One seldom hears any of the persons interested in the problem saying ‘Let us do something to change the Touchable Hindu’. It is invariably assumed that the object to be reclaimed is the Untouchables. If there is to be a Mission, it must be to the Untouchables and if the Untouchables can be cured, untouchability will vanish. Nothing requires to be done to the Touchable. He is sound in mind, manners and morals. He is whole, there is nothing wrong with him. Is this assumption correct? Whether correct or not, the Hindus like to cling to it. The assumption has the supreme merit of satisfying themselves that they are not responsible for the problem of the Untouchables.

How natural is such an attitude is illustrated by the attitude of the Gentile towards the Jews. Like the Hindus the Gentiles also do not admit that the Jewish problem is in essence a Gentile problem. The observations of Louis Goulding on the subject are therefore very illuminating. In order to show how the Jewish problem is in its essence a Gentile problem, he says:

“I beg leave to give a very homely instance of the sense in which I consider the Jewish Problem in essence a Gentile Problem. A close acquaintance of mine is a certain Irish terrier of mixed pedigree, the dog Paddy, who is to my friend John Smith as the apple of both his eyes. Paddy dislikes Scotch terriers; it is enough for one to pass within twenty yards of Paddy to deafen the neighbourhood with challenges and insults. It is a practice which John Smith deplotes, which, therefore, he does his best to check—all the more as the objects of Paddy’s detestation are often inoffensive creatures, who seldom speak first. Despite all his affection for Paddy, he considers, as I do, that Paddy’s unmannerly behaviour is due to some measure of original sin in Paddy. It has not yet been suggested to us that what is here involved is a Scotch Terrier Problem and that when Paddy attacks a neighbour who is peacefully engaged in inspecting

the evening smells it is the neighbour who should be arraigned for inciting to attack by the fact of his existence.”

There is here a complete analogy between the Jewish Problem and the problem of the Untouchables. What Paddy is to the Scotch Terrier, the Gentile is to the Jews, and the Hindu is to the Untouchables. But there is one aspect in which the Jewish Problem stands in contrast to the Gentile Problem. The Jews and the Gentiles are separated by an antagonism of the creeds. The Jewish creed is opposed to that of the Gentile creed. The Hindus and the Untouchables are not separated by any such antagonism. They have a common creed and observe the same cults.

The second explanation is that the Jews wish to remain separate from the Gentiles. While the first explanation is chauvinistic the second seems to be founded on historical truth. Many attempts have been made in the past by the Gentiles to assimilate the Jews. But the Jews have always resisted them. Two instances of this may be referred.

The first instance relates to the Napoleonic regime. After the National Assembly of France had agreed to the declaration of the ‘Rights of man’ to the Jews, the Jewish question was again reopened by the guild merchants and religious reactionaries of Alsace. Napoleon resolved to submit the question to the consideration of the Jews themselves. He convened an Assembly of Jewish Notables of France, Germany and Italy in order to ascertain whether the principles of Judaism were compatible with the requirements of citizenship as he wished to fuse the Jewish element with the dominant population. The Assembly consisting of 111 deputies, met in the Town Hall of Paris on the 25th of July 1806, and was required to frame replies to twelve questions relating mainly to the possibility of Jewish patriotism, the permissibility of inter-marriage between Jew and Non-Jew, and the legality of usury. So pleased was Napoleon with the pronouncements of the Assembly that he summoned a Sanhedrin after the model of the ancient council of Jerusalem to convert them into the decree of a Legislative body. The Sanhedrin, comprising of 71 deputies from France, Germany, Holland and Italy met under the presidency of Rabbi Sinzheim, of Strassburg on 9th February 1807, and adopted a sort of Charter which exhorted the Jews to look upon France as their fatherland, to regard its citizens as their brethren, and to speak its language, and which also pressed toleration of marriages between Jews and Christians while declaring that they could not be sanctioned by the synagogue. It will be noted that the Jews refused to sanction intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews. They only agreed to tolerate them.

The second instance relates to what happened when the Batavian Republic was established in 1795. The more energetic members of the Jewish community pressed for a removal of the many disabilities under which they laboured. But the demand for the fuller rights of citizenship made by the progressive Jews was at first, strangely enough, opposed by the leaders of the Amsterdam community, who feared that civil equality would militate against the conservation of Judaism and declared that their co-religionists renounced their rights of citizenship in obedience to the dictates of their faith. This shows that the Jews preferred to live as strangers rather than as members of the community.

Whatever the value of their explanations the Gentiles have at least realized that there rests upon them a responsibility to show cause for their unnatural attitude towards the Jews. The Hindu has never realised this responsibility of justifying his treatment of the Untouchables. The responsibility of the Hindus is much greater because there is no plausible explanation he can offer in justification of untouchability. He cannot say that the Untouchable is a leper or a mortal wretch who must be shunned. He cannot say that between him and the Untouchables, there is a gulf due to religious antagonism which is not possible to bridge. Nor can he plead that it is the Untouchable who does not wish to assimilate with the Hindus.

But that is not the case with the Untouchables. They too are in a different sense an eternal people who are separate from the rest. But this separateness, their segregation is not the result of their wish. They are punished not because they do not want to mix. They are punished because they want to be one with the Hindus. In other words, though the problem of the Jews and of the Untouchables is similar in nature—inasmuch as the problem is created by others—it is essentially different. The Jew's case is one of the voluntary isolation. The case of the Untouchables is that of compulsory segregation. Untouchability is an infliction and not a choice.

CHAPTER 2

UNTOUCHABLES—THEIR NUMBERS

Before one tries to know what it is to be an Untouchable one would like to know what is the total population of the Untouchables of India. For this one must go to the Census Report.

The first general census of India was taken in the year 1881. Beyond listing the different castes and creeds and adding up their numbers so as to arrive at the total figure of the population of India the Census of 1881 did nothing. It made no attempt to classify the different Hindu castes either into higher and lower or touchable and untouchable. The second general census of India was taken in the year 1891. It was at this census that an attempt to classify the population on the basis of caste and race and grade was made by the Census Commissioner for the first time. But it was only an attempt.

The third general census of India was taken in 1901. At this census a new principle of classification was adopted namely "Classification by Social precedence as recognised by native public opinion". To this serious opposition was raised by high caste Hindus to the enumeration by caste in the Census Report. They insisted on the omission of the question regarding caste.

This objection did not have any effect on the Census Commissioner. In the opinion of the Census Commissioner enumeration by caste was important and necessary. It was argued by the Census Commissioner that "whatever view may be taken of the advantages or disadvantages of caste as a social institution, it is impossible to conceive of any useful discussion of the population questions in India in which caste would not be an important element. Caste is still 'the foundation of the Indian social fabric' and the record of caste is still 'the best guide to the changes in the various social strata in the Indian Society'. Every Hindu (using the term in its most elastic sense) is born into a caste and his caste determines his religious, social, economic and domestic life from the cradle to the grave. In western countries the major factors which determine the different strata of society viz. wealth, education and vocation are fluid and catholic and tend to modify the rigidity of birth and hereditary position. In India spiritual and social community

and traditional occupation override all other factors. Thus where in censuses of western countries an economic or occupational grouping of the population affords a basis for the combination of demographic statistics, the corresponding basis in the case of the Indian population is the distinction of religion and caste. Whatever view may be taken of caste as a national and social institution it is useless to ignore it, and so long as caste continues to be used as one of the distinguishing features of an individual's official and social identity it cannot be claimed that a decennial enumeration helps to perpetuate an undesirable institution.

This Census of 1901 did not result in fixing the total population of the Untouchables at any exact figure. This was due to two reasons. In the first place no exact tests were applied to determine who is an Untouchable. Secondly a class of the population which was economically and educationally backward but not Untouchable was mixed up with those who were actually Untouchables.

The Census of 1911 went a step further and actually laid down ten tests to mark off the Untouchables from those who were Touchables. Under these, tests the Census Superintendents made a separate enumeration of castes and tribes who (1) denied the supremacy of the Brahmins; (2) did not receive the Mantra from Brahmana or other recognized Hindu Guru; (3) denied the authority of the Vedas; (4) did not worship the great Hindu Gods; (5) were not served by good Brahmanas; (6) have no Brahmin priests at all; (7) have no access to the interior of the ordinary Hindu temple; (8) cause pollution; (9) bury their dead and (10) eat beef and do not reverence the cow.

The separation of the Untouchables from the Hindus was insisted upon by the Muslims in a memorial to the Government dated 27th January 1910 in which they claimed that their representation in the political bodies of the country should be in proportion to the population of Touchable Hindus and not Hindus as a whole because they contended that the Untouchables were not Hindus.

Be that as it may the Census of 1911 marks the beginning of the ascertainment of the population of the Untouchables. Efforts in the same direction were continued at the Census of 1921 and 1931.

As a result of these efforts the Simon Commission which came to India in 1930 was able to state with some degree of surety that total population of Untouchables in British India was 44.5 millions.

Suddenly, however, in 1932 when the Lothian Committee came to India to investigate the question of franchise for the reformed Legislatures and began its investigation, the Hindus adopted a challenging mood and refused to accept the figure given by the Simon Committee as a true figure of the Untouchables of India. In some

provinces the Hindus went to the length of denying that there were any Untouchables at all. This is due to the fact that the Hindus had by now realized the danger of admitting the existence of the Untouchables. For it meant that a part of the representation enjoyed by the Hindus will have to be given up by them to the Untouchables.

The Census of 1941 must be left out of consideration. It was taken during the war and it was a sort of a rough measure.

The latest Census is that of 1951. The following figures are taken from the statement issued by the Census Commissioner. The Census Commissioner gives the population of the Scheduled Castes in India as 513 lakhs.

The total population of India, as shown by the 1951 census is 3,567 lakhs, excluding 1.35 lakhs, the enumeration records in whose case were destroyed by fire in the Census Tabulation Office at Jullundur.

Out of the total population of 3,567 lakhs, 2,949 lakhs live in rural areas and 618 lakhs in the urban areas. The Scheduled Castes in rural areas total 462 lakhs and in urban areas their figures are 51 lakhs.

Non-agricultural classes for the whole population total 1,076 lakhs, the Scheduled Castes 132 lakhs.

Cultivators of land, wholly or mainly owned, and their dependents total 1,674 lakhs for the whole population, 174 lakhs for the Scheduled Castes.

Cultivators of land, wholly or mainly unowned and their dependants are 316 lakhs for the whole of India, 56 lakhs for the Scheduled Castes.

Cultivating labourers and their dependants are 448 lakhs for the whole of India, 148 lakhs for the Scheduled Castes.

Figures for non-agricultural classes are as follows :

Production other than Cultivation: Total 377 lakhs, Scheduled Castes 53 lakhs.

Commerce: Total 213 lakhs, Scheduled Castes 9 lakhs.

Transport: Total 56 lakhs. Scheduled Castes 6 lakhs.

Other services and miscellaneous sources: Total 430 lakhs, Scheduled Castes 64 lakhs.

Out of a total Scheduled Caste population of over 513 lakhs, 114 lakhs live in North India (Uttar Pradesh); 128 lakhs in East India (Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur and Tripura); 110 lakhs in South India (Madras, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin and Coorg); 31 lakhs in West India (Bombay, Saurashtra and Kutch); 76 lakhs in Central India (Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Vindhya Pradesh); and 52 lakhs in North-West India (Rajasthan, Punjab, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Ajmer, Delhi, Bilaspur and Himachal Pradesh).