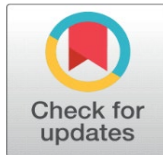
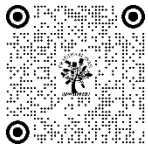


# GANDHI AMBEDKAR DEBATE

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## DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i7.2024.2381](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i7.2024.2381)

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper intends to explore the divergent perspectives and paths of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr B R Ambedkar on different socio-political issues of Indian Society. Before Independence, Outsiders (Aliens, British People) ruled India. Gandhi was afraid of our own people ruling like outsiders (alienation of administration) after Independence. However, in the light of the present context Gandhi's fear has come true. On the other side Dr. B R Ambedkar strongly believed in State power and a strong legal system. Catastrophically the dreams of Dr B R Ambedkar on social economic equality remains a myth. To understand the dynamics of two variant discourses of Gandhi and Dr B R Ambedkar and to follow both Gandhi and Ambedkar Principles are essential. Both ideas of Gandhi Ambedkar together bring a better order in India. People not only from the East but also from western world are inspired by Gandhian Principles of Truth and Non-Violence. The people of the world consider Ambedkar as an icon for Equality. Ideas of both Gandhi and Ambedkar could generate political consciousness among socially marginalized groups. Though both Gandhi and Ambedkar had different ideas and Concepts, and followed different paths both wanted to reform Indian society in general and Hindu Society in particular. Gandhi was influenced by Dr B R Ambedkar. At one point of time Gandhi wanted to fight for the cause of untouchables.

**Keywords:** Gandhi Ambedkar Caste



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr B R Ambedkar reflect the conscience of Modern India. Gandhi has been celebrated as a symbol of truth and nonviolence. Not only people of the east but also people of western world are inspired by Gandhian ideals. Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Architect of the Indian Constitution, fought for the rights of depressed classes. People of depressed classes from every corner of the world were inspired by the ideas of Dr B R Ambedkar. There are fundamental differences in the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar. The different points of time they belonged to and different socio-economic conditions of their time made them have different kinds of perspectives toward the issues.

The present study identifies four broad areas wherein Gandhi and Dr.B.R Ambedkar had differences of opinion

## 2. CASTE SYSTEM AND UNTOUCHABILITY

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were religious persons. Gandhi, deeply believed in religion, initially thought the Caste System is good and it is a kind of natural division of labour but he opposed the oppressive nature of the Caste system. Dr B R Ambedkar said that "Caste System is not merely the division of labour, but also a division of labourers. Civilized society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilized society division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. The caste system is not merely a division of labourers which is quite different from the division of labourers- it is a hierarchy. Caste does not result in economic efficiency. Caste cannot and

has not improved the race. Caste has however done one thing. It has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Later on, Gandhi changed his idea about Caste and started to support Varnashrama System.

Dr B R Ambedkar and Gandhi also had different notions about untouchability. Dr B R Ambedkar was of the opinion that, without the removal of untouchability, Swaraj is a meaningless term. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar believed untouchability is a kind of social evil. Gandhi thought it is possible to remove untouchability by changing the mindset of Savarnas. Ambedkar strongly believed that untouchables have to fight their own battle and it is only through legal policies of the state that he could change the social system. Ambedkar said to Congressmen if you demand for freedom by quoting Mill that "if one nation is not entitled to rule another" the same thing applies to the Upper caste people ruling over the downtrodden. "One Caste people don't have the right to rule others'. Untouchables are in real need of freedom. Others are fighting for something which is more than freedom. During the freedom struggle, Gandhi says this is not the time to ask for a separate electorate. For the cause of our nation and nationhood we have to be together. Ambedkar says we untouchables don't have our own nation. Hindus never consider us as human beings. I wonder Why Caste Hindus worship animals and lifeless things as gods and ill-treat untouchables. In his book *Annihilation of Caste*, he argued why social reforms are more important than political freedom. If you understand social reform as reform Hindu families against sati system or child marriage, such reform may not be a prerequisite to Political independence. If you have border perspectives on social reform to reform Hindu society by eradication of Caste system or Untouchability, that must be a prerequisite of Political freedom.

In 1935 Ambedkar finally declared that he was going to change his religion. All other religions welcomed conversation to their religions only to increase their numbers. And Ambedkar knew very well that conversion was not able to bring better status in life. Tragic part of the story is that conversion to other religions never brought better status to untouchables.

### 3. SEPARATE ELECTORATE TO DALITS

Gandhi was opposed to the political separation of untouchables from the Hindus. That would be suicidal. He asks Ambedkar that for the sake of homeland Hindus should be together. Ambedkar replies, I don't have a homeland and my own religion wherein we are treated worse than cats and dogs. We cannot get water to drink. Ambedkar argued in favor of a separate electorate to the depressed classes to get representation. After the Round Table Conference, in 1932 the British Government announced a Communal Award by giving separate recognition to the number of minorities including depressed classes and assigning separate electorates to them. Gandhi went to fast at Yeravda jail against the communal Award. As a reaction to Gandhi's decision to fast unto death, Ambedkar declared: "I do not care for these political stunts. This threat of Mr. Gandhi to starve himself to death is not a moral fight, but only a political move. I can understand a person trying to negotiate with his political opponent on equal terms by giving credit for honesty, but I will never be moved by these methods. My decision stands and if Mr. Gandhi wants to fight with his life for the interests of the Hindu community, the depressed classes will be forced to fight with their lives to safeguard their interests."

Gandhiji wrote, "My Step has not been dictated by reason; it was inspired by my inner voice. My reason, however, told me: 'Hundreds of persons like you will probably have to die in order to remove the blot of untouchability.' Fasting is a very common practice in Hinduism. I have always loved it. My decision is the cry of my heart. The Prime Minister's decision was only the immediate cause. It provided me with an opportunity to undertake the fast. However, the aim of my fast is not merely to change the decision, but to bring about the awakening and self-purification which are bound to result from the effort to get the decision changed. In other words, this is an opportunity to strike at the very root of untouchability.

### 4. DEBATE OVER PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS

Gandhi wanted independent India to be a Republic of self-sufficient Villages. In 1942, Gandhi wrote, "my idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity". The relationship between the individual and the village as a unit of administration is like that role of individuals in a family set-up. A healthy and harmonious relationship builds a dynamic family. Similar is the case of an individual's role in a village. In Constituent Assembly Debate Dr B R Ambedkar strongly opposed Village Panchayats, He said "What is the Village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and Communalism" he continues, "I am glad that the draft constitution discarded the village and

adopted the individual as its unit" As a result Panchayati Raj institutions were incorporated in part IV Directive Principles of State Policy.

## 5. STATE OR PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary form of government was model approved by B R Ambedkar for independent India. There are many reasons to adopt parliamentary democracy. One important reason is India's Diversity. It is possible to provide adequate representation in the parliamentary system of government. But Gandhi had very little respect for the parliamentary system of government

The Gandhian concept of State is Swaraj, it was nothing but the Gandhian concept of self-rule. Hind Swaraj was written by Mahatma Gandhi which means Self-rule in India. In this book he elaborates his idea of Swaraj, what is Swaraj? Gandhi says "in effect we mean this: we want English rule without the Englishmen, you want tiger's nature but not the tiger; that is to say you would make India English and when it becomes English it will be called not Hindustan but Englستان. This is not the swaraj I want." Gandhi opposed western system of state. Gandhi was of the opinion that although the British Government brought many things to India like the Railway Post Western system of Education, Gandhi believed to attain salvation Indians must unlearn all these things.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In a foreword by Justice Chandrashekar Dharmadhikari to the book true faces of Gandhi and Ambedkar Shesharao Chavan, opines that "we have imbibed a bad habit of making our great men stand and fight against each other. We do not have to go far to seek such illustrative examples. Various attempts have been made to oppose leaders like Tilak and Agarkar, Tilak and Gandhi and even Gandhi and Ambedkar against each other.

Dr U R Ananta Moorthy comparing Tilak Gandhi and Dr B R Ambedkar opined that Tilak saw only nation, Dr B R Ambedkar looked into only Society but Gandhi viewed both state and society simultaneously. Gandhi and Tilak born in an upper class and upper caste family of Hindu society naturally never suffered from the humiliations faced by Ambedkar.

Both Gandhi and Dr B R Ambedkar had different opinions as well as differences of opinion over many issues of State society and politics, which had to be understood from the standpoints of each great leader independently.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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