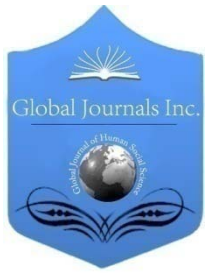
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# Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism: An Analytical Discourse for Dalit Liberation and Emancipation

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*Abstract-* The extent of social transformation of any socially discriminated people may be better judged from the social philosophies propounded by their great leaders like Gandhi and Ambedkar in modern India. Gandhi is dead, so are Ambedkar and Marx. However, neither their philosophies- Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism are dead nor could they posthumously suppress to one another. Their philosophical axis- may be different and dialectical such as for example absolutism versus relativism, positivism versus phenomenalism and theological versus metaphysical but remain the far sighted discourse for the liberation and emancipation of dalit in India. Our study also reveals that the protagonists of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism are either eating their humble pie in the circumstances of their failures or feeling like fishes out of water in the company of other outdated philosophies for the cause of dalit at present. Further, the change agents like heart, mind, conscience, science, violence, non-violence, constitutionalism, religion, state and village perceived in Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism could not break loose the thread of casteism.

*Keywords: dalit, humanism, ambedkarism, gandhism, marxism, liberation, emancipation.*

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# Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism: An Analytical Discourse for Dalit Liberation and Emancipation

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*Abstract-* The extent of social transformation of any socially discriminated people may be better judged from the social philosophies propounded by their great leaders like Gandhi and Ambedkar in modern India. Gandhi is dead, so are Ambedkar and Marx. However, neither their philosophies- Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism are dead nor could they posthumously suppress to one another. Their philosophical axis- may be different and dialectical such as for example absolutism versus relativism, positivism versus phenomenalism and theological versus metaphysical but remain the far sighted discourse for the liberation and emancipation of dalit in India. Our study also reveals that the protagonists of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism are either eating their humble pie in the circumstances of their failures or feeling like fishes out of water in the company of other outdated philosophies for the cause of dalit at present. Further, the change agents like heart, mind, conscience, science, violence, non-violence, constitutionalism, religion, state and village perceived in Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism could not break loose the thread of casteism. Irony is that the destitution and deprivation of dalits, tribals and women, instead of loosening their grips after gone through these isms over the time, have greatly been aggravated. On the one hand Gandhi being defender of caste-based hierarchism, caste-based incarnations and patriarchy could not be the true fighter against casteism and the Marxists though became true fighters for class equality and fraternity but could not promote individual liberty. On the other hand, the original axis of Ambedkarism based on liberty, equality and fraternity and Buddhism shows to the dalit their real paths of emancipation and liberation. However, for the cause of dalit in this paper we have not simply examined the quintessence of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism but in addition analysed their convergence and reconciliation judiciously through different creative Figure formats. Further, dialoguing Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx one another the dalit will certainly situate them somewhere emancipating and empowering from their age old sufferings from casteism.

*Keywords: dalit, humanism, ambedkarism, gandhism, marxism, liberation, emancipation.*

## I. Introduction

Every nation-state has some unfortunate human stock who has been suffering for centuries, for example, Slavs (Poles and Serbs) in Europe, Slave in Roman, Helots in Spartans, Villeins in Britain, Negroes in America, Gypsies and Jews in Germany and Tanka in China but not like "untouchables" who are destined to suffer forever in India. The slavery, serfdom and villeinage have been vanished and racism and religious atrocity on Jews have also been reduced to a large extent but the plight of untouchables revolves around their castes but "being outcastes". The untouchables known as Harijan, scheduled caste and dalit as used by caste Hindu- found to be the manual scavengers, street sweepers, cobblers and leather workers whose mere touch was believed to be "polluting" to a higher caste Hindu. It also relates to a situation of forced labour or slavery (see, Manual Scavenging, International Dalit Solidarity, 2013 & 2015; dsn.org/key-issues/manual-scavenging). In December, 2006, the then Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh described untouchability as a "blot on humanity" and India's "Hidden Apartheid (www.hrw.org/news/.../india-hidden-apartheid-discrimination-against-dali.www.chrgj.org). He publicly acknowledged the parallel situation as existing between untouchability and the crime of apartheid. The plight of untouchables was so severe that everything in him- appearance, speech, words, shadow, etc, as if polluting, and even they were treated as un-approachable, un-speakable, un-hearable and un-seeable in the past. So far, the scheduled caste has been physically tortured, mentally abused, socially humiliated, culturally accused and socially excluded (see, Deliege, 1997; Ilaiah, 1996; Tripathy, 1994; Rajshekar, 1987; http://drambedkarbooks.wordpress.com/dr-b-r-ambedkar-books). The legal protective acts like Civil Rights Act of 1955, Scheduled Caste and Tribe Act of 1989, the article 17, etc, are there to protect these unfortunate communities. This is also not untrue that the scheduled castes communities have been undergoing rapid changes in India. However, the changing status of this human stock is intense speculation throughout India. In this context, the philosophical queries and concerns raised through Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism can be critically analyzed for the promising prospect of dalit in India. In fact, whether it is class or caste oppression; the history witnesses that the contemporary Indian society cannot bypass the view points of Ambedkar, Gandhi and Marx (see, Roy, 2014;Habib, Weil, 1958). However, dealing with the caste or class oppression of either society's lowest rung or highest rung there has been no communality. In the

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lowest rung along with tribal the so called scheduled caste are still remaining underprivileged, downtrodden and marginalized as compared to their counterparts in Indian society (see, Mishra, 2010; Kathrine, 2007;Thorat, 2007; Gandhi, 2006; Hardiman, 2003; Roy, 2002; Zelliot, 2001; Omvedt,1995; Dhanwan, 1991; Keer, 1990). Even if the lower rung of the Indian society gets elevated to the status of higher rung the latter one may not drop into the status of the former one. In this context, the so called dalit stay dalit even if they achieve better political and economic status than their counter parts. In fact, it refers to anybody who is socially oppressed and depressed regardless of their gender, caste and ethnicity. However, the conception of "dalit" no longer remains a broad term in real sense of its comprehension and application since it identifies anyone who is called scheduled caste (constitutional term), Harijan (Gandhian term) and untouchable (Hindu term) in actual social practice. In this context, this article highlights the potentiality of Ambedkarism, Gandhism and Marxism for Dalit emancipation and liberation in Indian society. But what Gandhi experiments this truth by rectifying from within Hindu structure- without detaching dalit from the wrong doers- the so called higher castes, Ambedkar experiences it by getting rid of Hindu social structure (see, Ram.2009; Thorat, 2007; Alter,1996;Zelliot, 2001; Omvedt, 1995 and 2004; Dhanwan, 1991; Keer, 1990). The Marxism preaches it differently that the economic equality will destroy social inequality whereas Gandhism does not concern whether social inequality will destroy or stand on economic inequality. And Ambedkar visualizes that the economic inequality perpetuates social inequality but the economic equality also supports social inequality (Weil, 2010; Thorat, 2007). However, the critical overviews of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism reveal the problems and prospects for dalit's emancipation and liberation. In this backdrop, we have modestly tried to project an analytical discourse comparing the divergence thesis of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism in detail.

## II. Philosophical Moorings Of Gandhism, Ambedkarism And Marxism

The Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism- the promising philosophies in Indian scenario have been grounded thoroughly out of the retrospective lives, ideas and works of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx respectively. Question is not what their philosophies are but how much pragmatic, humanistic, liberative and emancipative these are. In order to authenticate our imaginative roots about them the philosophical backgrounds of each"ism"has been comprehended in this paper. In this regard, the personal backgrounds of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx have been found to be unique to one another. For instance, the humanitarian background of Ambedkar was influenced by the American pragmatism of John Dewey, Buddhism, social philosophy of Jyoti Ba Fulley and the writing of famous poet Kabir (see, Ram 2009; Omvedt, 2004; Zelliot, 2001; Gautam, 2000; Jatava, 1997; Gore,1993; Keer,1990). The ethical and moral background of Gandhi was influenced by Hinduism, Jainism and some historic books namely Henry David Thoreau's on the Duty of Civil Disobedience (1849); Plato's Apology(1862), John Ruskin's Unto this Last (1862), William Salter's Ethical Religion (1889) and Leo Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God is within You (1894) (see, McLellan, 2006; Hardiman, 2003; Mehring, 2003; Jack, 1994; Rubel,1973; Gandhi,1940). Marx was influenced by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, David Ricardo, Saint-Simon and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (see, Johnson, 2006; Mehring, 2003; Fischer, 2002). In fact, the German philosophy, French socialism and English and Scottish political economy greatly nurtured and socialised the mind of Marxism (ibid). The economic determinism, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, class consciousness, class struggles, communism, etc, are some of the communist ideology of Marxism (see, Abraham and Morgan,2010; Haralambos and Heald,2008; Calhoun, 2002; Russell, 1999). The ideological structures of Gandhism include truth, ahimsa, satyagraha, khadi, charkas, swadeshi, trusteeship, Ramrajya, etc (see,McLellan, 2006; Hardiman, 2003; Mehring, 2003; Parekh, 2001; Green,1986; McClellan, 1973; Rubel,1973; Gandhi, 1940). The ideological structures of Ambedkarism include the dalitism, constitutionalism, Buddhism, etc (see, Omvedt, 2004; Zelliot, 2001; Zelliot, 1992; Keer, 1990; Jaffrelot, 2005). Through these ideological structures the course of dalit emancipation and liberation has been tested and verified more often throughout the Indian history (see, Kuber, 1 973). However, the existing philosophical divergence and convergence between these "isms" have not been adequately analysed in Indian society. Thus, a critical reflection on Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism promote an appropriate discourse for the future prospect of dalit.

## III. Critical Reflection

### a) *Dimensions of Philosophical Divergence and Convergence for Dalit Liberation and Emancipation*

It is not easy to find out the appropriate discourse for the future prospect of dalit in India. Further, to what extent dalit liberation and emancipation possible following the philosophical discourses is another significant question. However, on the basis of philosophical dimensions like absolutism, relativism, phenomenalism and positivism the discourses developed in Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism can be analysed for the same. The different tenets of

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these philosophical dimensions preach a unique dialogue for dalit in India at present. The tenet of absolutism preaches and promotes conservatism, fundamentalism, communalism and reductionism whereas the tenet of relativism promotes pluralism and liberalism. Thus, for dalit liberation and emancipation the latter tenet is functional and desirable than the former one. The tenet of phenomenalism emphasizes subjective knowledge whereas the tenet of positivism emphasizes objective knowledge. Thus, for dalit liberation and emancipation the latter tenet is scientific and practical than the former one. In the Figure-1 we have modestly deconstructed a relative substantive base for our analysis.

*Figure 1:* Relative Importance of Absolutism, Relativism, Phenomenalism and Positivism

| Sl.No | Relative Importance in Gandhism | | Relative Importance in Ambedkarism | | Relative Importance in Marxism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | More | Less | More | Less | More | Less |
| 1 | Absolutism | Relativism | Relativism | Absolutism | Absolutism | Relativism |
| 2 | Phenomenalism | Positivism | Positivism | Phenomenalism | Positivism | Phenomenalism |

*Source: Our Own*

The Gandhism based on fundamental religious doctrine (Karma, Varnashrama Dharma, and gospel of Gita) reflects its tendency of having absolutism and phenomenalism more than relativism and positivism. For instance, the Gandhian practices- religious tolerance, non-violence, etc, were rooted in the great traditions of Hinduism. On the other hand the Ambedkarism seemed to have reflected more relativism and positivism than absolutism and phenomenalism. It is because Ambedkarism beliefs in scientific research and resolution but not in dogmatic fundamentalism (see, Roy,2014;Garada,2013; Coward, 2003; Roy, 2002; Puri, 2001; Alter, 1996; Gandhi, 1940 (www.gandhifoundation.net,www.mkgandhi.org/articles/gambedkaruntchbls.htm). The Marxism though reflects more on economic reductionism largely relies on positivism. It does not belief in absolute monarchism. But its vision of proletariat dictatorship through class struggle and its experience passing through the authoritarianism of Lenin and Stalin in former Soviet Union are proved to be as an absolutist strategy. Thus, to some extent the Gandhism and Marxism are structured largely on the principles of absolutism since the former utilizes religious fundamentalism and the latter utilizes economic reductionism as stated earlier. The latter is situated more on positivism and less on phenomenalism whereas the former is situated more on phenomenalism and less on positivism. The Ambedkarism is found to have the stand of less absolutism but more relativism and more positivism. His reductionist tendency of having the tenet of Buddhism is not dogmatic and conservative. Thus, it is clear that for dalit liberation and emancipation the positivistic and relativistic tendency in Ambedkarism and Marxism are more appropriate and functional than that of Gandhism. In this context, the discursive conception of truth explained in Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism has well comprehended the course of liberation and emancipation for dalit differently.

*Figure 2 :* Relative Conception of God and Truth

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Truth | God | Belief | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Truth is God | God is Truth | Belief in God and Religious Ethics | Monism/Dualism |
| 2 | Marxism | Truth is not God | God is not Truth | Neither belief in God nor in religious ethics | Atheism/Realism |
| 3 | Ambedkarism | Truth is Truth | God is God | Does not belief in God but belief in religious ethics | Realism/ Pluralism |

*Source: Our Own*

b) *Discursive Conception of God and Truth for Dalit Emancipation*

It is clear in the Figure- 2 that each philosophy at the least focuses on what is truth although that could be of monism, dualism and pluralism differently. Metaphysically the truth is ultimate reality but theologically it is God. To Gandhi it is the same thing. Gandhi

In fact, what the Ambedkarism disapproves or approves comfortably that help resolving that God is God and truth is truth. And to reducing truth into God meaning destroying and confusing the truth of truth according to Ambedkarism and Marxism. To Gandhi ultimate truth is God as without God nothing is possible (see, Johnson, 2006; Parekh, 2001;*Gandhi, 1940*). As for instance, Gandhi can live without air and water but cannot live without God. To Marx and Ambedkar we can live without God but cannot live without air and water. Gandhi argues that truth is God because without truth you cannot get God. God is there in everybody's heart and his sole (*atman*) is nothing but one with paramatma-that is God. To Biblical saying Jesus Christ is not only the truth but also the way to truth. The Bible also asserts that that even human being is the way, the truth and the



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life of God in a inclusive sense. In higher level of Hindu religious discourses, the Lord Krishna reveals the same thing through *Bhagat Gita* for which Gandhi claims God is Truth and Truth is God (see, Johnson, 2006; Parekh, 2001; Jack, 1956; Gandhi, 1940). This equation nurtures his fundamentalism as true to his practical life of religious absolutism. It does not mean that his truth is independent of human knowledge and belief because he individually experimented the truth of humanity during his life time (ibid). But still he is known more an absolutist than a relativist to dalit. To Ambedkar the truth is relative. There is no absolute truth and it is a self-defeating for him. For instance, if it is true, it is not true for everybody, its opposite is also either true or false to anybody who claims it differently. Every version of truth therefore, is equally legitimate or illegitimate. Thus, the monism (God is Truth), dualism (God is Truth and Truth is God) and pluralism (neither exclusively logical or spiritual or scientific or human) of truth are its inclusive realms as stated earlier. The truth is God and God is truth statement thus, assimilates metaphysics with theology to which Gandhi approves and Ambedkar and Marx disapprove. To a theist like Gandhi the true knowledge is the knowledge of God and nothing beyond. But to Marx one's statement is true if it corresponds to reality or to that extend if it is the fact itself (Gould, 1978; Marx, 1976 and 1975). According to Marxism there is nothing called as truth beyond its material existence and otherwise it is illusion. Thus, the truth is nothing more than a material life itself- a historical reflection. What the truth is perhaps the ensoulment of body to Gandhi, embodiment of soul to Marx and emancipation of body and soul from an eternal bondage to Buddhism. Further, the human desire and ignorance as the causes of the truth-sufferings the dalit should know for their emancipation and liberation as per the Ambedkarian Buddhism (see, Omvedt, 2004; Zelliot, 2001; Gautam, 2000; Grover 1992; Keer, 1990). The conception of truth on the basis of realism found in Ambedkarism and Marxism seems to be more practical for dalit emancipation and liberation than the conception of truth based on monism and dualism in Gandhism. The ambedkarian conception of truth is more relevant for dalit because it pleads the realism like Marxism and religious ethics like Gandhism. But unlike the materialistic atheism of Marxism and the theological conservatism of Gandhism it has been progressive for emancipation and liberation.

*Figure 3 :* Type of Knowledge for Dalit liberation and Emancipation

| Sl.No | Philosophy | Knowledge | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Theological/metaphysical | Theological/metaphysical knowledge assumed to be impractical for dalit liberation |
| 2 | Marxism | Epistemological | Epistemological knowledge is required for dalit cause |
| 3. | Ambedkarism | Epistemology/ religious ethics | Epistemological knowledge with religious ethics seems to be practical for dalit liberation |

*Source: Our Own*

The Figure- 3 clears the type of knowledge each ism having justifies how they are different in this regard. The intellectual bases in Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism can be deconstructed as theological/ metaphysical epistemology, objective epistemology and objective epistemology/religious ethical respectively. The theological/ metaphysical knowledge base in Gandhism assumed to be impractical for dalit liberation whereas positive epistemology with religious ethics in Ambedkarism seems to be more practical. It is clear in the Figure that the role of religion is significant for Gandhism but insignificant for Marxism whereas it is significant for Ambedkarism but unlike that of Gandhi's theism and Marx's atheism. In the Figure 3, the perception of Gandhi, Marx and Ambedkar on the role of religious-conversion & proselytization has been deconstructed for dalit liberation and emancipation. As stated earlier unlike theism and atheism Ambedkarism promote a religion of humanism that is desirable for dalit emancipation and liberation.

*Figure 4 :* Role of Religion for Dalit Liberation and Emancipation

| Sl.No | Philosophy | Religious-Conversion & Proselytization | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Gandhism | Gandhism neither approves religious proselytization and conversion nor disapproves missionaries' charity and services to humanity | Religion is significant for Gandhism but his religious orthodoxy is problems for Dalit |
| 2. | Marxism | Marxism rejects religion but cannot denies the effect of religion in the society | Religion is not significant for Marxism but without religion the dalit cannot live in Indian society |
| 3. | Ambedkarism | Ambedkarism neither pleads conversion into foreign religion like Christianity nor for proselytization although it promotes Buddhism for Dalit emancipation | It is significant for Ambedkarism but unlike that of Gandhi's theism and Marx's atheism. It seems to be a religion of humanity for dalit. |

*Source: Our Own*



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The Gandhism neither supported proselytizing nor conversion. But he also did not underestimate the role of missionaries for charity and human services in India. This dualism goes with his perception of anti-Indianisation agenda of western world. Ambedkar pleads for conversion but not for proselytization. Ambedkar also realised the importance of Indianness and therefore refused to convert into Christianity. Since Marx does not believe in religion the question of proselytization and conversion is not raised in Marxism. It is because the dalit requires the religion of humanism. But which religion is believed to be the most appropriate for this is an important question for dalit. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism seems to be appropriate for the Dalit but not yet realized by many dalit even after several decades of Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism. In order to resolve the problems of dalit the Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism provide the spiritual, secular and material spectrum of thought respectively. However, each spectrum of the thought is not univocal but cross-sectoral as mentioned in the Figure-5. While Gandhi's mode of spiritualism is his theism and Hinduism Ambedkar's spiritualism is his belief in Buddhism against Hinduism and fundamental of theism. The Marx's mode of atheism spread humanism against religious spiritualism. The Gandhian mode of secularism is his religious tolerance whereas Marxian secularism is his atheism. The Ambedkarian secularism reflects constitutionalism- all are treated equal before law irrespective of their gender, caste and colour.

*Figure 5 :* Nature of Spiritualism, Secularism and Materialism for Dalit's Liberation

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Spiritualism | Secularism | Materialism | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Theism, Hinduism | Religious tolerance | Nai Talim- Constructive programmes | It prioritizes ritualism over secularism but the Dalit want secularism against rigid ritualism for their emancipation |
| 2 | Marxism | Atheism & Humanism against religious spiritualism | Atheism his secularism | Optimism for capitalistic contradiction and coming of communism | The role of capitalism for achieving communism seems to be not fruitful for dalit in India. |
| 3 | Amedkarism | Buddhism against Hinduism | Constitutional safeguards | Nationalization of lands and properties | Religion without supernatural belief seems to be impractical in real life situation for dalit in India |

*Source: Our Own*

The nature of materialism is Gandhi's NaiTalim as constructive programmes whereas Marxism itself a materialistic philosophy that generates optimism for communism. Marxism also runs through inclusive perspectives such as his sense of humanism is his spiritualism, his practice of atheism his secularism and his optimism of communism is his economic perspective. However, responding to Dalit' plight Ambedkar and Marx are ideologically more committed to the secular perspective than Gandhi because both of them express their predicament for dalit's cause through modernity and go for radical transformation of economy and society with the help of technology (Tejani, 2008). Whereas Gandhi opposes it with tooth and nail upholding Hindu tradition (see,Gandhi, 1940). However, main ends of all isms are to liberate man from his suffering, promote equality between man and man and let them to live in their company and brotherhoodness. The spectrum of thought ways of Marxism, Gandhism and Ambedkarism for the dalit emancipation and liberation has been reflected through communism, Hinduism and Buddhism respectively. Thus,the Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism, are not different in their goals. However, to Hinduism there is no equality and liberty because its karma and varnashrama dharma do not uphold these equaliser concepts, and therefore, Gandhism heavily based on the ideals of Hinduism get destined to the principles of caste hierarchism, patriarchy and caste-based incarnations. On the other hand, though equality and fraternity as expected result of communism the Marxism remains far from the individual liberty. Since the democracy is the antithesis of Marxism the liberty, equality and fraternity cannot be incorporated in it.

On the other hand, the original axis of Ambedkarism is based on the egalitarian principles of liberty, equality and fraternity (Garada, 2013). Once Ambedkar argued that unless the dalits enter into a life of liberty, equality and fraternity based on Buddhism they cannot be free from social degradation, humiliation, and exploitation sustained in Hindu social order (Garada, 2013, Omvedt, 2004). Thus, how Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism perceive the role of change agents for dalit is important in this regards.

## IV. Discursive Perception of Change Agents for Dalit Liberation and Emancipation

It is very difficult task to have a critical reflection on philosophical dialogue of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism for dalit liberation and emancipation. We have modestly tried to analyse the different dimensions



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of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism for dalit's emancipation. The role of village and state as assumed through Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism reveals a different picture in this regards.

*Figure 6 :* Village and State for Dalit Emancipation

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Role of Village Life | Role of State | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Optimistic about the role of Village as self sustaining republic | Pessimistic about the role of state for dalit emancipation | Optimism and pessimism on the roles of village and state respectively comprehend a conservative strategy for dalit |
| 2 | Ambedkarism | Village as den of ignorance and casteism | Optimistic about the role of state for dalit liberation | Role of state against village based oppression is significant for dalit |
| 3 | Marxism | Village as geographical unit consisting of castes for economic activity | Optimistic about the role of state for economic development | Political economy of village and state is not free from caste hegemony |

*Source: Our Own*

It is clear in the Figure-6 that the philosophy of Gandhism romanticizes the village and village life as self sustaining republic. It proposes a better life for Indians irrespective of their castes safeguarding their self respects. But the Ambedkarism developed a polar anti-thesis to the village republic heralded by orientalists (Garada, 2013, Omvedt, 2004; Coward, 2003; Omvedt, 1995). On the contrary the Ambedkarism proposes a civilized life in the urban world in order to save the dalits from exploitation in the villages. In Marxian understanding the concept of village life is supposed to be changed from its traditional connotation to the modern connotation after development of capitalism. But the caste village cannot be fully class village in India although the agrarian class structures are there in the rural Indian societies. As a result, the caste village perpetuates an unequal society. In fact, neither village life nor industrial centre could fully empower the dalit from their destitution. The caste is accommodated in the urban way of life. Thus, it is assumed that for the dalit's emancipation and liberation the vision of village life emphasized in Gandhism is perceived to be impractical while the vision of city life promoted in Ambedkarism is practical but yet to be realised in larger context. Since the village in Indian social life cannot be detached from the caste life the untouchability cannot be wiped out from the village. Further, since the caste cannot be turned into class the problem related to casteism cannot be resolved following the path of Marxism. Thus, the vision against the village life promoted by Ambedkar is increasingly followed by the dalit. In case of role of the state for the welfare of weaker section the Gandhi was quite pessimistic whereas Ambedkar and Indian Marxists are optimistic. Since the dalit requires a welfare state the role of state for dalit liberation is indispensable. However, with the help of the state neither Gandhi nor Ambedkar and Marxists could completely eradicate the evils of untouchability in India so far. A critical reflection on the perception of Gandhism, Indian Marxism and Ambedkarism related to the role of constitutional provisions against untouchability is crucial in this regard (see, Figure 7). The role of constitutional provision which has been the modern catalyst of democracy and the watch dog of human right violation is indispensable for dalit liberation and emancipation in Indian society.

*Figure 7 :* Perception of Constitutional Provision against Untouchability

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Perception on Constitutional Provision | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Constitutional Provision Protect Hindu community from world's criticism on untouchability | Task of saving Hinduism and untouchables simultaneously invite dalit's suspicion and pessimism |
| 2 | Ambedkarism | It saves untouchables from caste based oppression and promote their human rights | Constitutionalism for human rights is inevitable for the civic and democratic life of dalit |
| 3 | Marxism | Constitutional mechanism for labour's right | Promotes fair &equal pay, labour rights and trade unionism for workers' welfare |

*Source: Our Own*

Though the Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism are seemed to be indifferent to the significance of constitutional provisions against untouchability they are found to have different stands on it. For instance, the first one supports it in order to protect Hindu community against world criticism of casteism whereas the second one approves it in order to save the untouchables from the caste-based oppression in Hinduism. Further, the Marxism is assumed to turning the caste into class for the annihilation of caste exploitation in India. Thus, it is



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assumed that unlike Ambedkarism the Gandhism hardly inspires the dalit for demanding the constitutional rights against casteism. Thus, the goal of Gandhian activism against the practice of untouchables was far different from that of Ambedkarian ones. The *Dalit* rights perceived in Ambedkarism is quite different than *Harijan* rights and worker rights perceived in Gandhism and Marxism respectively. Thus, the discursive paths of emancipation for dalit have also been perceived differently in the Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism.

## V. Discursive Paths of Emancipation and Liberation for Dalit

The paths suggested by Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism for dalit's emancipation and liberation have been critically comprehended in the Figure-8. In the philosophy of Gandhism though the forces of revolution and constitutionalism not undermined the vitality of religious and altruistic non-violence means is largely emphasized for dalit emancipation and liberation (see, Johnson, 2006; Roy, 2002; Alter, 1996, Gandhi, 1940). In the philosophy of Gandhism the path of achieving humanism has been non-violence (peaceful means), altruistic non-violence (suffering for the cause of larger interest) and religious non-violence (peaceful means generated on religious principles). In case of Marxism, it has been violence means. But in case of Ambedkarism, it has been non-violence, religious non-violence (peaceful means generated on Buddhist principles) and humanistic non-violence (humanism unlike religious one). The non-violence means always expose dalit to violation in the modern Indian history so far. Altruistic non-violence also led to human rights violation in the history. Thus, Ambedkarism neither promotes Gandhian means of non-violence which is based on religious ethics nor Marxian violence which led to human rights violation instead it promotes humanistic non-violence and religious non-violence unlike that of Gandhism.

*Figure 8 :* Paths of Emancipation and Liberation

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Path of Emancipation | Path of Liberation | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | Religious Non-Violence/ Altruistic Non-Violence | Reformative& Transformative movement | Transformative movement fails for the cause of dalit liberation |
| 2 | Marxism | Revolutionary Violence, class struggle | Radical movement | Extremism and violation means fail for classless/casteless society |
| 3 | Amedkarism | Constitutionalism-Humanistic-Non-Violence | Reformative& Alternative movement- educate, agitate and organise | Role of humanism, rationalism, pragmatism, socialism and democracy and strategy of educate, agitate and organise seem to be liberating for dalit |

*Source: Our Own*

For Marx, the revolutionary strategy is more functional and desirable than that of non-revolutionary and constitutional strategy of Gandhi and Ambedkar respectively. In the philosophy of Marxism, communism is the only way out for dalit liberation and emancipation but it cannot be achieved unless they go for revolution. On the other hand Ambedkar's constitutionalism has been the practical strategy of dalit emancipation. The force of constitutionalism envisaged in Ambedkarism is greatly help liberating the dalit from their social humiliation, suppression and oppression in Hindu society (see, Garada, 2013; Ram, 2009; Omvedt, 2004; Ambedkar, 1943). But, the dalit today require all means-non-violence, violence and constitutionalism. But the revolutionary violence strategy and religious non-violence strategy are unconstitutional in practice. Thus, the dalit has to follow constitutional paths for their emancipation. The dalits are also optimistic with the alternative political organization envisaged in the Ambedkarism than that of Gandhism and Marxism (see, the Figure-9). As for instance, the Gandhism promotes national level political organization for the development of the people. Gandhi believed National Congress as a national party represent all people including dalit. But Ambedkar did not accept that the congress party would do the best for the cause of dalit (see, Roy, 2002; Puri, 2001). On the contrary, he argued Gandhi's authoritarianism would be reflected through congress party. The Ambedkarism promotes separate political organization for the empowerment of Dalit. The Indian Marxists neither tolerated congress bossism nor liked Ambedkar's Dalit politics. In fact, the Communist Party of India based on a principle of Marxism developed the communitarian pressure group that not only pressure the government for policy change but also argued for grassroot movement for a classless society in India.



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*Figure 9 :* Political Organization and Dalit Liberation

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Political Organization | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhism | National level political organization- Congress party | Transformative movements and congress party fail |
| 2 | Marxism | Communitarian pressure group and communist party | In the name of classless or casteless society extremism and violation promoted |
| 3 | Amedkarism | Separate political organization- All India depressed class | Organization in term of the principles-educate, agitate and organise is inviteable |

*Source: Our Own*

The Gandhian inclusion of political freedom with power and human service through political organization like All India Congress could not be realized so far. Indeed the connection between freedom and powers is better reflected through Ambedkarism. The role of political party for Ambedkarism is an active action that helps promoting the dalit empowerment in real life situation. Of course not in similar perception as the political strategy of Marxism envisaged the practical action for Dalit empowerment. For instance, the extreme wings of the Indian communist party have been activising the Marxian radicalism in Indian situation. But each of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism though promoted the role of political organization as indispensable for the cause of Dalit empowerment but has been grappling with many loopholes in real life situation. The difference between Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx was not only their different approach to political discourse but their participation and non-participation in politics. The former two were active politicians while the later one was not. Except Ambedkarian political participation the Dalit does not have exclusive platform which authenticates their political involvement. The reformative and transformative movements against social evils as promoted in Gandhism and Ambedkarism is acceptable for the dalit. And even the radical movement of Marxism is also inevitable for their liberation. But Ambedkar's subaltern perspective is indispensable for the annihilation of casteism and dalit humanism in the Indian society (see, Garada, 2013). However, there have been many change agents promoted by the philosophy of Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism differently over the time. These are being applied for the actualization of dalit humanity in Indian society. However, the limitation and disadvantages involved in the change agents are neither adequately identified nor rectified for dalit empowerment so far. In this regard the relative importance of change agents for dalit humanism has been discussed in the Figure-10. For instance, change agents- the conscience works like science for Gandhi and therefore, he overemphasized it comparison to the role of revolution and constitutionalism. In Ambedkarism, the conscience without rationality is not a science and revolution without humanity perpetuates violence against dalit. Thus, the Gandhian conscience is also impracticable for dalit liberation and emancipation. The heart, religious principle, supernatural belief and ethical principles are assumed to be the main change agents of humanism in Gandhism. In case of Marxism, the mind and materialism are the crucial change agents whereas in Ambedkarism, heart, mind, religious principles, ethical principles and legal provisions are included.

*Figure 10 :* Relative Importance of Change Agents for Humanism

| Sl.No | Relative Importance in Gandhism | | Relative Importance in Ambedkarism | | Relative Importance in Marxism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | More | Less | More | Less | More | Less |
| 1 | Conscience | Science | Science | Conscience | Science | Conscience |
| 2 | Ethics | Law | Law | Ethics | Law | Ethics |

*Source: Our Own*

Thus, the relative change agents in Ambedkarism can serve better for the cause of dalits humanity comparison to the change agents in Marxism and Gandhism respectively. For instance, the approaches, means and goals for humanism have been the mythological, bodily fasting and Ramrajya (Lord Rama's rule in Hinduism) respectively in case of Gandhism. The historical extremism and communism in case of Marxism, the subaltern, non-violent and legal means and progressive socialism in case of Ambedkarism are deconstructed respectively. However, the personality and ideological dualism of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx make it more complex for dalit emancipation and liberation in the contemporary societies.

## VI. A Critical Reflection on Dualistic Personality and Ideological Dualism

The dalit needs a personality who is open, straight forward pleading their rights without any dualism and dilemma. In this regard, they follow more Ambedkar



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than Marx and Gandhi. In order to analyse this fact the facts of dualistic personality and ideological dualism have been deconstructed in the Figure-11. For instance, Gandhi's personality was assumed to be a backward man in English world but hero in South Africa and India in modern history (see, Jain, 1987). In true sense of his personality Gandhi was politician, conservative man and unsuccessful lawyer in his homeland. Ambedkar's personality was assumed to be one of the highly intellectual figures both in India and abroad. Ambedkar was forward looking, smart modernist and a successful lawyer in practice in modern India. However, both of them acclaimed high stature of international repute after Independence of India. Marx's personality epitomizes the stature of free thinking and dynamics academia. The secular thinking, great heart, critical attitude, etc are some of his personal reflection. Thus, Ambedkarian and Marxian radicalism instil dalit for social movements against social oppression whereas the Gandhian gospel of liberalism and conservatism hardly attract Dalit for their course of emancipation whereas.

*Figure 11 :* Personality and Ideological dualism of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Marx

| Sl.No. | Philosophy | Personality Dualism | Ideological Dualism | Critical Reflection |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gandhi | Gandhi is perceived as backward man in English world but the hero in South Africa and India | Gandhi is perceived to have liberalism and conservatism on caste query | Gandhi's personality and ideological dualism complicates the discourse for dalit empowerment |
| 2 | Amedkar | Ambedkar belongs to backward caste but hero among dalit in India and intellectual figures abroad | Ambedkar responded a politics of compromise on reservation issues | Ambedkar's personality is appreciable for dalits but his ideological compromise invites criticism for dalit empowerment |
| 3 | Marx | Marx is assumed to be a stature of free thinking and dynamics academia | The ideology of radicalism and capitalism doubt in converging his theory and practice. | Marx's personality and ideological dualism promotes extremism among dalit |

*Source: Our Own*

Though Gandhism promoting both the liberalism and conservatism such as untouchable's entries in his constructive programme and also his simultaneous cautionary remarks of not allowing inter-dining and inter-marriage between touchable caste and untouchable caste. This dualism invites inherent complicacy in the axis of Gandhism. Ambedkarism is also not free from its dualism on certain ideologies for Dalit empowerment. Initially, it followed humanitarian slogan against the social slavery of dalitism but compromised with Gandhi in Poona Pact for a sympathetic introspection of Dalit plight for reservation. Marx's thesis of Asiatic mode of production going beyond the anti-thesis tendency of western capitalism as for instance, the inherent contradiction of commune in Asian society was not revealed like that of workers' societies in the western world. There is also misconception that the Marxism conceived of convergence between its theory and practice. The dualistic tendency in the philosophy of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism is perceived differently but to what extent they either complicate or resolve the path of Dalit empowerment is not clear. For Dalit, the dualism of this entire "isms" must be rectified in the contemporary society otherwise the dalit will remain dalit forever. Taking all these deconstruction on Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism, we can find out the relevance of each philosophy for Dalit liberation and emancipation in the contemporary India. However, the gospel of humanism promoted by Gandhi, Marx and Ambedkar seems to be at crossroad. Taking the dynamics of subaltern approach such as the dynamics of originality, acceptance, rejection and new departure evolved in Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism it is assumed that Ambedkarism is decisive thesis for Dalit emancipation (see, Garada, 2013). It is because the original thesis of Ambedkarism includes humanistic relativism whereas it has been mythology and economic determinism in Gandhism and Marxism respectively. What these isms accept and reject also reflect a comparative advantage and disadvantage for Dalit liberation and emancipation. For instance, for Dalit emancipation Gandhi accepts Hindutva and rejects eurocentricism and Marxists accept communism and reject theology whereas Ambedkar accepts democracy and Buddhism and reject Hinduism (ibid). Another important question whether there is any new departure in the philosophy of Gandhism, Marxism and Ambedkarism for Dalit emancipation. For instance, there is no scope for new departure in Gandhism whereas there is scope for the new departure from caste to class and from Hinduism to Buddhism in Marxism and Ambedkarism respectively.

## VII. Conclusions

The article addresses the philosophical divergence and convergence of Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism for the cause of dalit liberation and emancipation. The relative importance of absolutism, relativism, phenomenalism and positivism in



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each discourse profess and preach unique intellectual acumen for dalit. However, the relative importance of relativism and positivism against absolutism and phenomenalism in Ambedkarism seems to be more practical discourse for the cause of dalit in India. The change agents such as heart, mind, conscience, science, violence, non-violence, constitutionalism, state, village and religion perceived in Gandhism, Ambedkarism and Marxism help evolving a new discursive synthesis for the cause of dalit liberation and emancipation. But there is difference since Gandhi experienced it by rectifying the problems from within Hindu structure- without detaching dalit from their wrong doers- the so called higher castes, Ambedkar experienced it by getting rid of Hindu social structure. The Marxism preaches it differently as the economic equality will destroy social inequality whereas Gandhism does not concern whether social inequality will destroy or stand on economic inequality. Ambedkar visualizes that the economic inequality perpetuates social inequality but the economic equality also supports social inequality. The role of religion is significant for Gandhism but insignificant for Marxism whereas it is significant for Ambedkarism but unlike that of Gandhi's theism and Marx's atheism. Our study reveals that the monistic (God is Truth), dualistic (God is Truth and Truth is God) and pluralistic (neither exclusively logical or spiritual or scientific or human) version of truth are the inclusive realms of dalit emancipation. To substantiate the conception of truth the study also reveals that metaphysically truth is ultimate reality but theologically it is God. For Gandhi this is the two sides of a same coin to which Ambedkar and Marx disagree. What is truth is perhaps ensoulment of body to Gandhian spiritualism, embodiment of soul to Marxian humanism and emancipation of body and soul from an eternal bondage to Ambedkarian Buddhism (see, Jondhale and Beltz, 2004). In fact, Ambedkarism neither want dalit to follow the path of *Kranti* (revolutionary non-violence) envisaged in Marxism nor the path of *Shanti* (peace- religious non-violence) promoted in Gandhism but the Mukti (emancipation and liberation) that is to have a original path but with a new departure apart from that of Gandhism and Marxism fighting against their age old social oppression in Indian society. Unlike violence of Marxism Ambedkar follows the non-violence means of Budhism and unlike religious non-violence of Gandhi he follows the Buddhist humanism and constitutionalism. On the other hand the Gandhism heavily based on the ideals of Hinduism get destined to the principles of caste hierarchism, patriarchy and caste-based incarnations. On the other hand, though equality and fraternity as expected result of communism the Marxism remains far from the individual liberty. Since the democracy is the antithesis of Marxism the liberty, equality and fraternity cannot be comfortively incorporated in it. On the other hand, the original axis of Ambedkarism is based on liberty, equality and fraternity (Garada, 2013). Thus, the question is not what these philosophies are but how much pragmatic, humanistic, liberative and emancipative these are and to that extent such dynamics resolved in Ambedkarism has been much more realistic and optimistic for dalit liberation and emancipation than Gandhism and Marxism in Indian society so far.

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