

Comparative Study B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi

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Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, the chief architect of the India shared many things in common. There existed sharp contradiction also in their approaches to social reforms and in details relating to political freedom. The scheme in Gandhi was very comprehensive; it never allowed social reform to remain aside of political freedom. Gandhi burning foreign clothes and B.R.Ambedkar burning Manusmrithi were no mere acts of sentiments; for both foreign clothes and Manusmrithi had the effect of bondage and slavery for the countrymen. A Pinch of salt from God's ocean was a political catharsis and 'a drop handful of water from the Mahad tank' was the proclamation of social philosophy. These were no symbolic gestures; they were the outward manifestations or portents of the new emerging social and political patterns, for India, in the offing. Gandhi made it clear as, "The cities live upon the villages, India is daily growing poorer. In losing the spinning wheel we lost our left lung. We are, therefore, suffering from galloping consumption it is a sin to be foreign cloth in burning foreign cloth I burn my shame".

Gandhi and perspectives

Gandhi held that if the country remains dependent on the master for its material necessities, education and social harmony it could never be independent. Here it is to be noted that Gandhi's love for the village was not that of a mystic or that of an orthodox, not one bound by tradition alone; he fully realized that the downtrodden, 'Hanjians', as he called them were tied down to the village, so the village structure was of utmost concern in his scheme. Gandhi believed that freedom was never to be bestowed; it has to be wrested from authority by those who demand it and intend to use it, whereas B.R.Ambedkar expected bestowing of freedom by the imperial rulers. Constitutional rigidity and complexities did not form a part of Gandhi and perspectives, he preferred a suitable constitution to work a democracy; unlike B.R.Ambedkar he was not constrained by dogmatic consideration in this regard. Gandhi had a simple preposition in this. In his opinion, Free India Government would set up a constitution suited to the Indian genius, evolved without dictation from outside, the dictating factor will not be an outside one but wisdom. Parliamentary system of government was the model approved by B.R.Ambedkar for independent India, but Gandhi had very little respect for the parliamentary system of governance. Likewise, both Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar shared differing views on the nature and scope of democracy as a method of government. Democracy getting converted to mass democracy with a propensity for domination by leaders was seen as a dangerous drift by Gandhi. B.R.Ambedkar was unconcerned about such a possibility, instead, he developed an inclination for mass democracy where pressure can be built up by the advancement of the depressed. Gandhian vintage was establishment of swadeshi and swarajya for one and all, not only for the few westernized, all segments were to be permeated, the poor and hitherto kept out outcastes as well. But politics of atomization was not the means adopted because he foresaw that mobilization based on castes and confined uplift through public employment and state regulated aid were only peripheral in effect. This marks a distinction between Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar; the latter was for mobilization on the basis of caste and uplift mainly through the instrumentality of the state. Both Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar were political and social activists. In the approach of B.R.Ambedkar certain categories were very rigid but Gandhi had no rigidities of ideology or principles except the uncompromising category of nonviolence.

B.R.Ambedkar perspectives

B.R.Ambedkar, on the other hand, had a fair Proclivity for liberal ideology and appurtenant institutional frame and structures. B.R.Ambedkar had strong caste identity too. Gandhi had neither religious identity or caste identity alone, these two formed only subsidiary or subordinate partners in cultural identity and political orders. B.R.Ambedkar's politics highlighted the aspect of Indian disunity whereas Gandhian politics showed the aspect of Indian unity. In 'Hind Swaraj' Gandhi pleads and establishes that India has always been a nation prior to the onset of the imperial rule and it was the British who broke this cultural unity. B.R.Ambedkar subscribed to the notion that Indian unity was the by-product of British legal system introduced by the colonial state. Gandhi had a full know of the inner secrets of the colonial rule, the way they played faction and groups in India against one another. This was necessitated by domestic compulsions in Britain and the dwindling economy of the British. Here, Gandhi framed the opposition or responses to colonial rule fully reading these realities. The British strategy was to keep the different common testis get; in the opinion of William Shirer, "The game was to keep the Hindus and the Muslims, and other minorities as untouchables, squabbling among themselves so that the

Government could proclaim that until the Indians themselves agreed on what they wanted it was futile for the Government to make any proposals of its own.

B.R.Ambedkar was eager to take advantage of such a situation expecting that the colonial state would make sincere efforts of uplift of the neglected strata, and to that extent he had faith in the colonial political order. To Gandhi 'Gramraj' is 'Ramraj' and is real independence. But B.R.Ambedkar took strong exception to this, for the status quo nature of the Indian villages denies equality and fraternity and also liberty. So he held that there is nothing to be proud of Indian village system, rather we shall be ashamed of it. B.R.Ambedkar vehemently opposed the use of compulsion or force for social integration and reform. Proper education to make the individual long for change, reform and integration as the stance of both B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi. The Gandhi approach of naming the 'depressed' and 'untouchables' as 'Harijan' did not find approval with B.R.Ambedkar, for he regarded this as clever scheme to give the untouchables a sweet name by Gandhi. Hence, when the Depressed Classes League was renamed Harijan Sevak Sangh by Gandhi, B.R.Ambedkar protested and left it pleading that for Gandhi removal of untouchability was only a platform, not a sincere programme. As different from Gandhi, B.R.Ambedkar held that the centre of religion must be between man and man, not between man and God alone as in Gandhi. Like Gandhi, B.R.Ambedkar too wanted to cast away the evil practices in Hinduism, his attempt was to reform and reconstruct, not to destroy in full. In his own words.

The Hindu society

They should be re-organized on two main principles equality and absence of castes. Freedom of religion, free citizenship and separation of state and religion were the precepts of B.R.Ambedkar in politics. Gandhi endorsed the idea of freedom of religion, but never approved a separation of politics and religion. But religion as an agent of social change was well accepted both by B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi, both refuted in theory and thinking anything that either decried or diminished the role of religion in the life of the individual or in the life of society. B.R.Ambedkar believed in the limited sovereign power of the state and limited authority there from for the government. Legal sovereign power should be limited and people shall be the ultimate sovereign. To B.R.Ambedkar, "Beyond doubt, the sovereignty rests with the people". Gandhi too was for limited sovereign power of the state, lest it will annihilate the spirit and personality of the individual. The categories of violence and non-violence received differing explanations in Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar; but the latter held absolute non-violence as an end and relative violence as a means, whereas Gandhi did not make such a distinction and was an avowed opponent of violence of any kind. B.R.Ambedkar adopted such a stand because he was of the opinion that Gandhi and non-violence was derived from Jainism, not from Buddhism, Buddhism never stretched non-violence to the extreme level like Jainism, to B.R.Ambedkar. In his view, the law should be non-violence wherever possible; violence whenever necessary. This shows that there is only very limited intermixing of 'means' and 'ends' in the scheme of B.R.Ambedkar. He held that fight; whether violent or non-violent was just if the end sought was good. That means if the end sought was just the insistence on its achievement and the fight for it must be equally just. If the end was unjust and unfair, then the insistence on its achievement must be unjust. But the justness of an end did not change with the means employed for its achievement; the justness of an end did not vary with employment of different means, as does verb change with its subject. This is completely at variance with the Gandhi perception that insists on purity of means, which is determinant of the end. Rather than consolidating the anti-imperialist forces B.R.Ambedkar was pre-occupied with the task of consolidating the forces that opposed untouchability and caste discrimination. Gandhi was engaged in a process of dual consolidation; organza the forces both of anti-imperialism and streams and forces that wanted to spearhead socio-reform movements. Thesis very clear when we scan the equations, on the eve of freedom, for Gandhi and not Equations Rights.

Dhananjay Keer

The makes it clear as, "Gandhi who was one of the greatest men under the sun, was innocent of political science and principles of sociology whereas B.R.Ambedkar was a doyen of Constitutionalists and a student of sociology. On mechanization of production and on utilization of heavy machinery Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar had different perspectives. This difference is reflective of differing views on societal organization and structural pattern therein. Gandhi was critical of the devastating de-humanizing impact of mechanization and held it responsible for the creation and sustaining of exploitative socio-economic orders. B.R.Ambedkar attributed the evil effect of machinery to wrong social organization that made private property and pursuit of personal gain matters of absolute sanctity. To him, the remedy is not to condemn machinery and civilization, but alter the organization of society so that the benefits will not be usurped by few but well accrue to all. He was of the firm belief that machinery and modern civilization were of benefit to all, and held that, the slogan of a democratic society must be machinery and more machinery, civilization and more civilization. Collective aspects of human life were very much the theme of B.R.Ambedkar. Balance between spiritual and material aspects of life was his main concern; these entire he found. Impossible of attainment through radical means or through the methods of Marxism, so he

thought of Buddhism as the suitable means.

The panchayat system of Gandhi too stresses on the collective aspects. Spirituality and material progress were held to be cousins by Gandhi too. Gandhi also, like B.R.Ambedkar, repudiated the doctrine of class antagonism moving society. Ambedkar was opposed to Machiavellian statecraft. Dignity of the individual and organizational power of state were to be in harmony, state is to be moral and social in character and it shall fulfil the practical needs of its members, then only the state becomes practical and realistic. This requires man's faith and obedience to the state. On the other hand, Gandhi was for a morally enlightened order where the rigid organizational power of the state will not come in the way of dignity of the individual. Obedience, in Gandhian approach, was more of spiritual and moral in content emanating from religious conviction and inner calls, not to start from considerations faecal nature. Both B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi sought social transformation through democratic and peaceful means they did not favour a violent overthrow of any kind.

B.R.Ambedkar Social Ideology

Blending deal is and pragmatism in a fair manner, in equal measures. B.R.Ambedkar desisted from pleading a blunt destroying of the social order however iniquitous it is. He always attempted to offer something better in the place of a degenerate social order. Like Gandhi he sought to create an order conducive to the flourish of democracy, sought to solve the problem of social disharmony and disintegration through peaceful rehabilitation of the downtrodden. Gandhi disagreed with B.R.Ambedkar's denouncing of the Vedas and scriptures. He Gandhi held that caste has nothing to do with religious precincts and spirituality, caste and 'Varna' are different, and caste is pervasive degeneration. Gandhi explains that, "A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens, but by the best it might have produced for that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon". Also he was very clear that political role of religion shall be integrative, not divisive, encouraging caste antagonism will have divisive impact. Promoting solidarity by removing caste antagonism was his theme. B.R.Ambedkar on the contrary, clearly defined his group and proclaimed that he stood for the backward people or 'depressed classes'. But he spoke only on behalf of the untouchables and he had only sympathies for others. Precisely, only Mahars were his target group. even in converting to Buddhism B.R.Ambedkar was not concerned about the whole untouchables converting. He was well aware of caste divisions further proliferating into sub castes and sub-castes maintaining conscious exclusivity of their,

This attitudinal pattern was alien in the Gandhi a paradigm. B.R.Ambedkar ideology' was emancipation of the deprived, 'articulation' was by showing the de-humanizing effect of castes, expression was by denouncing the caste Hindu exploitation, mobilization was by organizing only the untouchables, in 'action' 'we' is the deprived mainly the Mahars and 'adversaries' were caste Hindu touchable. In effect the approach had divisive results and aggravated the schism and exacerbates antagonism, both in articulation and action Cohesiveness to promote unity is slender For Gandhi Ideology IS social mobility and cohesion and throwing away of colonial value system, 'articulation' is by depicting the evils of Satanic Civilization, expression is by desisting the perpetuation of the exploitative colonial structures and values, mobilization is by promoting social unity, appealing to Indigenous cultural values, in action we mean the whole of Indian society and adversaries are virtually nil or at the maximum the suppressive imperial state system. In all respects social harmony and symmetry is stressed, social mobility is ensured and antagonistic stances have no place. B.R.Ambedkar by treating the untouchables as a separate block fine-tuned his relationship with the colonial establishment, but was let down by it in 1947. This attempted collaborative stand in actual effect, if not in principle and action, proved to be of no vital use. Gandhi consistently opposed such collaborative stands. The Poona fast and subsequent pact was a turning point from the angle of development and incorporation of the depressed classes to the main body politic and society. B.R.Ambedkar eschewed the scheme of separate political identity for the depressed classes by means of separate electorate, he settled for reserved constituencies in which votes for depressed classes candidates will be cast even by caste Hindus.

Poona Pact 1947

Also Poona Pact made Gandhi to become more realistic about the need for concrete and speedy result oriented programme for the uplift of the depressed by works for the removal of untouchability and also leading to the creation of reserved seats by the Constituent Assembly for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. After Poona Pact both B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi realized the urgency for the uplift work, they cooperated on the platform of Anti-Untouchability League, that later became the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The basic differences in approaches between the two remained. B.R.Ambedkar wanted reforms to come through political power, but Gandhi desired that it should be religion-social movement that effect uplift of the depressed. This attitudinal difference made B.R.Ambedkar to bargain both with the colonial establishment and nationalist movement, for the advantage of the depressed classes. This became very evident in the post Pact period up to 1947 Gandhi believed that removal of social and religious make the discrimination in other fields wither away. Socio-religious cohesion is the forerunner of political unity and mobility. Political power was the first priority for

B.R.Ambedkar and once it was ensured all other disabilities were expected to disappear. He B.R.Ambedkar was for social engineering through the medium of state and politics; Gandhi, on the other hand, was for social engineering through ethnic religious spiritual medium.

This perception difference strongly prevailed, but fundamental issue of uplift of the deprived was never in dispute. Thus, brief period of cooperation (1932-1936) between B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi ended and B.R.Ambedkar who was stressing on political solutions for problems confronting the depressed classes began to harp on religious conversion. He had to make his mind up by 1936-37. Gandhi found this to be unfortunate, for the fight against untouchability was at its last leg and was showing good results. Gandhi held that socio-religious reform and political movement against colonial state, for independence, should progress together. B.R.Ambedkar was for propelling the untouchables to the political orbit by co-operating, if not collaborating, with the imperial state, and socio-religious issues were to be taken up later. He held that social, economic and political uplift of the depressed classes is possible even while the colonial state prevailed in India, it ought to be attained before independence gained. Gandhi was never in agreement with this. Even while considering the question of religious conversion B.R.Ambedkar was motivated by political considerations. He explored the possibility of conversion to Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity, last decided in favour of Buddhism. B.R.Ambedkar claimed himself to be an atheist and found no need of religion. But he was ready to use it as a mode of political action to attain political gains. In converting out of Hinduism B.R.Ambedkar wanted to make sure of two things; firstly, conversion shall be a mass and community based large scale affair, not an individual one; second, the new faith shall be the least unacceptable to the Hindus.

It means that the whole exercise was not in quest of better spiritual goals. If he alone had converted his hold over his followers will be weakened, he cannot then speak on their behalf. He converted from his mother religion only after the Constituent Assembly passed the provision abolishing untouchability. For Gandhi religion was to be the soul of politics, the sole motivating force. In politics, religion was not to be a political expedient but the sure means to sanitize political precepts and action. The 'politics of untouchability' coined by B.R.Ambedkar began to be beset with factionalism the moment he established a political outfit of his own, the Independent Labour Party. B.R.Ambedkar had a very peculiar notion about the role and status of minorities in a democracy. Minorities should be ensured not only of equal opportunities but also a share in power. It is significant to note that in the earlier period B.R.Ambedkar was for reserved seats for the untouchables he argued for this before the Southborough Committee, before the Sermon Commission he stood for common or joint electorates for all minority groups, at the Round Table Conference he argued for separate electorate for untouchables. The Poona Pact was a compromise between separate electorate for the untouchables and a joint electorate. When, in the elections of 1937, his strategy of establishing separate political and electoral identity of depressed classes failed he floated a new doctrine addressing the All India Scheduled Caste Federation in 1945. In heterogeneous polity the majority community shall have only a relative not absolute majority it shall need the support of a minority group to carry through its programme; the minorities in a combination shall be able to obstruct unilateral action by majority community. The internal inconsistency of a theoretical stand of divisive politics is evident in this context. Shifting political perceptions were caused by wrong fundamental premises of peripheral politics played on a board of power game. Opposed to this Gandhi was for amalgamation of all the groups and held on to the principle of unity and mode of action. Electoral politics was not of much concern in his scheme, instead, it was social and political unity and harmony. Hence, shifting political stances are virtually absent in Gandhi's responses. Power-centric view of politics and social process characterizes B.R.Ambedkar's approach. Power was held to be the key to social progress and he believed in playing the political game by observing the rules of the game. In post-independent India while remaining a part of the interim Nehru Cabinet. In August 1948, addressing the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation, he expressed, "we must take advantage of the toggle between the two parties and, maintaining our separate identity, co-operate with the one which will accept our conditions and thus derive the most benefit. Power is the key to social progress."

Indian polity

To B.R.Ambedkar the basic unit of Indian polity was not the village community; in the village power structure untouchables had no share. It was not caste, but the individual, then the state and then the centre was the political structural ordering envisaged by B.R.Ambedkar and this finds ample expression in the Constitution. Gandhi was against any oscillation towards the centre, or even to a state level political organization; even though individual was the focal point in Gandhi's principles, the corporate life was to revolve around the village panchayat. B.R.Ambedkar's contributions toward the uplift of the untouchables spanning over a period of decades achieved certain decisive milestones. But it would not have been so if Gandhi had not done the other complimentary part of enlightening the Harijans and also educating the caste Hindus. His insistence on caste Hindus doing a penance and adopting a Harijan girl and also establishing his Harijan Sevak Sangh all helped the work of B.R.Ambedkar. Between the two, their approaches and values provided the frame for the social political uplift of the depressed classes; Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar provided the basic premises for the legal framework aimed

at uplifting the downtrodden. B.R.Ambedkar depicted untouchability as a grave symptom and the disease was moral decay of society and religious perversity, the very notion of 'untouchability' is irrational and more irrational are the attempts to reform or perfect the so called untouchables, reformation and perfection are needed at some other levels. He presents his regiment in the following words, Everyone who feels moved by the deplorable conditions of untouchables begins by saying 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 Hindu'. It is inevitably assumed that the object to be reclaimed is the untouchable as though untouchability was it was wrong diagnosis and erroneous prescription that attracted criticism from B.R.Ambedkar. Gandhi too found that the sin is not that of the so-called untouchable, hence, change of mind on the part of the high caste is warranted as an act of self-purification and penance.

The target groups of B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi were different, even though they converged at certain points. The methods and skills of communication and mobilization of both were different; Gandhi spoke in plain language and that too in local vernacular. B.R. B.R.Ambedkar had no strong base outside Maharashtra and had to depend on the English educated local leaders. Inside Maharashtra he spoke in English and his movement did not have the second-level elite or leadership, his audience were poor and illiterate and he did not have the symbols and austere life styles of Gandhi. Lack of a well-knit organizational network was an additional disadvantage for B.R.Ambedkar Gandhi an paradigm was more viable, for the untouchables were dependent on the rich land owners, landed gentry in rural areas, a mere change of religion could not deliver the goods in such a milieu. Social justice and social equality; education and change of mind of the Caste Hindus, reform in property relations through trusteeship always were more comprehensive; Gandhi had a very firm and consistent view about the place of the untouchables in society, viewed them as an integral part of the Hindu whole, whereas B.R.Ambedkar had an ambivalent stand on the issue; they had difference in approach toward the method of eradication of untouchability. To Gandhi untouchability was one of the many problems confronted by Indian society, but to B.R.Ambedkar it was the only problem that captured his sole attention. B.R.Ambedkar made an exhaustive study of the problem more fully from the historical angle, and Gandhi was seized more up with the problem in its contemporary situation and tried to apply practical solution for its eradication. B.R.Ambedkar was an insider as far as caste disabilities were concerned, and Gandhi belonged to the vaishya caste that did not suffer untouchability related problems. B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi both found the delve dually using his identity and self-expression as a result of caste practice. For the subordination of the individual to the caste makes caste, not the individual, the basic block of social organization Caste hierarchy has the negative impact of not making the individual perform his responsibilities toward the larger group.

Hindu social order

Caste was not acceptable as the group, because in itself it is a negative institutional arrangement, the internal logic of which is suppression, exclusivist and immobility stifling freedom and liberties. Gandhi made the self-contained vibrant village community the 'group' entity for this purpose, with a higher moral content in it. The social location of B.R.Ambedkar as a Mahar subjected to humiliations and discriminatory treatment coloured his vision Also his ideology of protest was developed in the context of a social ordering of graded inequality and dehumanizing practices, in a world where human progress was guided and carried over by equality, fraternity and liberty. The social location of Gandhi was that of a vaishnavite belonging to the mercantile community, in the caste order a vaishya; he perceived the whole practice of untouchability and caste imposed disabilities on human beings from outside the discriminated lot. The oppressive effect or impact of a state and its apparatus on man, especially the weak and downtrodden, the soulless civilization promoting unequal competition between the poor and strong, the lesser endowed and better endowed causing caste and class conflicts was the social context for Gandhi. It was unacceptable because it effected a deviation from the practice of 'Dharma' causing all round degeneration and impositions of alien values on the social and political life of the community. Gandhi was fighting a dual battle, against the British rule of 350 years' of age in India and, against morbid tendencies of Hindu social order that were thousands of years old.

Annihilation of caste system

B.R.Ambedkar wanted Varnashrama to go lock, stock and barrel since it fosters superior-inferior division in social ordering. B.R.Ambedkar held that caste system has its sanctity in the Shastras and Vedas. Annihilation of caste system can be achieved only by destroying the authority of Vedas and Shastras. Gandhi differed on this. Class struggle may destroy class divisions, but caste struggle cannot destroy caste divisions, there is need for some other methods, for Shastras and Vedas by any stretch of imagination do not justify caste system and consequent oppression. But both agreed on the point that caste is dysfunctional, disintegrative and undesirable. Hence, B.R.Ambedkar held that right of the depressed classes becomes a duty for the colonial state, but for Gandhi it is a duty for the high castes. B.R.Ambedkar subscribed to the notion that 'cultural reformation' is a duty of the state, Gandhi, on the other hand, held it to be an internal process of Hindu society. Gandhi adapted a multi-pronged

attack to contradict the British colonial establishment in India and for opposing the evil social practices, both were sought to be eradicated simultaneously. B.R.Ambedkar believed that transfer of power from the Britishers will have the impact only of shifting the untouchables to the tutelage of Indian masters, and so the colonial state is bearable provided it would mitigate the evil of social ostracism. This was to be achieved prior to the withdrawal or termination of the colonial establishment through a joint endeavour of Indian leaders and alien rulers. B.R.Ambedkar doubted the sincerity of the emerging leadership in India. Gandhi wanted to settle the issue of uplift without the intervention of the alien state and value frame; he doubted the sincerity of the Britishers. B.R.Ambedkar regarded the untouchables as a religious minority outside the pale of Hindu community, whereas Gandhi proceeded from the proposition that they are an integral part of Hindu community disjointed due to the interference of extraneous, non-religious considerations. B.R.Ambedkar preferred to call them a 'political minority' or 'minority by force'. Since Buddhism is based on love Karuna it aims at reformation of the minds of men as a prelude to social reformation, and exhorted the 'minority by force' to embrace Buddhism. Buddha aims at energizing the individual, purifies conscience and mind is converted, so the attainment remains permanent, opined B.R.Ambedkar. Gandhi taught to overcome the problems of India at the societal and religion ethical evils without any process of conversion. Gandhi fully agreed with B.R.Ambedkar on all the degradations that have crept into Hindu order, but differed on the point of change of religion. This attitudinal difference is due to differences in perception, background. Education and experience etc.

Social Evil

B.R.Ambedkar shared the Gandhian outlook of the equal divinity of man. In the opinion of Justice Krishna Iyer, it would thus appear that B.R.Ambedkar and Gandhi had common allergy for social evil and injustice. But a fundamental difference, more apparent than real, demarcated them. To break law to make the law more just is a Gandhi vintage, noncooperation, herbal; satyagraha, civil disobedience etc. were its outward expressions. But B.R.Ambedkar seems to be more concerned with the observance of law and constitutionality in political process. The great Indians who were products of their times and location utilized time the right way. Dhyananjay Keer observes on the two as, "Two great Indians of our age utilized every moment of their life as life's greatest treasure. They were Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar. They knew the meaning of a moment. To them time was precious gold mine".

Conclusion

B.R.Ambedkar mainly fought against the latter, political independence was only of secondary importance for him, social and economic freedom for the depressed classes was his first priority. Even though both Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar identified the evil of untouchability as the foremost bane of the social order they differed in their methods and approaches for its removal. B.R.Ambedkar wanted this to be done through laws and constitutional methods. Gandhi treated it as a moral stigma to be erased out by acts of atonement. B.R.Ambedkar held that reliance on change of heart alone is not sufficient, it moral atonement is to be re-enforced by leg-constitutional measures. Gandhi counted leg constitutional method only of very limited utility, he was for moral, and conscience related remedy for the evil. Both were reformers fired by the dire immediate need for restructuring the malaise order. Both Gandhi and B.R.Ambedkar had vast and variegated types of expression of nationalism and patriotism before them; these expressions belonged to the pre-1857 and post-1857 periods. Developments, social, political and religious of these periods greatly went into moulding their perceptions. They equally were embroiled with the question of borrowing Western frame for Indian socio-economic structures. Gandhi never wanted to build the present and future exclusively on the past; nor did the Western traditions and practices fascinate him. With a sound common sense approach he was able to cobble together all sections of the people with him, the Anatomists and outcasts. Politicization and empowerment of the untouchables was of important concern for Gandhi, lest they well not feel integrated to the Hindu order. To B.R.Ambedkar this was of prime importance, but to be achieved by segregating themselves from the Hindu fold. Gandhi did not subscribe to the notion of divide into majority-minority communities. B.R.Ambedkar on the other hand viewed the whole issue from the angle of the depressed classes alone and wanted a separate solution for their problems. On a horizontal level Varnashrama was acceptable to Gandhi. He found quite a lot of utility in this, for it wards off unnecessary competition and material cravings by making people occupy their traditional calling, there was no superior-inferior dignity attached to vocation by Gandhi. He regarded Varnashrama as the invention of Dharma, the result of continuous search for truth.

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