

# Graded Indian educational system through Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's lens

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**Abstract:** Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was a self-made man with a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional personality. He was a traditional reformer wherein he inoculated numerous changes in the social practices of Indian society as a whole. He saw that the social institutions of Indian democracy can only aid in guaranteeing the future development and welfare of the marginalised sects. He convinced the members of the constituent assembly to undo millennia of discrimination and exploitation via affirmative action to socially uplift the backward classes by introducing reservations in jobs, schools and universities. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was posthumously accorded Bharat Ratna in 1990, but his academic writings, speeches were still left out of the primary and higher education spheres. The contemporary academic sphere is mired with solipsism which reinforces casteism by its occlusions and creates a tunnel vision that simply doesn't see Dalit or backward class experience or reality as valuable or important, unless in spasmodic, impotent guilt-reflexes, which have a minute or no long-term, continuing impetus or political practicality. This article seeks to look into the contemporary graded educational system and the voices of social subjugations among backward classes. Furthermore, the New National Education Policy (NEP) is also being looked into briefly through Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's lens.

**Keywords:** Education, Caste, Untouchability, Annihilation, NEP

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## I. Introduction

The current rat race towards receiving education provides an instance wherein it is one of the intermediate concerns of countless middle-class Indian parents and is yearly in the limelight when one student or another is deprived of a place at university, particularly in engineering or medical colleges, in spite of shining educationally. The contemporary system of education still favours the rich Indians, because such individuals not only have better socio-economical positioning to gain access to such spheres but also some people buy their way into such engineering or medical colleges. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar drafted the Constitution of India and enshrined affirmative action to inoculate the remedy of social discrimination. In this vein, he further contemplated that “the aim of human society must be to enable every person to lead a life of culture which means the cultivation of the mind as distinguished from the satisfaction of mere physical wants” (Ambedkar, 2009).

Dr. Babasaheb's reservation or quotas in education, jobs and elected assemblies aided in the social upliftment of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs), but not in the desired manner in which it was conceived. The result of hegemonic social practices of upper-caste was that the beneficiaries of reservations were diminished to the status of applicants for whom a special concession was being made by the majority that governed the nation in full-scale. Thus, the members of the downtrodden sects were permanently marked as a caste-based exception, whereas the upper castes existed as a casteless norm. Such preconceived notions never lead towards annihilation or even the lessening of casteism.....the annihilation of caste herein seems more like a disabling dream than an empowering utopia (Deshpande, 2013).

Currently, the three traditionally dominant castes are interchangeably called as “elite or forward castes”, and they constitute around 15% of the total populace. All the other castes and groups are together put under an umbrella term “Backward Classes” in the Indian Constitution. The so-called Shudras are called Other Backward

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Classes (OBC) and they constitute around 36% of the total populace (as per the National Sample Survey's 1999-2000 round). The so-called Untouchables are called Scheduled Castes (SCs), they comprise around 16.6%, and the Scheduled Tribes constitute around 8.6% of the total populace (as per the 2011 Census of India). As per the second Backward Class Commission report is also known as the Mandal Commission (constituted under article 340) submitted its report to the Indian Parliament in 1980, these classes together constituted around 85% of the total Indian populace (Mandal, 1980). The Backward Classes are backward in educational and social aspects because they are ritually and religiously ineligible for rights to education, freedom of occupation, and pursuit of happiness. They do not have any right to liberty and protection of life. They do not have the right to liberty and protection of life. The system of social relations even today underlies the norms that regulate access to resources and the position of the individual and collectives in society. The social evils of the caste system and the low equilibrium trap that it engenders have been studied by numerous Nobel prize-winning economists such as Joseph Stiglitz and George Akerlof. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is the first person to look into the social impact of the caste system on national wealth. Nevertheless, in the contemporary context, the problem of the caste system in wealth generation is hushed among the academic space of social scientists for reasons unknown.

In general, academic space is more or less equivalent to the term university, where knowledge is shaped by minds through dialogues between the professor and students. It is an unrestricted space where one can learn, research, investigate, interrogate, search for truth and develop a certain scientific attitude and critical thinking skills in order to formulate normative ideals for the society, the polity and the academic institutions themselves. All shades of ideas are theoretically discussed and debated. And, yet Upendra Baxi was compelled to comment a few decades ago that Babasaheb had been wholly omitted, forgotten, and ignored by the entirety of the Indian academia (Baxi, 2000). In a similar vein, Christopher Queen and Perry Anderson have each written that Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is practically unknown to the masses outside the Indian sub-continent, whereas Mahatma Gandhi is renowned throughout the world (Anderson 2012; Queen 2008).

The question arises that: Why is it that Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar—one of the great luminaries of modern India—is seldom taught in social sciences or humanities disciplines in Indian universities? On the other hand, Babasaheb has become a political banner for national and regional parties across India. Does this infer that the academic space is contested and that there are at play deeper power relations of a different character than those within the socio-political sphere? If no purely academic justifications are available for the academic curricula to exclude thinkers such as Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar and other anti-caste and Tribal activists from the fundamental academic syllabus (in numerous universities); this exclusion would have to be regarded as an unethical academic scheme.

In the recent past, Gopal Guru wrote "How egalitarian are the social sciences in India?" (Guru, 2002). This article came into the limelight amongst the upper caste academics as they attempted to respond to Guru's critique. The question is still prevalent in discussions on university campuses but is only raised by Dalit students. In a different context, Johannes Baltz remarks that the social science community has largely ignored Babasaheb, which is surprising because of his analysis of Indian culture, the caste system, authority and religious power, and the religious foundation of the Hindu social order are significant contributions to contemporary debates in sociology and anthropology. In a similar vein, Vivek Kumar writes, possibly, Babasaheb was the first Indian trained in sociology and anthropology from an overseas university, who also published his article in a foreign journal. Yet he was not encompassed in the list of founders of anthropology and sociology in India (Kumar, 2016). Furthermore, Rathore and Verma (2011) contemplate that, "in the field of postcolonial studies, Ambedkar has been all but ignored. Postcolonial theory is another field of study dominated by the high-caste intelligentsia, but insofar as this group is generally radical and leftist, it is difficult to attribute their exclusion of Ambedkar to class or caste bias". Taking a cue from Guru, it can be evidently observed that knowledge is historically controlled and monopolised by the upper castes since time immemorial. In other words, intellectual activities maintain the hierarchization of knowledge which becomes a criterion for exclusion, particularly when we look at the syllabus, curriculums, and methodology used in the production/distribution of knowledge.

The general perception of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar among the Indian academia is that his philosophies are mostly related to polemic speeches on caste, brahmins and untouchability and that his writings, speeches, and political agendas were cynical and derogatory towards Hinduism as a whole. This form of character assassination is subtly found among most of the individuals who are unknown to the thoughts and virtues of Babasaheb. Most of the time, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is not even recognised as a political philosopher or anthropologist or social crusader at par with Mahatma Gandhi. In this vein, Aakash Singh Rathore (2017), observed that Indian political theorists are obdurate to consider Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar as a serious thinker. "I have encountered over and over again a profound resistance against introducing Ambedkar not only into the curriculum, but even across the thresholds of the doorways to philosophy departments.....A thesis on Gandhi? Fine carry on. Bilgrami said its ok. A thesis on Ambedkar? The committee erupts in chorus: but he is not even a philosopher!" (Rathore, 2017).

The aforesaid viewpoint was seconded by numerous Ambedkarite researchers, who raised the question that why Indian academia ignores Babasaheb (Gail Omvedt; Sukhdeo Thorat; Gopa Guru; Vivek Kumar; and others). Thus, from all the aforesaid contexts it is clear that the question is not of if, but rather of why Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is omitted from the academic space in the Indian context.

## **II. Methodology**

This article seeks to give a holistic purview of the graded inequality in the hierarchical educational systems through the Ambedkarite lens. It analyses the major paradigm shifts inoculated by Babasaheb for creating a casteless and humane society for the upliftment of the poorest of the poor. This article is compiled through secondary data analysis of available books, journals, government websites, newspapers and articles to develop a neoteric understanding of the topic. Furthermore, content analysis of the secondary data was employed to interpret and code all realistic conclusions from it.

## **III. Results**

The educational policies put in place by the Indian government seems to be an augmentation of the British Raj policies which billeted the pre-colonial social order. And the castes that inherited power from the British trailed the ideology of Hinduism despite socialist and secular claims. Hence, education is the key tool to initiate upward social mobility, a sure means to get out of the pothole of traditional occupational rigidities, India's caste elites viewed its spread to the masses as a threat to their positions of privilege and power, and felt the need to fuse their hold by making use of the state resources and power. These socio-political fears and anxieties were exhibited in fiscal policy as well: the negligence of education in percentage of the total GDP (even though the New Educational Policy asked for 6%) to the masses and concentration on higher education to the dominant castes. In this vein, making use of research papers and the suppressed or consciously disregarded present-day voices of the then-nationalist era, we trace the association between the caste system and education and its effects on Indian society, of which illiteracy is an obvious indicator.

### **Traditional Systems, Education and Social Structure**

Our Indian society is characterised by unity in diversity in respect to languages, ethnicities, various religious beliefs and so on. There are two India's. The first one is where the citizens follow the de jure Indian Constitution. And, there is the second one wherein hegemonic social practices of graded inequality are ingrained into the minds of individuals. The Manusmriti (or the Laws of Manu) is one such de facto constitution whose fundamental faith is the inescapable inequality based on the prescription of ascribed status during the birth of an individual. This is where the achieved status is considered to be of lesser value in terms of the ascribed status of an individual perpetuated through the caste system.

The caste system is the basis of Indian social relations. It is essentially a feudal, pre-industrial system of governance and hierarchical organisation of society based on occupation assigned at birth. It emphasises the differences between various social groups and is a static, stratified and immobile system (Gellner, 1983).

Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, the anthropologist extraordinaire, observed that "caste is not merely a division of labour but also a division of labourers.....It is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers are graded one above the other.....This division of labour is not spontaneous, it is not based on natural aptitudes". Moreover, he contemplated that, "the division of labour brought about by the caste system is not a division based on choice. Herein individual sentiment, individual preference has no place in it. It is based solely on the dogma of predestination (Ambedkar, 1979). Thus, under such a socially discriminate system, education and the pursuit of business are assigned to certain castes specifically, and not to the marginalised individuals which creates a lop-sidedness for the downtrodden sects (broken mens/humans).

### **Denial of Education: Root of Casteism**

The system of caste could not have been perpetuated for so long and reproduced so successfully without the systematic and effective denial of the right to education to a majority of the Indian populace. As per Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, to accomplish the subjugation of the populaces, the Brahmins, who were the key perpetrators of casteism, employed a six-fold approach to mass subjugation. These are:

1. "graded inequality between different classes;
2. complete disarmament of the Shudras and the untouchables;
3. total exclusion of the Shudras and the untouchables from places of power and authority;
4. complete ban on the education of the Shudras and the untouchables;
5. complete prohibition against the Shudras and the untouchables for acquiring property; and
6. complete subjugation of the women" (Ambedkar, 1991).

The strategy of disarmament and economic sanctions against the right to bear arms and pursue a business of profit were employed to pre-empt any rebellion against the system and economic independence and self-

development of the majority. A well-integrated, interlocked, mutually reinforcing, closed system of castes was brought into existence, making the escape from the system a near impossibility. A blanket ban on the education of the masses could not have been enforced by chanting hymns and reciting the Vedas. Rather the denial to access education had to be carried out by means of fraudulent notions and by force. The Brahmins were, in fact, very apprehensive of the prospect of an armed rebellion of the majority against the minor upper castes. So, they promulgated the notions of disarmament of the Shudras and the untouchables as a rule of law. All in all, this can be defined as slavery with added norms. And, these norms/mores enabled the so-called elite upper castes to perpetuate their hegemony against the marginalised ones. So, making it evident that restricting access to education ensured the reproduction of privileges that were reserved by occupational rigidity strengthened through casteism.

### **Academic Untouchability**

The Indian academic contours have failed to reform their own social identities—their phenomenological position remains knotted with their social identity. Thus, one must not be surprised to realise that various sorts of untouchability are being experienced on university campuses by Backward class students. The scope ranges from the experiences of students in their relationships with their teachers to their experiences with other students and even those with the non-teaching staff; in each case they find themselves being treated in certain ways based on their social identity, not only as a part of a hierarchy in administrative functioning, and the teacher-student relationship but also as an implicit bias against students in reserved seats who are considered to not be as worthy as students in unreserved seats. Students belonging to backward classes, especially, face social discrimination stemming from these ideas in all spheres of academic life, whether they are utilising their fellowship or in the process of writing their dissertations. The casteist mentality and the behaviour of students in unreserved seats, teachers, and the non-teaching staff often associate students from marginalised backgrounds with derogatory working practices, even sometimes exhibiting their outright scorn for them. In this vein, the life experiences of Backward class students can be studied by Anthropologists to better comprehend the new form of Academic Untouchability both in primary and higher levels of education.

### **Social Stigma of Reservation**

Reservation is an antagonistic topic among Indian students. Some students have gone so far as to commit suicide in protest against reservations in higher education in India, as was evident during the Mandal commission commendations during the 1990s. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar designed the system of reservation policy as a form of social justice, and the OBCs, SCs, STs were the beneficiaries of such a policy. The main idea of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was to uplift the downtrodden sects through such a form of social engineering. But such a policy of social engineering was transformed into a mere political tool by corrupt politicians to initiate polarisation of the masses. In this way, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's legacy is parochialized into Dalit politics and reservation policy wherein some consider Babasaheb's name to be synonymous with reservation and vice-versa.

Moreover, in most of the universities, public schools, etc. where knowledge is disseminated among the future citizens of the nation, a certain ethos is put in place. Such ethos prohibits such social institutions from properly practising their constitutional rights citing some form of bureaucratic hindrances. Even after entering the set stage of 75 years of India's independence, backward classes are still struggling for recognition as seen in the Hathras rape case incidence of Uttar Pradesh. In similar veins, the situation in academia is pitiful wherein anti-caste thinkers are not recognised as thinkers at all but are unceremoniously cast off as lesser intellectuals or sometimes even polemic for stating their ideas.

In a hypothetical situation, if Babasaheb and other anti-caste thinkers resorted to teaching the future minds of India, the situation in our Indian society would have turned out to be very different. There are numerous questions that come to one's mind after going through such downward spiraling of India's mental perceptions. Is the Indian education system afraid of teaching Babasaheb's way of thinking to the students? Are the so-called elite upper-castes still holding Babasaheb to be dangerous as a thinker? To answer these questions, it can be said that, our prospectuses are set in such a manner that teachers teach their students from provisioned books, without inspiring any critical engagement with the text or the tradition, and without bringing in the contexts of the content of their teaching.

## **IV. Discussions**

In anthropology, scholars such as H.H. Risley, G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas's writing on caste are often taught in the syllabus of diverse universities, as they are considered to be scholarly. But Babasaheb's writing on caste and gender are almost unknown even to most of the veteran anthropologists (and sociologists) who teach at various levels (be it undergraduate or postgraduate). All these need to be rethought to include anti-caste

thinkers in Indian academia, then only we can hope for the effective dissemination of mental reformation of the whole Indian society.

### **Struggles against Casteism**

Casteism in the Indian context existed since time immemorial. But the caste system did not go unchallenged as there were numerous unrecorded mutinies against the caste system which are not well recorded in the annals of our Indian history. However, the struggles against casteism received a shot in the arm with the rise of Satya Shodak Samaj which was established by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in Maharashtra in 1873. Mahatma Phule along with his wife Savitribai Phule were the torch-bearers against the hegemonic social practices of the upper castes. Mahatma Phule observed the consequences of deprivation of education: "Without education knowledge is lost; without knowledge, development is lost; without development, wealth is lost; without wealth, Shudras are ruined" (Omvedt, 2004). Apart from Mahatma Phule, there were numerous other luminaries who paved the way for the education of the downtrodden sects. In the south, Mahathero Venerable Punditha Iyothee Thass with the support and patronage of Olcott and Mahathero Anagarika Dharmapala, had initiated mass schools and educational institutions for the mass spread of educational institutions. Maharaja of Kolhapur Chhatrapathi Sahuji issued the royal decree of reservation in employment in the region of Kolhapur to the Bahunjan for their social upliftment through education. In similar veins, Maharaja Krishna Raj Wudiyar of Mysore issued a royal decree of sanctioning reservation to the educationally and socially backward classes. In Madras presidency during the then British Raj, the Justice Party and the Self-respect movements spearheaded by E.V. Ramaswamy and the Sri Narayanaguru Dharmapariपालाना Shaba in Kerala, under the guidance of Rajarishi Narayana Guru, carried forward the struggle against the caste system (Sakthivel, 2021). The 1930s and 1940s saw the rise of the caste school of race relations; the Dalit Panthers in the 1970s modelled themselves on the Black Panthers; and there were calls for recognition of caste oppression at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia in 2001. These were some of the struggles which paved way for the modern scenario of somewhat acceptance of backward classes into social institutions.

However, still, now the fear that education would break the graded inequality i.e., disrupt the social arrangement, is the apple of discord among the members of the Indian middle class. The Indian middle class is mostly made up of upper-caste people along with Brahmins. So, the state under the governance of upper castes relinquished the idea of the right to education under Article 21A of the Indian constitution. While higher education was accessible to the so-called upper castes, it camouflaged its bias with the discourse of merit i.e., there was no suitable candidate available from backward classes (OBCs/SCs/STs) and created numerous islands of excellence and social institutions of national importance [or Institute of Eminence (IoE)] that are characteristically based on the idea of caste, creed and colour. Moreover, now duties are put before the enactment of rights which is quite a disproportionate scenario considering the current situation of the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Ambedkarite version of Universities**

The Ambedkarite notions of a university entail envisaging the inclusion of all kinds of notions to be studied for the betterment of Indian society as a whole. In this vein, it can evidently be observed that in spite of naming numerous universities, university buildings and centres after Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar across India, there are disproportionately very few texts of syllabi of any of the serious social research departments in our nation (Rathore and Verma, 2011). Even Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to anthropology and sociology is often disregarded by veteran scholars of the subjects. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation has created numerous chairs across India in various universities, but most of these centres suffer from severe cash crunches. At the University of Delhi, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was introduced in a Bachelor of Arts optional course after arduous efforts from the backward class faculties. Babasaheb as a thinker and statesman offers a vast scope that can be reaped as an area of interest by scholars in social sciences and humanities. Intriguingly, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar has now been introduced indirectly into several courses through Dalit Studies, Social Justice, Human Rights, Dalits and the process of social exclusion, Dalit literature, Babasaheb's philosophies and so on. Furthermore, numerous upper-caste professors are taking up optional courses in academics at various institutions such as Calcutta University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and so on. In this vein, it can be clearly observed that new historiography is emerging in our Indian academia.

### **NEP 2020 and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar**

The trickle-down approach was meant to be a process of social engineering wherein social penetrability would allow the percolation of benefits to the downtrodden sects. However, the fact that our Indian society was an impermeable medium was left out of the debates and dialogues. Our Indian society is somewhat separated in silos (compartmentalised) via graded inequality perpetuated through the hegemonic practices of the upper castes. The caste system, if truth to be told, thrived by excluding the rest of the backward classes from access to

education. So, those who were in control of the resources closed the door of opportunities before they even percolated down to the lower strata of society.

In contrast, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar observed that “education is something which ought to be brought within the reach of everyone.....the policy, therefore, ought to be to make higher education as cheap to the lower classes as it can possibly be made. If all these communities are to be brought to the level of equality, then the only remedy is to adopt the principle of equality and to give favoured treatment to those who are below level” (Ambedkar, 1979). Furthermore, he contemplated that, “the aim and functions of University Education should be to see that the teaching carried on there is suited to adults; that it is scientific, detached and impartial in character; that it aims not so much at filling the mind of the student with facts or theories as at calling forth his own individuality, and stimulating him to mental effort; that it accustoms him to the critical study of the leading authorities, with perhaps, the occasional reference to first-hand sources of information, and that it implants in his mind a standard of toughness, and gives him a sense of the difficulty as well as the value of reaching the truth” (Ambedkar, 1979).

In this vein, the new National Education Policy (2020) observed that the curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. The mandated content will focus on key concepts, ideas, applications, and problem-solving. Teaching and learning will be conducted in a more interactive manner; questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will regularly contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for students for deeper and more experiential learning. In all stages, experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, and story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects.

The new policy has also identified a multiplicity of factors, such as lack of access to quality schools, poverty, social mores & customs, and language have had a detrimental effect on rates of enrolment and retention among the Scheduled Castes. Bridging these gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes of children belonging to Scheduled Castes will continue to be one of the major goals. Also, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) which have been identified on the basis of historically being socially and educationally backward also need special focus. Apart from the aforesaid context, the new policy has also observed that the tribal communities and children from Scheduled Tribes also face disadvantages at multiple levels due to various historical and geographical factors. Children from tribal communities often find their school education irrelevant and foreign to their lives, both culturally and academically. In this vein, while several programmatic interventions to uplift children from tribal communities are currently in being put in place, and will continue to be pursued, special mechanisms need to be made to ensure that children belonging to tribal communities receive the benefits of these interventions. Minorities are also relatively underrepresented in school and higher education. The Policy acknowledges the importance of interventions to promote the education of children belonging to all minority communities, particularly those communities that are educationally underrepresented. All these aspects put forward by the New National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are in the confluence of the philosophical virtues envisioned by Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar.

## **V. Conclusion**

The caste system with all its repressive mechanisms and anti-democratic dogma and practice escapes the world's attention, except as a vestigial piece of the Hindu religion. Nevertheless, as Babasaheb pointed out, the mechanism of caste has a secular goal of maintaining over the masses, and the cloak of religion is used to mask it from the rational and moral scrutiny of the world. Hitherto, the Government of India has continued to ignore the issue of primary education i.e., slates (the symbolic expression for universal primary education) at the cost of economic growth and security and the formation of a nation in the future. In this vein, the New National Education Policy 2020 on paper brings positive hopes as per the mandates. But how much will it be implemented at the grass-root level is the million-dollar question raised by numerous critics.

Apart from this, there is an increase in the scholarship specifically for the Scheduled Caste (ST) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students, not only within India but outside of India as well. Along with these numerous Western scholars are studying works of Babasaheb, for instance, the recent work on “Political Philosophy of Antonio Gramsci and B.R. Ambedkar” (2013) by Cosimo Zene. Other scholars such as Martin Fuchs, David Blundell, Gail Omvedt, Luis Cabrera have seen the theoretical potential of Babasaheb. Intriguingly, Babasaheb is slowly gaining traction as he is introduced to Western syllabi that seek to study India of South Asia. Needless to say, in India, there are prickly issues surrounding backward class scholarship, particularly as posed by upper caste scholars. There is a heated critique by Dalit movements and Ambedkarite scholars of the nature of Indian academics, and the authority of national-level politics by the upper-caste upper-class elites. At the juncture of 75 years of India's independence, this is the first-time philosophies and values of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar is gaining mainstream attraction due to the efforts of the government of the day through the celebration of Azadi

Ka Amrit Mahotsav. But one cannot follow such a trend blindly, rather, one has to critically analyse it. In essence, Indian academics of the future will be more varied; and there will be multiple questions from various regions and schools of thought, which will test the mainstream academic discourse. It is in this context that we should seek to use Babasaheb's notion of annihilation i.e., a schema to destroy caste, and in the process, attack the conditions that allow these social identities to be used as anchors and onagers of privileges, rather than use these social identities as a way to secure morsels. The struggle is to find a way in which marginalised sects of the Indian populace are able to act with each other and not in competition with each other.

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