



---

## Critical Caste Studies And Civic Education: Perspectives On Ambedkar's Social Justice

**Dr. RAMESH BABU PARA** Tagore National Scholar for Cultural Research, Andhra Pradesh State Archives (Nodal Institution) Teen Murti Bhavan, Ministry of Culture, Government of India

**Dr. K. AJAY BABU** Lecturer, Department of History, SRR & CVR Government College Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

---

### Abstract

Rather than looking at the growth and advancement of humans, the foundations of Indian education and its philosophy have been examined through the prism of caste. In pre-independent and early post-independent India, communities living under dominant and resistance regimes shaped the educational landscape. Dwijas controlled education in the early stages by imparting knowledge derived from sacred scriptures. The Bhumiputras, or sons of the earth, posed a challenge to the Varnashrama for Dwijas, the prevalent and biased method of knowledge acquisition. Historically, the Charvakas/Lokayatas and Buddhist schools of thought have given rise to the Bhumiputra, a new alternative education system founded on egalitarian and materialist philosophy. Education was subject to dominance and resistance in the shape of mixed secular and feudal praxis following the arrival of Muslim authority in mediaeval India. How specifically did the Dalit's educational chances get expanded by colonial modernity along the lines of secular and nation-state formations? The caste-class concepts of nationalism and secularism persisted, as did the reinforcement of domination in educational opportunities. Social reformation, anti-caste protests, and self-respect campaigns in the direction of social fairness and equitable educational opportunities were the forms of opposition that first appeared. More specifically, it aims to understand and depict Adi-Andhra, the collective autonomous category of Dalits. Within this framework, this paper's primary goal is to identify different educational streams that were effective at different scales as well as the contradictions that arose in the process of Dalit identity and cultural formation in Deccan Nizam's Hyderabad State and Colonial Coastal Andhra between 1906 and 1956.

**Keywords:** Identity, Culture, Dalit Schooling, Adi-Andhra, Bhumiputras, Dasabodha, Navayana.

### Introduction

The field of political behaviour of the state, which is highly contested, was founded in the 1950s and 1960s by Simon and Schuster and other political scholars such as De,

Tocqueville, and A. Marx, Karl (1985), Mc Graw Hill (1964), Durkheim E. (2012), and Weber, M. (2009). Inquiring into the micro-practices of class, religion, race/ethnicity, or education on individual and group-based political behaviour, the majority of brilliant works of the 1950s and 1960s gained popularity as empowerment and education. Subsequently, starting in the mid-1970s, research on education and empowerment grew more focused on the macro issues of how political institutions shape political outcomes. The fundamental causes and consequences of these revolutions are examined through a comparative historical perspective of nation-state development.

In the social sciences, the concept of “education” has mainly been limited to philosophy. Following the growth of the behavioural and social sciences, scholarly works in psychology, economics, sociology, and political science acknowledged the significance of the “phenomenon of education,” which gave rise to the current scenario of educational studies Shukla, S. (1996) should be examined as a notion of the multidisciplinary field of research. This end focus of recent study on the “concept of education” and its relationships and interactions with the social “phenomenon of learning” inside the “paradigm of school” was examined by Pearson, M. N. (1995). Political scientists have made very little to education as a topic of policy study in general and Dalits in particular. A large portion of educational studies in the social sciences has come from sociology.

The current investigation can be broadly classified as colonial studies. The paper’s primary goal is to present Dalit empowerment and education as a product of colonial thinking.<sup>1</sup> The idea is not to imply that, in the supposedly capacity and capability approach to the globalised modern world, education has become less relevant and empowerment more salient. The subject matter for discussion comes from a time when the British Government was having a significant impact on the Native American people and the national movement was in process.

This attempt to comprehend the socio-political practices of education in the colonial state is somewhat motivated by the desire to elevate the lowest classes within the south Indian population. Is it to enable the Coastal Andhra Pradesh and the former Nizam Hyderabad State to understand themselves as an important and cultural community? Is it the result of Nizam Hyderabad State policy, autonomous independent struggles, or Adi-Andhra? It seems helpful to treat school, culture, and cosmopolitan development of the modern state even though this study engages with the colonial period. It is aware that the school in contemporary politics needs to locate historically in the colonial intervention and the structure of anti-colonial responses found in the nationalist narratives. This research aims to trace the trajectory of Dalits’ education and empowerment journey inside the colonial framework. Once more, this is not meant to be an outright support of those who have either consolidated the idea of education and empowerment or totalized the idea of Dalits’ culture and education. This study is an investigation along that line. It gives details.

The left has noted that these political-sociological narratives not only ignore the colonial past of these developing countries, but they also export an ideology of “structural-functionalism” and “relative deprivation” to a marginalised South, thereby perpetuating a hegemonic North over that region. The breakdown of historically developed societies and the pervasive geopolitical problems brought on by Western science and technology on social systems and education have not been brought to Amartya Sen’s attention. Despite these criticisms of empowerment and education, this study aims to reexamine these analyses in a circumstantial manner.

### **Social Background and History of Adi-Andhra**

The caste name Adi-Andhra is derived from ‘Adi’ meaning from the ‘beginning’ or ‘original settler’ and Andhra refers to people from Andhra Pradesh.”<sup>2</sup> When the Government of British India began conducting a census of the local groups at the beginning of the 20th century, a group of Dalit intellectuals came up with this word. The topic of Adi-Andhra ethnic identity was raised at the 1917 Vijayawada Andhra Panchama Maha Jana Sabha, the first regional Dalit convention.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the conference attendees and the leaders of the organising committee approved a resolution designating untouchables or outcasts as Adi-Andhra. The primary goal of this coinage is to strengthen and elevate the self-respect of the ‘untouchables’ in Andhra Pradesh.

In terms of numbers, the Adi-Andhra caste dominates Andhra Pradesh, with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Pondicherry, and Kerala following. The caste’s members are dispersed throughout all of the major towns and cities on the plateau, all the way down to the “Sahyadri” hills in Karnataka. They are migrants in Tamil Nadu, having come from the nearby coastal state of Andhra Pradesh. Most Adi-Andhras in people in Tamil Nadu live in cities. In Andhra Pradesh, the following districts have been identified as having seen a high influx of cast members return: Srikakulam, Vishakhapatnam, East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Nellore, Cuddapah, Ananthpur, Prakasam, Kurnool, and Guntur. Adi-Andhras are located in the districts of Bangalore, Bellary, Mysore, and Kolar in the state of Karnataka. While Adi-Andhras in Tamil Nadu are dispersed over Madras, Chegalapattu, Dharmapuri, and North Arcot, they are concentrated in one region in Kerala, Kozhikode.

‘Karati’, Satyanpalle, Mekala, Dasar, Mitla, and other exogamous clans are among the Adi-Andhra. The mother tongue of the Adi-Andhras is Telugu. They speak two languages in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry, and Karnataka. Put another way, they speak the native language of each state in addition to Telugu, which is their mother tongue.

### **Mapping the Rationality of Dalit Education**

In pre-independent and early post-independent India, education for social justice and Dalit empowerment was shaped by the socioeconomic standing of the communities living under dominant and resistance regimes.<sup>4</sup> Diwijas<sup>5</sup> controlled education in the early stages by imparting knowledge derived from sacred scriptures. Bhumiputra resistance has evolved against this dominated and biased information acquisition.<sup>6</sup> The mere name

Bhumiputras, or sons of the land, refers to the working class of that era's society who rebelled against Dwijas' Varnashrama school of thought.

This is the new place that the egalitarian and materialist ideas of the Jain, Buddhist, and Charvaka schools of thought have produced.<sup>7</sup> The establishment of Muslim power in mediaeval India resulted in the dominance and resistance of education through secular and feudal practices. The Upanishad age gave rise to the liberal Bhakti cult, which promoted serious socio-religious educational equality among the many communities. During Muslim control in India, this led to the establishment of new vernacular and country school education. According to Suresh C. Ghosh (2007), Islamic education has been forced upon its adherents through formal institutions like madrasahs and maktabas, which were funded by rulers, their friends, family, and/or followers, as well as by affluent and devout Muslims. In the real sense, Islamic education placed more emphasis on pragmatic issues than on spiritual subjects like Sufi philosophy. In addition, new elements were added to Indian education generally and Dalits specifically with the development of Maratha dominance.

The purpose of the "Phenomenon of Education," as coined by researchers, is to advance the basic level of education for the underprivileged. The education and empowerment of Islamic madrasahs, Buddhist schools, and Jaina establishments in India were shaped by the Caste Hindu model of the "Gurukula," according to Suresh C. Ghosh (2007). Before and after the onset of colonial authority, it had established a number of legal protections for education. The introduction of English education during the colonial era allowed for a reevaluation of the Brahminical Gurukula System of education, which was made possible by the rise of social consciousness across all socioeconomic groups, including the Dalits Suresh C. Ghosh (2007). Social changes gained traction, and caste associations and reforms acquired significance as well. Education was only available in "Gurukula," schools in addition to Buddhist viharas, Islamic madrasahs, and Maktabas, before it spread throughout all of India.

In order to comprehend the whole evolution of education in India, it may be instructive to look at the conceptual framework of Dalit education through caste associations in Nizam Hyderabad. Rudolph and Rudolph (1967) claim that caste associations serve as "para-communities" for the pursuit of social mobility, political power, and economic advantage. They also distinguish between voluntary associations and caste associations, noting that the former are visible in technologically advanced humanities while the latter are more akin to numerous traditions.

At the organisational level, caste associations are more prevalent than the former caste structures when compared to voluntary associations. With conferences, delegates, and resolutions, one can observe its offices, membership, early stages of bureaucratization, and legislative procedure. However, caste affiliations have a solidarity not seen in voluntary associations since they are defined by a shared sense of culture, character, and

position. Caste associations serve a variety of purposes. It benefits Indian society by both supplanting and levelling the ancient, hierarchical caste system. It starts and oversees the lower castes' attempts to become twice-born and to complete the holy thread, which represents a higher ritual rank and culture.<sup>8</sup>

It is noteworthy that the caste system plays a significant role in the structural and traditional development of Indian society. Additionally, caste systems foster an adaptive tradition that allows for the coexistence of both traditional and modern aspects of society with equal vigour and gamble. Drawing ideas and theoretical stances from education and empowerment is helpful while researching education and empowerment for Dalits. Education and empowerment are essentially about the relationships between these institutions as well as the family, the economy, and the polity. In the sociology of education, socialisation theories are where the concept of culture is most frequently employed. It is believed that socialisation is the process by which human subjects' awareness is developed through the internalisation of culture.

### **Colonialism and the Education of the Dalits**

Jotirao Phule's strong focus on Dalits' education and empowerment is a first in Indian social history. He started the process of establishing a school in Maharashtra for Dalit girls in 1848. After Phule's introduction, the Gurukula System of education had a significant impact on Dalits' social stigma and their status as untouchables. It may have been the first school established for Dalits in India. It was imperative that Maharashtra's colonial government start providing education for the Dalits.

The philosophers and educators before to Phule had never participated in the establishment of Dalit schools. The majority of them have ties to the Gurukula educational system, which has been heavily criticised for its views on social concerns, political economy, and education for Dalits. At the time, there was widespread anxiety in the society, widespread poverty appeared to be the norm, and there was tangible hope for a revolutionary resolution to the caste strife. Within the fourfold Varnasrama dharma principle of caste Hinduism, caste Hindu ideologies were still able to describe education in the shape of Gandhi's idea of education as a step towards or as the caste consciousness of the Dalit fight. However, the 'annihilation of caste' proclamation by Ambedkar represents a bold path forward for the masses and Dalits seeking an education in India. In light of the current state of Dalit liberation and emancipation, this thought remains pertinent.

This inquiry aims to address the extent to which caste Hindu ideas about Dalit education can be understood. Jyotirao Phule's illustration of educational advancement through 'Satya Sodhak Samaj' within a specific field is the embodiment of certain interdependent caste-based propositions. According to one of the claims, the more concepts that are regarded as ideal, the more fundamental principles can be inferred. When an idea's true validity is demonstrated by the relationship between a theory and an experience, one of

the two needs to be altered since either the observation was incorrect or the theoretical foundations include flaws. The theory is reduced to a hypothesis when the facts are considered.

Building a “universal system of education” is the goal of Dalit education. The hierarchy of this system can only be determined by applying the “concept of inductive thought,” which is connected to the caste-based labour division system. The societal division of labour based on caste determines its function. It did not, however, challenge the framework that gave rise to it or the premises upon which it was justified. For good reason, Buddha, Phule, and Ambedkar noted that the ideology of the caste Hindu educational system currently in place is subordinate to this theory, which is more in line with people’s experiences. According to him, the Dalit educational ideology of the technical process would not have been feasible during the colonial era without the development of a conception of the “material basis for knowledge” with the aid of hypothesis.

Ambedkar’s attempt to make a distinction between Dalit education, which acknowledges the fundamentals of society, and Hindu caste ideology is focused on the eradication of caste. Annihilation of caste is characterised as the outcome of general social practices among Dalits, specifically through social consciousness education, and general community standards. As such, it needs to be understood through theoretical clarification, historical genesis analysis, and interpretation. One must also consider the historicity of the theory itself. The social reality must therefore be understood by theory as the outcome of certain given conditions of production, as well as the result of labour and the caste-based division of labour that characterises caste society.

This work is limited to the education and empowerment of Dalits in the context of the Adi-Andhra movement, which took place in the states of Nizam Hyderabad and former Madras. Anger and dissatisfaction have been the driving forces behind the ongoing advancement of Dalit education in the former Nizam State of Hyderabad and Coastal Andhra. As a potential mass movement that unites all oppressed masses and challenges the “Gurukula system of educational ideological traditions,” Dalit education seeks to redefine its “social identity.” Between 1905 and 1956, these oppressed groups underwent an unseen politicisation that had a profound socio-political effect on the state’s educational systems thanks to its new leadership. It has only been recently that social scientists have begun to examine the emergence of “social identity” self-respect movements and anti-caste agitations in colonial coastal Andhra Pradesh and Nizam Hyderabad State. As a critical educational ideology, it has been interpreted differently as a collective action and understood from different theoretical paradigms. The subsequent paragraphs endeavour to examine the extant theoretical frameworks, succeeded by an elucidation of the current work’s methodology concerning the educational ideology of the Dalit community in the studied regions.

The founder of the Adi-Andhra movement in Hyderabad State's coastal Andhra and Deccan Nizam regions was Bhagya Reddy Verma (1888–1939). He is a well-educated activist and scholar from the Hyderabad area who started the establishment of Dalit schools by placing a high value on the education of Dalit girls. The Dalits' socioeconomic circumstances are precarious at that point. Bhagya Reddy Verma saw the need for education for the first time and established a school in 1910 at his Jagan Mitra Mandal office in Easamia Bazar. Later, under his leadership, 26 schools were funded by the government and established in Dalit communities throughout the Hyderabad region.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to the harsh poverty, ignorance, and illiteracy that characterised the lives of the Dalits, the Deccan Nizams of Hyderabad State inspired the Dalit leadership of the nearby coastal Andhra state to champion education as a crucial tool for the advancement of the Dalit community. With the Burma factor Tarakam, Bojja, Adi-Andhra leadership established schools and hostels for Dalits in coastal Andhra on par with Christian missionaries. (2016). The majority of Dalits travelled to Burma in search of employment, made some money there, and then left to actively support the Dalit struggle back home. Among the social activists who brought back Dalits to Burma were Vundru Tatayya (1850–1930) and Voguri Veeraiah. They acquired 300 acres of land in Burma and 150 acres in the Rajolu Taluk of the East Godawari district. They also built hostels and schools for Dalits to receive an education in the villages of Ponnamanda, Anaravaram, Allavaram, and Modalukunduru, as well as Paswan Sanjay and Jaideva Pramanshi (2002). In the region known as Golla Chondrayya, Kusuma Tatayya, Tadiswamy, Pamula Reddy, and Konda Venkanna, Tatayya's had encouraged a number of Dalit leaders to take up the cause of Dalit's educational and social development.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the politics of the coastal Andhra region and Nizam's Hyderabad dramatically came to dominate national social and political developments, particularly peasant resistance, Congress's pro-Hindu inclinations, the rise of the Communist Party, and Ambedkar's ascent to prominence as the only Dalit leader. In the earlier chapters on Dalit education, it was mentioned that after M. K. Gandhi entered the nation's social and political scene, new players entered the race for political dominance. Gandhi employed social empowerment and education as his methods. The elite and middle classes used to be the only ones involved in this conflict, but these days the whole public is also involved. Furthermore, in a brilliant move by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Congress agreed to a separate Muslim electorate "in the larger interest of forging a united Hindu-Muslim front against the colonial rule" when it signed the Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League in 1916 (Bose, S. and A. Jalal, 1998).

The British, already entangled in the web of economic severities resulting from the First World War, were further threatened by these new developments and started implementing some measures to appease Indian public opinion. On August 20, 1917, Edwin Montague famously declared that the British government's goal was to bring about "the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the

gradual development of self-governing institutions to progressively realise a responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.” The force of such mass-based mobilisation, coupled with the political unification of the two major religious groups against colonial rule, undoubtedly had far-reaching consequences (Metcalf, R. Thomas, 1995).

This declaration was followed by the Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919. These reforms though they did not provide for the provision of a separate electorate for the Dalits, did provide a few nominated seats for them in legislative bodies (Galanter, Marc. 1984) and thus raised the curtain for intense political activity by the Dalits across the country. For the first time, the Dalit spokesmen were heard in political assemblies and the legislatures took an interest in the problems of the Dalits. The denial of access to Dalits in schools, wells, and roads was declared illegal in various legislative resolutions and administrative orders. Yet, such resolutions and orders were, Marc Galanter points out, “honoured largely in the breach,” (Galanter, Marc. 1984). The government, on its part, began to provide land, housing, schooling, and government posts to the Dalits which resulted in the increase of Dalit children in schools and the entry of a few educated Dalits in government services. Thus, by the close of the 1920s, as Eleanor Zelliott observed, “the principle of special attention (for the Dalits) was firmly established” (Zelliott, Eleanor. 1969).

The visit of the Simon Commission in 1928 was one event in particular that spurred all the castes, communities, and political parties to heightened political activity during the end of the 1920s. The Commission was empowered to recommend Round Table Conferences to create a new constitutional framework for India. All the upper caste and class-based political outfits, including the Congress, Muslim League, and Justice Party, boycotted the Commission, mainly because they felt that there was not enough “Indian representation” in it. However, the Dalits throughout India welcomed the Commission by holding meetings in its support; by this point, Ambedkar had become a powerful voice for the Dalits.

Ambedkar appeared before the Commission and submitted a lengthy memorandum, which was often referred to as the “manifesto of untouchable rights,” in which he demanded reserved seats for the Dalits in legislative bodies, special educational concessions, and recruitment to government jobs. The Commission in its Report substantially accepted a majority of the demands in the memorandum, (Galanter, Marc. 1984), but the Report was finally rejected by all the major contenders, including the Congress, Muslim League, Justice Party, and Dalits. As a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, he introduced the Mahar Watan Bill against the forced performance of all forms of free labour, first for the gramma pramukhs (village elders) and now for the British bureaucrats.

## **Folklore of Adi-Andhra and the Caste Hindu Reform Model of Education**

**8876 | Dr. RAMESH BABU PARA**

**Critical Caste Studies And Civic**

**Education: Perspectives On Ambedkar’s Social Justice**



The first was the growth of the Dalit movement, which changed in 1906 with the rise of Jagan Mitra Mandali, later in 1911, became Manyu Sangham, and then in 1922 All India Adi-Hindu Conference declared as Adi-Hindu Social Service League. Although the Hyderabad region was under the indirect rule of the British Government, it had an independent status of administering the Hyderabad state by Nizams; Telugu was not given state patronage; instead, Urdu was made the language of administration. The Hyderabad state under Nizam kept it nearly isolated from progressive trends and modern influences. The Adi-Hindu Movement is deeply rooted in the isolated portion of Hyderabad tradition itself. The primary trajectories of the movement are the material conditions created by the colonial rule.

The two main segments of Hyderabadi society between 1906 and 1934 were the Hindus and the Muslims. The agitation started in 1906 when Bhagya Reddy Verma started his propagation work through Jagan Mitra Mandali through popular folk forms like Harikatha, Burrakatha 'Bhajana Mandali'. In just 14 years, or the 1920s, schools began to open widely in Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and similar events occurred in the provinces of Madras, Bombay, and to a lesser extent in Karnataka (M.B. Gowtham 1991). Soon afterward, awareness campaigns in Hyderabad and Secunderabad led to the identification of caste associations in many of the provinces.

A remarkable period of sustained educational growth underpinned the unprecedented sense of economic and social progress that was a hallmark of political development during the mentioned period, in which education came to assume a key role in the political economy of caste associations. The most notable measure in 1917 was the presidency of Madari Bhagyareddy Verma over the First Andhra Panchama Conference at Bezwada.

A labour department was established by the local government to oversee the educational advancement of the Dalit communities. As a result, separate labour department schools were established throughout the Madras presidency, and the overall number of public institutions primarily catering to the Depressed Classes increased gradually. The number of special schools for untouchable communities increased by 42.2% between 1919–1920 and 1936–1937, while the enrolment of students from the depressed classes increased by 181% between 1919–1920 and 1948–1949. While this may seem impressive, it is important to remember that, in 1928–1929, only 7.52 percent of boys and 1.65 percent of girls from the Untouchable communities received an education.

Scheduled Caste students made up 11.6 percent of all students in the same year. Additionally, it was discovered that the proportion of male Dalits students decreased as they advanced through the grades. In 1928–29, they made up 6.6 percent of all students at the primary level (Class V), but by 1928–29, that percentage had dropped to 2.8 percent at the secondary and 0.89 percent at the high school levels.

The second factor was that, in the context of the depressed classes, Dr. B R Ambedkar can be seen as the leader of those classes who, following Jyothi Rao Phule, raised the issue of universal compulsory education and pressed the government to adopt a more liberal policy in India, criticising the repressive measures being used to control the agitations and activities and the government's failure to meet the demands of the more moderate Indian nationalists. In contrast, Gandhi's establishment of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in support of the Hindu reformation project across the nation during his 'Harijan' tours in the 1930s, on the other hand, in opposition to this, Gandhi's establishment of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in support of the Hindu reformation project across the country.

The third factor was the growing fear of Dalits' worsening relations with Hinduism and the establishment of Urdu-medium schools in the Basti's and Wadas of them spreading to the Islamic culture. Additionally, the work tried to demonstrate the influence of various schools of thought, both official and non-official, on the policy, involving as they did differing views about the nature of the Adi-Andhra Movement and its problems as well as the future of Nizam and British Government in India.

In Nizam's Government of India, an attempt was also made to assess the policy's effect on the character of the government and to assign accountability for its various components to the Adi-Andhras and various sections within the Dalit Caste Associations. These associations have been characterised as either one of repression and concession, or order and progress; in my view, the concessions were weighed in a way that attempted to lessen their actual value, while the repression was partially mitigated or controlled by the Adi-Andhra Social Service League's interventions.

The work also challenged the prevalent theory, that the policy retained the character of the state as a benevolent despotism. In my view, the general effect of the policy was an alteration in the character and role of the state of India in India's evolution, and certain subtle changes in the role of the Adi-Andhra Social Service League, leading to repercussions of the relationship between the Hindus, Muslims, and Adi-Andhra people. The idea of education is investigated by raising questions: what is school, what, and how does a school teacher, and how does school as a major basic institution of education relate to society? These questions are examined through some terms that are almost obsessions with the current educational discourse. These terms are access and structure (what is school), creativity, competency, and evaluation (how does a school teach), community, and value (how does a school relate to society). These issues enmesh. The way these terms were used depends upon the underlying epistemic premises. It is argued that very often the kind of educational reform desired does not take place because of the epistemic tensions between the different perspectives that bear upon it both internally and concerning each other.

Ambedkar's declaration also inspired some young Dalits in the Coastal Andhra region, like Eali Vedappalli (1911–71), who organised secretary of Adi-Andhra conferences in

East Godavari, and Geddada Brahmaiah (1912–50), secretary of an Adi–Andhra Sangham in 1935.<sup>10</sup> They were joined by Kusuma Dharmanna (1898–1948), one of the prominent Dalit poets of his period, who published the Jayabheri newspaper and wrote the well-known song *maakoddu nalla doratanam* (we don't want a country ruled by the upper castes). These three individuals became “a sort of mouthpiece for the Ambedkarite group, Omvedt, Gail (1994)”. in the Andhra coast. In 1935, the Adi-Andhra Mahajana Sabha held its eleventh conference in Rajahmundry, in the East Godavari region. Kusuma Dharmanna chaired the conference's welcoming committee and Kusuma Venkataramayya served as conference president. One of the well-known Dalit presidents of the Madras Presidency, M.C. Rajah, opened this meeting. Following this conference, Kusuma Dharmanna led the organisation of two provincial-level conferences in 1936 and 1938 as well as numerous district-level conferences. Bhagya Reddy Varma chaired the twelfth provincial level conference, which was held in 1938. The demands for the wasteland, job reservations, sanctions against those who oppose Dalit children attending schools, and reserved seats for Adi-Andhras in all representative bodies were the main topics of discussion and debate at each of these conferences. However, the Adi-Andhra Mahajana Sabha was unable to continue its agitation outside of the East Godavari district for an extended period of time. The increasing popularity of Gandhi and his Congress in the Telugu areas led to a significant number of Dalits joining the Harijan fold of Gandhi and the Congress. Consequently, Adi-Andhra activity did not have a substantial effect on the Dalits in the province.

Nonetheless, Ambedkar's proclamation electrified Hyderabad's Dalits. It was not unexpected that the Dalits were excited, given the escalating communal tensions between Muslims and Hindus, which were reflected in the Arya Samaj's control over nationalist Hindus and in the Majlis-i-Ittihad-ul Mussalman's politicisation of common Muslims. Because it made it possible for them to establish a distinct area for themselves apart from Muslims and Hindus. However, not every one of them was keen to seize this fresh chance. They were split into two main factions that disagreed with Ambedkar's statement. The young Dalits made up the majority of the pro-Ambedkarite group that Venkatrao and Arigay Ramaswamy organised. Bhagya Reddy led the opposite side, which persisted in its belief in both internal and exterior reforms.

The pro-Ambedkarite faction received an invitation to join the Poona, Maharashtra, Untouchable Youth Conference in 1936. The “fire-eating speeches of the Maharashtra leaders” impressed them, as noted by Omvedt, and upon their return to Hyderabad, they established the Youth League of Ambedkarites, appointing Venkatrao as president and Venkataswami as secretary. “To enlighten people on the evils of Hinduism, to oppose conversion at present but search for a new democratic religion; and to organise a vigorous campaign on socio-economic disabilities,” stated the League's primary objectives (Venkataswamy, P. R. 1955).” The League also aimed to “organise the youth.”

Soon the leadership struggle between Venkatrao and Ramaswamy rocked the League, and this, in turn, led to further division of the League. While Venkataswamy formed the Hyderabad State Depressed Classes Association in 1938 and began to lean in a pro-Muslim direction, Ramaswamy went on to revive the Hyderabad State Adi-Hindu Mahasabha. Venkatarao's pro-Islam choice was rather surprising. Until 1938, he never showed any inclination towards Islam. Indeed, he never showed any interest in religious issues. His choice was influenced by his concern for the empowerment of Dalits and a firm belief in the ability of the Hyderabad state, a state that can rescue the Dalits from the clutches of the caste-Hindus and also provide material benefits to the Dalits.<sup>11</sup> For instance, after Ambedkar's declaration on conversion, the Hyderabad state took several initiatives towards attracting the Dalits into the Islamic fold, such as employing full-time paid Islam preachers and supporting the Majlis in their conversion campaigns among the Dalits. In addition to these measures, the State also provided Dalits with government jobs. It also made the anti-vethbegar legislation, which rescued a great number of Dalits from the virtual slavery of the caste-Hindus. Undoubtedly, all these measures provided the basis for the pro-Islam stance of the Dalits and their leaders in Hyderabad (Omvedt, Gail. 1994).

Although the divisions among the Dalits continued, they all attended the founding meeting of the Scheduled Caste Federation in Nagpur in 1942. During the meeting, Ambedkar advised them to compromise and organize as the Scheduled Caste Federation without any official affiliation to the all-India body. But Venkatrao refused to work with the Adi-Hindu group led by Arigay Ramaswamy, Subbaiah, and Venkataswamy. On their return, the Dalit leaders of the Adi-Hindu faction convened a general body meeting, in which they changed the name of their organization as the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) and selected Subbaiah as its president and Venkataswamy as its general secretary. Beyond condemning the Dalits' conversion to Islam, the SCF of Hyderabad could not do anything, both due to the continuous factionalism among the Dalits and the fact that Dalits were divided along caste lines.<sup>12</sup> From Bhagya Reddy Varma to Venkatrao and Arigay Ramaswamy in Hyderabad, Vemula Kurmaiah and Kusuma Dharmanna from coastal Andhra - all the important Dalit leaders came from the Mala caste and focused their activism among the Malas, except Arigay Ramaswamy, who addressed the intercaste differences among the Dalits especially between the Madigas and Malas and encouraged inter-caste marriages among them.

## **Conclusion**

It was precisely at this time that the Dalits, both in Hyderabad and coastal Andhra, turned their attention from their earlier focus of respect and social equality to the question of political representation. But they were not united in their demand. They were being pulled in various directions by the major forces in Telugu politics, either into the communist movement or into a pro-Hindu Congress or pro-Muslim politics of patronage,

(Omvedt, Gail. 1994) in addition to a weak but sustained independent activity. In coastal Andhra, a branch of the SCF was formed under the leadership of Buldas, after Ambedkar visits Krishna district in 1944.<sup>13</sup> Beyond fighting against atrocities and celebrating Ambedkar's Jayanti, this branch was not able to affect events very much. Moreover, as Omvedt observes, "In that period of turmoil, with an aroused mass of Dalits, this could not compete with the hard organizing and real economic issues being taken up by the Communists or the patronage and co-opting facilities offered by the Congress. Thus, even before the British transferred their authority over education, there was a largely active Dalit pro-Ambedkarite movement.

## References

1. Bose, S., and A. Jalal., (1998). *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, and Political Economy*. London: Routledge.
2. Brighouse, H., and Robeyns, I. (Eds.). (2010). *Measuring Justice: Primary goods and capabilities*. Cambridge University Press.
3. De, Tocqueville, A. (1985). *Alexis de Tocqueville*. University of California Press.
4. Durkheim, E. (2013). *The Evolution of Educational Thought: Lectures On the Formation and Development of Secondary Education in France (vol.2)*. Routledge.
5. Galanter, Marc. 1984. *Law and the Backward Classes in India*, Berkeley: UCP, p. 29.
6. Ghosh, S. C. (2007). *History of Education in India*. Jaipur, Rawat Publications.
7. Giddens, A. (1979). *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in the Social Analysis (Vol. 241)*. University of California Press.
8. Gowtham, M.B. (1976). *The Untouchable Movement in Andhra Pradesh, Harijan Conference Souvenir*, Hyderabad, Government of Andhra Pradesh.
9. Holt, J.C. (2008). *The Buddhist Visnu: Religious Transformation, Politics, and Culture*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
10. Kamble, J. R. (1979). *Rise and Awakening of Depressed Classes in India*. New Delhi: National, 53-54.
11. Kothari, R. (1970). *Politics in India*. Orient Blackswan.,
12. M.B. Gowtham (1991): "Bhaghodayam," *Adi-Hindu Social Service League publications*, Hyderabad.
13. Macaulay, T. B. (2005). *Minute on Indian education, February 2, 1835*. *Post-colonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, 121-31.,
14. Marx, K. (1964). *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*.
15. Mc Graw Hill., Durkheim, E. (2012). *Moral education*. Courier Corporation.
16. Metcalf, R. Thomas. (1997) *Ideologies of the Raj*. Cambridge: CUP,
17. Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Sage Publication.
18. Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit movement in colonial India*. New Delhi, Sage Publication.
19. Omvedt, Gail. 2004. *Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India*. New Delhi: Penguin.
20. Paswan Sanjay and Jaideva Pramanshi (2002): *Encyclopedia of Dalits in India*, on Education in Volume 10, Delhi, Kapaz Publications, 112-113.

21. Pearson, M. N. (1995). The Thin End of the Wedge Medical Relativities as a Paradigm of Early Modern Indian European Relations. *Modern Asian Studies*, 29(01), 141-170.
22. Rudolph and Rudolph (1967): *Voluntary Associations and Problems of Fusion and Fission in a Minority Community in South India*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, January, Volume 3, P 43-48.
23. Shukla, S. (1996). From pre-colonial to post-colonial: Educational transitions in southern Asia. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1344-1349.
24. Suresh C. Ghosh (2007). *History of Education in India*, Jaipur, Rawat publications.
25. Tarakam, Bojja. (2016). *Charitra marchina Manishi*, Hyderabad, Hyderabad Book Trust.
26. Vaikuntam, Y., (1982). *Education and social change in south India and Andhra 1880-1920*, Madras, New Era Publications.
27. Venkataswamy, P. R., (1955). *Our Struggle for Emancipation*, Hyderabad.
28. Walker, I., and Smith, H. J. (2002). *Relative deprivation: Specification, development, and integration*. Cambridge University Press.
29. Weber, M. (2009). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Simon and Schuster.

### **Work Cited**

1. Most of the structuralist studies focus on school as a very important object of enquiry.
2. Mala, Madiga and Panchama castes are preferred to call themselves as Adi-Andhra in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, In Karnataka, the caste like Achhut, Adi-Jambava, Adi-Hindu, Chambara, Jambavalu, Muttaranevaru, Panchama and Tholavadu are synonymous, whereas in Tamil Nadu, the sweeper and Thoti are other names used for them.
3. *Andhra Patrika*, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917.
4. Dalit is a popular term invented by the Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra as a connotation for ex- untouchables and Scheduled castes. The name has a meaning of “oppressed,” “Neglected,” and downtrodden. For a detailed account of etymology and evolution of the term Dalit see Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, pp: 162-167.
5. The meaning to Dwijas twice-born people in Hinduism and they are Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaisya, caste groups.
6. The Bhumiputras are referred as ‘sons of the soil’ and powerfully used in Adi-Andhra movement as Adi-Andhra, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Hindu, and Namasudras. See also Holt, J.C. (2008). *The Buddhist Visnu: Religious Transformation, Politics and Culture*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, p.22.
7. Carvaka is also popular as Lokayata and Brhaspatya. It is to be called as the ancient school of Indian materialism. See Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy as <http://www.iep.utm.edu/indmat/#SH3b>
8. It is clear in case of Nadars of Tamil Nadu, a low caste of toddy tappers, who through the efforts of their association, the JaganmitraMandaliof 1906 by Adi- Hindu Social Service League, who acquired Arya Samaj activities in the initial time, the

- NadarMahajanaSangamformed in 1910, acquired not only higher status but a modern organization to service their needs. See also Kothari, R. (1970). Politics in India. Orient Blackswan, Apte, M. L. (1974). Voluntary associations and problems of fusion and fission in a minority community in South India. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 3(1), 43-48.
9. Annual Report of Adi-Hindu Social Service League in 1922, Machilipatnam, Ramji Mudraksharalayamu, P. 18.
  10. Brahmaiah edited the Adi-Andhra Patrika between 1938-40, for more details see Gowtham, M.B. (1976). The Untouchable Movement in Andhra Pradesh, Harijana Conference Souvenir, Hyderabad, Governemnt of Andhra Pradesh, P. 71.
  11. Interview with G. Shankar, Scheduled caste Employees Federation, Hyderabad. 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
  12. Interview with the Surendar Rupala, grandson of B. S Venkata Rao, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010.
  13. Interview with Ghanumala Gnaneswar, Dalit Activist and Organic intellectual, Hyderabad, 10 March 2014.
  14. Interview with Ghanumala Gnaneswar, Dalit Activist and Organic intellectual, Hyderabad, 10 March 2014.