

**THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF MAO
ZEDONG AND B.R. AMBEDKAR: A CRITICAL STUDY**

Thesis Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for Award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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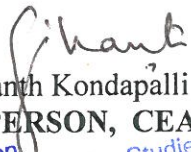
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "The Socio-Political and Economic Thought of Mao Zedong and B.R. Ambedkar: A Critical Study" submitted by me for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or other University.



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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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Dedicated To
The Martyr of “Anti-Caste-Struggle” in Bundelkhand
Brave Lalla (Uncle) Late. Gotiram (Guddan)
(Born-05th July 1965, Died- 27th July 1997)

This work is dedicated to the unsung martyr of Anti-Caste-Struggle in India Late. Gotiram. He was the fifth son of my grandparents Bhantiya & Khuman. His image in my memory is like Alha, the hero of Alha-Khand. Lalla (Uncle) used to read Alha-Khand regularly. Alha-Khand is a collection of fifty-two stories about two brave men (Alha and Udal) who were army chief of Parimal Dev king of Bundelkhand in the 12th century. Lalla was a short in height and muscular man with immense courage and power. He used to look like a rock never afraid of the so called feudal and dominant castes in my village. He lived his life with self-respect and dignity, never tolerated humiliation. The tale of his bravery still gives us inspiration and haunts our exploiters in my village even after more than twenty years.

It was early morning 7 O'clock on November 3rd 1992 when a six year old child was taking sunbath with our family members like mother, sisters, aunties and grandmother in our Kharena (crop field). My uncle was putting a fence with thorny tree branches holding small axe in hand. One of the villagers running fast toward our house crying laud bacha lo Guddan..., maar dala... (Guddan save me, they are going to kill me). We could decipher mob is coming toward our house. It was an attack by the landowning community with whom our community had a land dispute, distributed by the government of Madhya Pradesh. Children were asked to enter the house and close the door. My small village was stormed by around thirty feudal landowning community men armed with axes, bamboo sticks, and Bhalas. The Kharena became a battle field within a minute as Lalla alone entered into the mob dragging my grandmother behind as she was pulling him back. He just stormed the mob, and seven of rowdies fall on the ground within a minute. Somebody throw a towel at my uncle's face, and he fell then they beat him. My mother fought, my grandmother fought, my sister-in-law fought until enemy run away. Afterward, Caste Hindus had surrounded our village so that we could not go to police station and hospital. Doctors at District Hospital Tikamgarh said he could not be saved. Sixteen hours passed Gotiram reached the hospital at Gwalior; doctors were called from Bombay. For three months, he was in the hospital and was saved. After five years of his painful life, he died on 27th July 1997.

Late. Gotiram lived with respect and dignity; he sacrificed his life for the same. He is the martyr of anti-caste struggle in India. He will live in our memory for forever. More than twenty years passed, his case is still pending at Jabalpur High Court, MP and we are still waiting for Justice. This thesis is a small dedication for his sacrifice to fulfill Ambedkar's dream of annihilating caste.

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any means to go to my native village. I also lost my maternal Grandfather Late. Dhanju Maate (Head of twelve villages) last year 2014. I also lost my cousin Rajani in last month.

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The responsibility of any discrepancy in the work lays with me.

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Abbreviations

AOC: *Annihilation of Caste*

BAWS: *Babasaheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches*

BSS: *Brahmanical Social Structure (Hindu Social Order)*

BHS: *Bahishkrut Hitkarini Sabha (Conference for Welfare of Excluded)*

CPC: *Communist Party of China*

CSS: *Confucian Social Structure*

FYP: *Five-Year Plan*

GLF: *Great Leap Forward*

GPCR: *Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*

ICR: *Indian Cultural Revolution*

INC: *Indian National Congress*

ILP: *Indian Labour Party*

MFM: *May Fourth Movement*

MLT: *Marx-Lenin Theory*

MSW: *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*

MZT: *Mao Zedong Thought*

IDR: *Indian Democratic Revolution*

PC: *People's Commune*

PDD: *People's Democratic Dictatorship*

PRC: *People's Republic of China*

RPI: *Republican Party of India*

RTC: *Round Table Conference*

SCF: *Scheduled Castes Federation*

USSR: *Union of Soviet Socialist Republic*

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Background

The social, political and economic thought of Mao Zedong¹ and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the two great thinkers and leaders of Asia, had a significant influence on their respective social, political and economic systems. Mao Zedong was a Marxist-Leninist and used communist ideology for establishing socialism in China while Ambedkar applied the democratic means for heralding state-socialism in India. Mao believed in revolution and guerrilla warfare for achieving the goal while Ambedkar advocated socialist democracy to be the best way to establish equality, liberty, and fraternity for an egalitarian society. Thus, these two leaders signify two ideological standpoints i.e. Marxism and democracy. The tools of social engineering related to the historical and socio-political situation in China and India were decisive factors in their methods. Both began their intellectual quest with the existential and epistemological issues related to the social order in general and the problem of the marginalized in particular. In the 1950s, they directed the efforts towards the reconstruction of the socio-economic situation in their countries. In their writings, an alternative socio-economic and political framework emerges where the pragmatic, and the visionary facets of their thinking begin to transform praxis.

Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar's thought is located in the historical context starting from the 1850s, primarily because *Confucian* and *Brahmanical* social orders faced a major blow by the colonial assault. China and India stepped into modernity soon after the Western capitalist intervention. The Western capitalism had played a revolutionary role in social change but was destructive vis-à-vis the autonomy of the

¹ While the study uses Pinyin style for Mao Zedong in the text, it retains the Wade Giles system for references as it is used for all his selected works.

Indian economy. As a result some sections witnessed freedom from the age-old social constraints, and centuries-old hereditary caste occupation began to collapse soon after the introduction of the capitalist mode of production in India. The thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar evolved during this period.

Their social thought is very similar in certain respects. However, there are differences in their methods. Though Mao's social thought was deeply influenced by classical Marxist base-superstructure framework, he made several departures later. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) has been one of the major points of departure from the classical Marxist economic determinism after the failure of people's commune. Ambedkar's social thought articulated that the *Brahmanical* social order is contrary to the spirit of equality, liberty and fraternity. He advocated the annihilation of caste and untouchability for social change in order to accomplish democracy. Further, Ambedkar held that the unequal social relations would lead to unequal distribution of resources.

Similarly, Mao and Ambedkar had major differences in their political thought. Mao considered the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary for achieving socialism while Ambedkar emphasized on state socialism under an elected government. Mao advocated violent means to achieve the political power as highlighted in his articulation of "power flows through the barrel of a gun." The dictatorship of the proletariat under communist party is necessary for the redistribution of resources. Mao's form of the democracy is a rule of the majority proletariat over minority bourgeoisie until classless society is established. In contrast, Ambedkar wanted "state socialism" under constitutional democracy and advocated equal rights for all citizens. Ambedkar sought to create a democratic socialist state with people's consent and non-violent means. However, both Mao and Ambedkar have agreement on three principles of egalitarian society: equality, liberty and fraternity. Ambedkar considered liberty and fraternity vital for democracy while Mao paid much attention to economic equality for the success of socialism. Mao considered people's democratic dictatorship is essential to accomplish the goal of socialism while Ambedkar advocated for democratic means including agitation and criticism for socialism.

Mao and Ambedkar have certain similarities in their economic thought relating to land reform, cooperatives of agriculture and industrialization. Mao emphasized the need for agrarian reform and carried out one of the most impressive and successful programmes in the annals of human history. At the same time, he firmly believed that this would not solve the problem. Therefore, he underscored the industrialization of agriculture to increase agricultural production. However, after the revolution, Mao stressed on modernization and industrialization to build a modern nation-state. Ambedkar, on the one hand, advocated industrialization, modernization of agriculture, irrigation, electricity under state socialism, and considered economic equality a primary condition for functioning political democracy and social equality on the other. Hence, he focused on nationalization of land and key industries. Furthermore, he argued that unequal distribution of resources among the people does adversely affect the democratization of society. Thus, both leaders considered agrarian reform, modernization of agriculture and industries necessary to establish an equal and just society. They also supported the cooperatives in the agricultural sector for the proper functioning of community life in the villages.

The present study thus endeavours to examine the social, political and economic thought of Mao and Ambedkar. In doing so, it carries out a textual analysis of their thought with an eye on its impact in transforming their respective societies, economies, and political systems. Mao played an important role in the empowerment of poor peasants and restructuring Chinese exploitative system through Chinese revolution while Ambedkar had played a vital role in securing rights for the socially and economically exploited ex-“untouchables”² and women in a particular and backward sections of the society in general.³ The relevance of the thought of Mao and Ambedkar is growing, and, therefore, a critical study of their thought would be an addition to the existing body of knowledge and to address the present social, political and economic problems.

² “Untouchables” are one/fifth of the Indian population and they are the out of the four-fold *Brahmanical (Hindu)* social order. Article 17 of Indian Constitution prohibited the practice of untouchability. Thus, called Ex-Untouchables. In political terminology they are called as Dalits (crushed or broken people) and in the official language they come under Scheduled Castes (SC).

³ Backwards are *Shudra* as Fourth Verna in the Brahmanical Social Order. In official Language they are now Other Backward Classes (OBC).

II. Literature Review

Available literature on Mao and Ambedkar is very diverse and deals with their thought focusing on the context in which they developed their ideas. With the exception of few studies, majority of them delineate their thought separately. Review of this literature is divided into three themes: social thought, political and economic thought.

Social Thought

The social thought of Mao and Ambedkar has certain key similarities. One of them is that Mao and Ambedkar considered social reform primary for any structural change. S. Rao (1996) compared Mao and Ambedkar from the perspective of socio-historical conditions of China and India. The central argument of Rao is that both adopted appropriate means and tried to change the exploitative system. The difference given the national context, though, is in method they used. While Mao used revolution, Ambedkar followed the path of reform.

Nigel Todd (1974) argued that Gramsci and Mao saw ideology as important factor. Although, it is part of the superstructure, deeply affecting the economic relationships. He further articulated that both were on the same page vis-à-vis ruling classes exercising control over societies not only by using power and physical coercion but also by securing loyalty. However, both men viewed that the role of intellectuals within the complex social relations of their respective societies was important. Andrew Walder (1977) posited that Mao's *voluntarism*, as a unique form of Chinese Marxism, is not a departure from the original framework of base-superstructure advanced by Karl Marx. Mao's emphasis on voluntarism substantiates Marx's base-superstructure framework. He further clarified that Engels did not deny the influence of superstructure on the base, considered superstructure retains the base and also has a role in changing society. Mao's *Voluntarism*, in this case, denotes a social analysis and revolutionary strategy stressing human will as the primary causative agent in producing social change.

Lung-Chang Young (1973) views that most of the scholars have neglected Mao's social thought and focused on his version of ideology. Author divided Mao's period into pre-1949 and Post- 1949, and argued that Mao's ideas in the pre-1949 phase were centered on economic power and post-1949 were focused on social and cultural. Mao changed his opinion in the post-revolution period and argued that changes in the base did not lead to change in social inequality and the notion of inequality in status and gender. Therefore, he understood the need for a permanent revolution where he departed from the classical Marxist base-superstructure binary. Lucian Pye (1976) analysed the socio-psychological context of Mao Zedong's emergence and argued that the secret of Mao's greatness lies in his extraordinary ability to understand, evoke, and direct human emotions and the innumerable ways in which he has used his persona to command the sentiments and passions of masses. Mao's success lies in the strategy of mobilizing masses for political activity. Pye argues that Mao's perspective is influenced by the idea of contradiction in the society which played a significant role in the communist revolution.

Ambedkar (BAWS: 1:1979)⁴, in "Annihilation of Caste", primarily argued to restructure the retrograde Indian social system. He vehemently attacked the Brahmanical religion, culture, social structure and claimed that the national freedom struggle for the political change would be ineffective without a social change in the feudal and caste-ridden society. He attacked the hierarchical system for maintaining an unjust and unequal system for centuries. He further argued that history bears out the proposition that social and religious revolutions have always preceded political revolutions. M.S. Gore (1993) focused on the study to understand the nature of the ideology of protest of Ambedkar to locate it within the broader framework of the study of a social movement on the one hand and the sociology of idea on the other. When a social movement challenges an existing system, we expect that individuals in the society will perceive these changes in terms of how they are likely to affect them individually. Gore believes that Ambedkar's ideology is the ideology of protest which will succeed with the Buddhist ethics in its fundamental

⁴ Babasaheb Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches (BAWS).

principles. Ambedkar, as a propagator of liberal socialist society, also argued for Buddhist *Sangha* (Community) model.

Gail Omvedt (1994) posited that caste-based discrimination could not be fully comprehended through the Marxist analysis of history. She articulated that neither caste and nor class is seriously investigated in India. Omvedt emphasized that Ambedkar and Phule located the caste system in the larger political context. Gopal Guru (2013) compared Gramsci and Ambedkar and argued that how Brahmanical hegemony limits the universal capacity of organic intellectual in a caste-based society of India. Brahmanism has been crucial to the understanding the context of social as well as economic exploitation. He further explains that how affects those on the margins in the Brahmanical social order.

Mao advocated a classless society and argued that the French Revolution did not produce a society of liberty, fraternity and equality and the Russian revolution no longer promises the Marxist vision of a classless society. We have to prepare to take that giant leap from the “realm of necessity to the realm of freedom” (Meisner 1977:56). Ambedkar, however, advocated for classless and casteless society and propagated three principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity and further argued that liberty cannot be divorced from equality; equality cannot be separated from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be separated from the fraternity. Without equality, liberty produces the supremacy of few over many. Equality without liberty would kill the individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things.⁵

Political Thought

Mao’s theory of New Democracy that aims to understand the historical journey from feudalism to socialism that culminated into People’s Democratic Dictatorship (PDD) which depicted as the materialist progress of the society. In “On People’s Democratic Dictatorship” Mao offered classical Marxist goal of classless society as a viable alternative for China. For Mao, when the classes disappear all instruments of class

⁵ B. R. Ambedkar’s concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly in 1949. Constituent Assembly Debates, Volume 7, p. 38. Constituent Assembly Debates vis-à-vis the Scheduled Castes (Online: web) URL: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/28604/5/05_chapter%202.pdf.

struggle, parties, and state machinery will lose their functions, therefore gradually wither away and end their historical mission, and human society moves to a higher stage (MSW: 4:1965:411).⁶ Democracy is practiced within the rank of people, who enjoy the rights of freedom of speech, assembly, association and so on. The right to vote belongs only to people, not to reactionaries. The combination of these two aspects; democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the essence of PDD (MSW: 4: 1965:418). Stuart Schram (1963) discussed that the political thought of Mao bearing the inscription of the historical context of China's political and intellectual climate. Though the forces of Westernization and nationalization pulled China towards them, Mao, using Lenin's democratic centralism, successfully formed unity among workers and peasants under the leadership of CPC. According to Schram, Sinification of Marxism in the Chinese peasant society was a great success of Mao's political thought.

Phyllis Frakt (1979) compared Mao's concept of representation as a mass line with that of other Western thinkers like Hanna Pitkin and Edmund Burke. He posits that Mao's mass line does not permit ordinary workers and peasants to dictate party policy. Pitkin clearly states that political representation must be more than mere presentation of the public opinion or standing for the people. Both Burke and Mao believed that the representatives must learn from the masses and translate that into policies that are consistent with objective truth. John Starr (1976) discussed Marx and Mao's methodology of revolution. Mao "Sinified" Marxism to legitimize the peasant revolution. In an effort to explain the Chinese attempt to make Marxism and Leninism meaningful in the Chinese context, he tried to Sinicize revolution in a society that had virtually nothing in common with nineteenth-century industrializing Europe.

In contrast, Ambedkar (BAWS:1:1979:409) posited that political democracy rests on four premises: First, the individual as an end in himself; Second, the individual has certain inalienable rights that must be guaranteed by the constitution; Third, the individual shall not be required to relinquish any of his constitutional rights as a condition to the receipt of the privilege and; Fourth, that the state shall not delegate powers to private person to govern others. Mungekar (2007) argued that the importance of

⁶ Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung (MSW)

Ambedkar's democratic socialism becomes more relevant because of two reasons; First, the failure of socialism as demonstrated by the disintegration of the USSR and the collapse of socialist states in Eastern Europe is seen by many as the triumph of democracy based on the capitalist economy. Second, Ambedkar has given adequate and serious consideration to the problem of democracy and socialism. Rodrigues (2007:144) argued that the avowal of rights is central to Ambedkar's entire project. A political order based on rights has come to be universally accepted following the French revolution. In Ambedkar's perspective, an individual is considered an end in himself and the aim of the society is a holistic development of individual.

Ambedkar in "Buddha or Karl Marx"⁷ compared Marx with Buddha and analyzed the Marxist core propositions for establishing an egalitarian society in the following manner: First, the function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste time in explaining the origin of the world. Second, there is a conflict of interest between classes. Third, private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation. Fourth, it is necessary for the sake of society that the sorrow could be removed by the abolition of private property. Ambedkar recognized that Buddha also considered that private ownership of property is the root cause of deprivation and exploitation of the poor masses and that it could be removed by economic reorganization of the society. Moreover, Buddha did not suggest violent means to establish an egalitarian political system (BAWS:17-III:2003).⁸

Jatava (1998) critically examines Ambedkar's ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity. For Ambedkar, the meaning of political independence was not only to get out of the grip of the British hegemony, but to establish a social system where all men and women could live a life free from slavery and economic exploitation. Thus, Ambedkar was committed to humanism, secularism, and socialism.

Gail Omvedt (1994) argued that Ambedkar's movement was part of the larger democratic revolution in India. He was very crucial to the Indian democratic revolution.

⁷ B. R Ambedkar, "Buddha or Karl Marx" BAWS:3:2014: 439-462

⁸ B. R. Ambedkar, "Buddha or Karl Marx" Speech at Fourth World Buddhist Conference, Kathmandu, November 20th 1956. BAWS: 17: 2003.

Zelliot (2013) articulated that Ambedkar's political thought has been the base for the establishment of the popular government in India. Ambedkar's engagement in the entire anti-colonial struggle has played a crucial role in the political foundation of India. Gokhale (2008) opined that Ambedkar is an independent political philosopher, and it would not be correct to reduce Dr. Ambedkar to a traditional Buddhist, a Marxist, a Deweyan or a pragmatist philosopher. The complexity and uniqueness of his philosophical identity can be grasped better if we consider him as an independent thinker finding his way through various conceptual and practical dualities by synthesizing and reconstructing them. Ambedkar's methodological approach is manifested in his Buddha and his Dhamma. It was more rational reconstruction than just an interpretation. His interpretation of Buddhism was forward looking rather than not backward. Through his methodology as presented in Buddha and Dhamma is the morality-centric religion, without God and Soul, with materialist ontology and epiphenomenalist conception of mind (Gokhale 2008:7-8).

Economic Thought

Regarding economic thought, Mao advocated for a state system that is shared only by common people and where the bourgeoisie is not allowed to own private property.⁹ Jaffrelot (2005) argued that Ambedkar had a complicated and love-hate relationship with Marxism. He wanted to establish a casteless, classless and egalitarian society, influenced by the Marxist economic notion, and, therefore, advocated for nationalization of land and State Socialism. Mao firmly believed that the step to socializing agriculture must be coordinated with the development of powerful industry having state enterprises as its backbone. At the same time, he argued that land reform is a key to an economic revolution in agriculture production and desired social organization of the rural areas (Meisner 1973:141).

Maurice Meisner (1977) critically analyzed the pattern of the Chinese socialism and Marxist revolution. He analyzed the contribution of first-generation Communist

⁹ Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", In Commemoration of the Twenty-eighth Anniversary of the Communist Party of China June 30, 1949, Online: URL https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-4/mswv4_65.htm.

leadership and Mao toward the socialist and communist state. The legacy of Mao was pristinely socialist one and that Mao's successors inherited it and were expected to continue the revolution in order to guarantee a socialist future for China. Mao believed that the transformation of social relations and consciousness were the prerequisites, not the product of the development of the material forces of production, for building a socialist society. Further, he argued that the prevailing condition of economic backwardness offered an advantage for building a socialist society. Sidney Klain (1958) argued that Mao's economic theory covered New Democracy and State Socialism. The economy of New Democracy consists of three sectors: first nationalized sector and commanding heights in the economy. Second the private sector, the plains of the economy; these consist of small industrial and commercial firms, which have relatively few employees. Third, the cooperative sector and the low hills of the economy which are largely but not exclusively associated with agriculture, being socialist and semi-socialist in nature, the nationalized, and cooperatives were fostered through preferential treatment. Mao and his spokesmen claimed that the economy of the New Democracy was merely application and adaptation of Marxism-Leninism to China.

Charles Hoffmann (1971) postulated that official statements cannot establish a Maoist economic model. According to Hoffman Mao's model must be observed carefully as the abstraction of guidelines to social action from often chaotic and seemingly unrelated events necessarily conveys a tidiness that should not be mistaken for reality. The dual economic objectives of Mao were the rapid attainment of modern industrialization within the framework of planning and socialization of all enterprises as well as of the people. Although the economy was to be organized according to the classical Marxist framework but had modified by the experience of the CPC in the context of Chinese reality. Mao followed the strategy of balanced and proportionate growth that focused on agriculture and industry, town and county and manual and mental labor. C.M. Chang (1951) posited that the land reform was an important and central agenda of the CPC from the 1930s, and this not only played a key role in the mobilization of masses but also provided advantageous position against the nationalist party "*Kuomintang*". The agrarian law of 1950 was designed to do away with the feudal system

of land ownership and feudal exploitation, this consolidates agrarian reform and paving the way for an effective socialist system in China.

Thorat (2007) opined that Ambedkar developed his distinctive approach attuned to the particular situation in India. Ambedkar favored democratic socialism for the economic reorganization of the capitalist economy and chose Buddhism for social reconstruction and egalitarian society. Ambedkar advocated socialism with parliamentary democracy emphasizing this combination be necessary to ensure that the social and economic organization would be more egalitarian. Ambedkar (BAWS: 1:1979:397) had a very similar perception of agriculture and proposed that agriculture and industry shall be organized on the following lines:

i- The state shall divide the land acquired into farms of standard size and let out the farms for cultivation to residents of the village as tenants (made up of families) to cultivate on the following conditions:

A- The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm;

B- The farm shall be cultivated by rules and directions issued by government;

C- The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly leviable on the farm.

ii- The land shall be given to the villagers without distinction of caste or creed and in a manner there will be no landlords, no tenants, and no landless laborers.

iii- It shall be the obligation of the state to finance the cultivation of the collective farms by the supply of water, draft animals, implements, manure, seeds, etc.

iv- State shall be entitled to (a) levy the charges i- a portion for land revenue; ii-a portion to pay the debenture –holders and iii-a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied.

Thus, the literature available on Ambedkar and Mao is quite substantial. One of the critical gaps in this literature, however, is that there are very few studies that contrasted

and critically examined their thought together. Therefore, this study critically scrutinizes similarities and dissimilarities in their thought and adds to the existing body of literature.

III. Definition, Rationale, and Scope of the Study

Mao and Ambedkar are two great Asian leaders with a goal to establish an egalitarian and equitable society centered on three principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Mao adopted Marxist ideology and violent means while Ambedkar advocated for democracy based on consent and representation through democratic and constitutional means. Mao and Ambedkar's thought is very similar vis-à-vis social revolution and economic policy while do differ in political philosophy and its proposed means. Both the leaders were influenced by the Western ideas of socialism and democracy and left an indelible influence on Asia's two oldest civilizations.

Both Mao and Ambedkar are contemporaries who started their writings late in the 1920s and widely influenced masses of the two nations and later shaped the destiny of their respective countries. Mao was the leader of the Marxist revolution and established people's democratic dictatorship in China while Ambedkar was the champion of social and democratic revolution and a strong advocate of political rights and the father of modern India and architect of Indian constitution. Mao's role in shaping Chinese political system is vital. In the policy implementation, Mao successfully applied his vision in China. Whereas Ambedkar's vision, laid down in the Indian Constitution, is yet to be fully realized. Therefore, in the realm of policy implementation, Mao was more successful than Ambedkar, but the relevance of Ambedkar's thought in the present globalized world seems more suitable than Mao's thought. The two great visionaries of Asia searched for their paths to resolve their domestic problems. A critical study of their thought and ideology would give us interesting insights into how ideas shape societies. The scope of the study covers classless and casteless society, New Democratic Revolution and Indian Democratic Revolution, and industrialization and nationalization.

IV. Research Questions

- How Western Imperialist intervention shaped the thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar and what is the role of the Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Colonial Struggle in their respective societies on their thought and methods?
- What are the similarities and dissimilarities in Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar's social thought, and how their thought is appropriate to establish socially just society in their respective countries, and how much their social thought is relevant to the present social context?
- What is the relevance of political thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar and what is the difference between New Democratic Revolution by Mao and Democratic Revolution by Ambedkar?
- What is the difference between Mao's Socialism and Ambedkar's state socialism and why egalitarian values are required to maintain socialist economic order?
- How similar is the economic thought of Mao Zedong to that of B. R. Ambedkar, and how their thought is compatible to the present scenario, and how relevant their economic thought is for establishing an inclusive and equitable economy?

V. Hypotheses

- The social, political and economic thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar has played a significant role in shaping their respective societies, political systems, and economies.
- While there are similarities in their social and economic thought, there are key differences in the political thought. Their similarities and differences have a significant bearing on their countries.

VI. Methodology

This study is essentially a textual analysis of the social, political and economic thought of Mao and Ambedkar. The textual analysis is located in the historical context. The study critically analyzes Mao and Ambedkar's social, political and economic thought. The critical theoretical method has been a major point of the discussion on socio-political and economic thought. Equality, liberty and fraternity are the vantage points of the critique of socio-political thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar. The study avoids the dialectical materialist method which is one of the dominant paradigm to study Mao Zedong thought. To study the B. R. Ambedkar thought, idealist and liberal method are often used but in this study critical method has been used. Inductive method is used to analyze their thought. This study has been based on the primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include their original writings, speeches, letters, and government publications. Secondary sources include scholarly books, articles, and other writings. The social, political and economic thought is considered as independent variable and social, political and economic change as dependent variables.

VII. Structure of the Study

The introductory chapter provides a brief background to the study besides highlighting literature review; it is divided into three themes i.e. social, political and economic thought of Mao and Ambedkar. Definition deals with the brief description of the study with core outlines, rationale justify the purpose of the study and scope sketches about the latitude and prospects of the study, research questions, hypotheses, and methodology are part of this chapters.

The second chapter discusses the context of independence in India and the establishment of PRC in China when Mao's and Ambedkar's thought is shaped. This is necessitated primarily because this context played a key role in shaping their thought. The Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Colonial struggle is discussed to understand the environment of that time when Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar grew up. They were part of the Anti-Imperialist and Anti-Colonial Struggle. It has also described the

convergence of social reform and mainstream political movement in China while divergence of the social and political movement in India.

The third chapter critically looks at their social thought. It deals with the concept of the Cultural Revolution of Mao and Ambedkar. The critical discussion reflects upon the idealist and materialist interpretation of the Cultural Revolution. Annihilation of Caste and Burning *Manusmiriti* has been discussed under Indian Cultural Revolution under the leadership of Ambedkar. The discussion maps their ideas and attempts to establish a classless and casteless society in their respective countries.

A critical scrutiny of Mao and Ambedkar's political thought is part of the fourth chapter. It draws parallels between the concept of New Democratic Revolution in China and Democratic Revolution in India. It also deals with the theory and practice as the influence of the pragmatism on both of the leaders. Mao's People's Democratic Dictatorship (PDD) and Ambedkar's constitutional parliamentary democracy are discussed with a focus on freedom of individuals and their representation. Moreover, the relevance of their political thought in the domestic context is deliberated.

Chapter five assesses Mao's Socialism and Ambedkar's State Socialism. Mao's economic thought pertaining to land reform, agriculture cooperatives, and industrialization comparing them with that of Ambedkar's programme for nationalization of land and industries, cooperatives in agriculture. It also discusses enforced economic socialism has been inadequate without egalitarian values in the society. It analyzes three principles of egalitarianism: equality, liberty and fraternity of Mao and Ambedkar critically. It deals with the advanced economic society need advanced social values.

In the concluding chapter findings of the study are delineated. The present study finds that the context had played a significant role in shaping the thought of Mao and Ambedkar. The colonial and imperialist assaults were crucial in the awakening of two old civilizations. The study also finds that Mao and Ambedkar maintained consistency in their commitment for social change. The impact of the pragmatism on Mao and Ambedkar is manifested in their political ideas as they focused more on practice than theory. The significant difference between Mao's socialism and Ambedkar state's

socialism was that the former was based on force while the latter on consent. Their economic thought, by and large, has been similar with a difference in their approach to means to implement them. Mao's economic thought is communist while Ambedkar believed in a mixed economy.

Chapter 2

Contextualizing Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar's Thought

I. Introduction

The historical context is very crucial to understand Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar's thought in the light of transforming Chinese and Indian societies. Mao and Ambedkar were born at a time of transition when Chinese and Indian societies were being transformed from traditional to modern societies among three antagonistic forces of feudalism, imperialism, and progressive movements. These forces were in conflict with others. To put it differently, the first force opposed the other two forces and vice versa. First, feudal resistance to imperialism and progressive movements; second, progressive movements' resistance to the imperialism/colonialism and feudalism; and third, imperialist/colonial powers' resistance to the progressive democratic movement and feudalism. The different social, political movements in the period of anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggles required to be examined from the social, political, and economic points of view.

The phase of transition from feudal to semi-feudal, semi-colonial and colonial had a significant impact on the qualitative changes that unfolded in Chinese and Indian societies.¹ The Imperial and Colonial interventions had a profound role in unleashing social change.² The character of the resistance movement in terms of modern ideas and

¹ Mao argued that since 'Opium War', China stepped into Semi-feudal mode of production from feudal mode of production in his "New Democracy", Marx also acknowledged the contribution of capitalist intervention in the East. India also stepped into modernity after 1858 as India came under direct rule of Britain.

² Karl Marx highlighted the role of Imperialism in the social revolution in China and India, He wrote articles in the *New York Tribune* during 1853-62. For Online visit- <https://www.marxists.org/archive/riazanov/1926/xx/china.htm>

values pertaining to social, political and economic equality, is central to contextualizing Mao and Ambedkar's thought. The political resistance was foregrounding social equality reflected its progressive nature. The convergence of social and political movement in China gave strength to Mao while segregation of political movement from social reform movement in anti-colonial struggle marginalized B. R. Ambedkar to a great extent.³

The critical scrutiny of China's anti-imperial⁴ and India's anti-colonial⁵ struggle, herein, narrated from the point of view of convergence and divergence of social and political movements in both the countries. The fundamental point of the study is to look at the convergence of social and political realms in China and divergence of social and political processes in India. The resistance movement and their attitude toward the ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity remain the critical locus. The dominance of certain classes in China and certain castes and classes in India is another point of discussion. The Western exploitative mechanisms and their exploitative policies toward China and India, and the native countries' nationalist resistance are the issues of concern. In addition, the nature of nationalist movement in the anti-colonial and anti-imperial movement in both the eastern countries is central to the study.

The Chinese consider the period from 1840 to 1949 as a century of humiliation. The collapse of the "Middle Kingdom" and its *Confucius's* moral order divided the Chinese into two groups, those who supported traditional values, and those who opposed them. The resistance movements such as the *Taiping* Rebellion, the Boxer Rebellion, and the May Fourth Movement took up the issue of social reform. Thereafter, nationalist movement continued social reform as a primary responsibility with the political movement for liberation from the imperialist forces. The defeat of the *culturalists* in the

³ *Taiping* Rebellion is one of the examples which was essentially a peasant revolt with the elements of social reform movement (Grasso 1997). Chow Tse-Tung (1960) argued that Social revolution had put the foundation of the Chinese Communist revolution. In contrast, Social Reform Movement was sidelined in India. Phule a radical social reformers was ostracised from society for taking up rights of Women, "Untouchables" and *Shudra* see G.P. Deshpande (2002).

⁴ Anti-Imperialist Struggle started after the 'Opium War'- 1840s.

⁵ Indian Anti-Colonial Struggle starts with the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. It is considered the first revolt of the Indian independence, (Rawat 2007, Chandra 1989).

hands of the Nationalists was a positive dimension of the anti-imperialist movement in China.⁶

In the Indian context, the double standard of *Savarna* in the anti-colonial struggle as has been observed by Gopal Guru (2009:3), in “*Humiliation: Claims and Context*,” questioning the Indian, traditional elite developed an insight into humiliation under the direct British rule. He views that they acquired this insight not because they had an innate moral capacity for equal treatment but because of the colonial reconfiguration of power, produced by modernity, disrupting their feudal complacency and awakening them to their subordination within the new framework of power. In fact, the social disruption caused by the colonial configuration of power forced them to seek recognition from others. The anti-colonial struggle led by the elite *savarna* was not more than an astute trick to regain the previous position without giving opportunities to the oppressed. This is the fundamental reason behind the separation of social and political movement in the struggle. To regain the lost hegemonic position the political movement relegated social movement so that traditional social order could be maintained. Retaining social hegemony was major agenda of the anti-colonial struggle. This separation of social from political in the anti-colonial struggle makes the study more relevant in the context of an “untouchable” leader like Ambedkar.

Against this backdrop, the first section briefly discusses the pre-1850 *Confucius* and Brahmanical social orders. It highlights the nature of social and economic exploitation in Chinese and Indian societies. The position of women in *Confucian* and Brahmanical social order remains an important part of this discourse. The second section deals with the Imperial and Colonial penetration in China and India and their resistance through anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle. The transition of two societies from feudalism to semi-feudal and semi-colonial society is discussed from socially deprived community’s point of views. Third section examines the nature of resistance and nationalism in China and India and its power relationships. Fourth section looks at the

⁶ *Culturalists* wanted to stick to their old culture while Nationalists wanted to embrace Western modernity for self-strengthening.

different social movement and their acceptance in the Chinese and Indian societies. The important discussion is that how social and political facets merged in China and how the social and political movements diverged from each other in India. Themes from Mao and Ambedkar's perspectives crystallized from their experience forms part of the fifth section. This chapter also addresses the personal biographies of Mao and Ambedkar briefly with a focus on the context in which they played their part.

II. Society in China and India before 1850⁷

China and India are two ancient civilizations. The two oldest Asian societies retained rigid social structure for more than three millennia. The social structures of *Confucianism* and Brahmanism were so rigid that change was impossible without external intervention. The social hierarchy was common for the *Confucius* and *Brahmanical* social systems. Their social structures were interwoven with customs, rites, religious practices and hierarchical family and graded social relationships. Indian and Chinese women were subordinated in the rigid patriarchal family structure. The major difference between the two societies was that practice of caste and untouchability in India, which was imposed with the sanction of religion. Therefore, caste system continues to remain an integral part of Indian society.

1. Chinese Social Structure: Confucianism

Traditional Chinese society was often described as a feudal society that began with the Qin Dynasty and ended with Qing Dynasty in 1911. The Chinese society was divided into four classes of kings and bureaucrats, peasants, craftsman and merchants (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:108).⁸ It was essentially a class-based society. The Chinese society was rigid in ritualistic practices but open in the social relationships. The

⁷ Chinese and Indian societies before and after interaction with Western Modernity are discussed to contrast the qualitative changes occurred during this period.

⁸ Online source: <http://mmsamee.weebly.com/ancient-chinas-social-classes.html>.

fundamental difference is that occupation was not hereditary⁹ in China while it was legally binding in India.¹⁰

Chinese social relationships were based on “Five Great Relationships”¹¹ to maintain social, political and moral order in the society. The “*Filial Piety*”¹² is like Indian Dharma, which assigned to maintain the social order and social harmony. The primary responsibility of the family was to raise a “*Filial*” Son. “Five Great Relationships” are central to *Confucian* tradition. They are related to relationships between Rulers and Ruled, Father and Son, Husband and Wife, Elder and Younger Brother and Friend and Friend.¹³ These relationships subordinate one to another. The major responsibility of these relationships was to maintain harmony in the society. The family, not individual, was the basic economic, political and moral institution of the Chinese society. It was one of the powerful institutions, owned the property, paid taxes, and had the responsibility for the legal or moral lapse of their members. The “*filial piety*” was nurtured among people to create loyalty and reverence to these relationships. A fundamental principle of the *Confucianism* was to maintain harmony in the society through teaching and nurturing *filial piety* in the new generations. The “*filial*” sons become loyal to family relationships including five great relationships (Berthrong & Berthrong 2000:59).

Father remained the head of family as a top autocrat, who has full control over the use of all family property and income and a dominant decision maker in arranging the marriage of children. *Filial piety* and obedience inculcated in family life were the training ground for loyalty to the ruler and obedience to the constituted authority in the state (Fairbank and Goldman 2011:18). The most important aspect of these five relationships

⁹ A major Confucian principle is that man is perfect. In the era of Warring States, Chinese thinkers of the major schools had turned against the principle of hereditary privilege, invoked by the rulers of many family-states, and stressed the natural equality of men at birth. (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:52).

¹⁰ *Manusmriti* is an Ancient Text, which is a model code of Conduct for hereditary occupation. There is a provision of punishment for those who break the hereditary occupation.

¹¹ Birthrong & Berthrong (2000:63) explained the “Five Great Relationships” as part of the Confucian Social Order.

¹² *Filial Piety* is like cultivating reverence in the mind of youngsters to elders, Berthrong & Berthrong (2000:27).

¹³ Online sources: <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/confucius.html>.

was that a man knows automatically where he stands in his family or society and what are his responsibilities to family and society? Li Peilin (2012) identified stability, closed nature, rigidity, and integration as fundamental characteristics of the Chinese society. For more than 3000 years, China remained a feudal society, accounting for almost all of China's traceable traditional cultural history. During this time, Chinese history demonstrates a continuous form; a change in dynasty but reproduction of the same social system (2012:3).

The *Confucius* and *Brahmanical* social orders had common elements for the subordination of women. From the days of yore to till now, women exploited and subjugated in the family as well as in the society. The control on the women's freedom in these two civilizations was social as well as legal. Women were portrayed negatively in the Chinese social order. Family is the basic social unit, and the members endured tyranny on women, they suffered worst deprivation, subordination and subjugation in the hierarchical family relationships. Women and men relationships are depicted with just opposite features, in term of *yin* and *yang* dualism, where *yin* represents the negativity and *yang* as a positive aspect of nature. Women represent all the negativity and men associated with the all positive element of nature (Berthrong & Berthrong 2000:61). Fairbank and Goldman (2006) observed how the family as a unit of society could sustain the long historical journey of the Chinese civilization. The most interesting thing about the Chinese society has been its ability to maintain a highly civilized life despite having unequal conditions for centuries.

They credited the social institutions, which have carried the individuals of each family through the phases and vicissitudes of human existence according to deeply ingrained patterns of behavior. These institutions and behavior patterns are among the oldest and most persistent social phenomenon in the world. China has been a stronghold of the family system and has been derived both strength and inertia from it (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:18).

Chinese social structure can be divided into two types of structure, closed and open. The closed structure has an obdurate ability to maintain its pattern due to a lack of new elements. Li Peiling (2012) found rigidity and elasticity in Chinese society. Li Peiling

(2012) identified three characteristics of rigidity for retaining society because; first, it is not easy for internal structure to produce and develop new elements; second, the structure tends to defy and resist new things from outside; third, even the action of external forces do not easily change the structure to adapt to the new environment, and the structure may maintain the prototype or it may disintegrate. It can also be seen that rigidity is closely linked to a highly stable and closed structure (Li Peilin 2012:6). The integration of social structure was originally about the differentiation of the structure, but in traditional China, integration manifested in ethnic assimilation, cultural integration, and social unification.

Fairbank and Goldman (2006) argued that the notion of the superiority of the Chinese and Indian culture developed despite consistent defeat in the hand of outsiders. The Chinese *culturalism* as superior develops from the difference with the inner Asian “barbarians”. Inner-Asian invaders become more powerful as warriors. Therefore, Chinese found their refuge in social institutions and the feeling of cultural and aesthetic superiority something that alien conquest could not take away (Fairbank & Goldman 2006:25). The same tendency also developed in the Indian culture. As Karl Marx (1853) identified that India has no history, rather than the history of intruders, so many invaded but *Hindooized* themselves in the native culture and society. However, British, the superior race that did not assimilate them into the Indian culture and successfully challenged the Indian cultural tradition.¹⁴

The Chinese tradition provided an explanation for the dynastic rise and fall, which must be understood in the sense of the failure of the old dynasty was a proof that it had lost the support of God, which is called the ‘Mandate of Heaven’. The loss of this mandate from the hand of King gave people the right to rebel against the regime. *Confucius* scholars provided four virtues to complement *LI*: benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, and good faith. These scholars also gave five great relationships (Grasso 1997:19). “Zhongguo” is the concept that Chinese believed as a central territory or the Middle Kingdom, and they also called their emperor the “Son of the Heaven.” Chinese

¹⁴ Karl Marx, “The Future Results of British Rule in India”, *New-York Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1853, Accessed on 29/05/2015. See details: <http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/1853/07/22.htm>.

tradition and mythology affirmed that their emperors ruled over the world and it composed of concentric circle of which China was the core and which became progressively less civilized the farther one strayed from the glorious center (Grasso 1997:3).

2. *Indian Social Structure: Brahmanism*¹⁵

Rig Veda is one of the first ancient religious texts that talked about the origin of the Brahminical social order and four-fold *Varna* system. It is the most prominent religious text that shaped the principle of *Varnashrama Dharma* which divided the Indian society into *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Shudra*. Brahma is a giant as the creator of the world. *Brahmin* sprang out from his head, *Kshatriya* (warrior class) from Arms, *Vaishya* (trading class) from waist and *Shudra* (servile class) from his feet.¹⁶ This principle not only divided the Indian society into permanent hierarchical clusters but also assigned them duties and responsibilities. These four *Varnas* are ordered in a social hierarchy, *Brahmin* at the top, *Kshatriya* at second, *Vaishya* at third and fourth, *Shudra* as last in the hierarchy. The “Untouchables” were outside of the four-fold system. Brahminical religion does not recognise the principle of equality of social status; on the other hand fosters inequality by insisting upon grading people as *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* which now stand towards one another in an ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt (BAWS:3:2014:48).

M.N. Srinivas opined that the institution of caste and untouchability is the typical case for Indian society. The caste system in India and South Asia makes them very different in social relationships, economic and political relationships from the other social systems across the world (Srinivas 1980:1). The caste system is not only religious and social but also economic and political order. The fundamental principle of the Brahmanical social order is that everything is determined by birth, not by worth (BAWS:

¹⁵ The study of *Chaturvarnya* starts from the Ninth Hymn of the Tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda. A hymn from the the *Purush Sikta* explained the origin of *Varna* and Caste system, J. Moir, *Original Sanskrit Text* , vol.1, 1868, p.9, cited in B. R. Ambedkar, *Who are the Shudra*, BAWS:7: 2014:21.

¹⁶ B. R. Ambedkar “*Philosophy of Hinduism*” BAWS: 3: 2014: 1-91. Also at. <http://www.ambedkar.org/ambcd/17.Philosophy%20of%20Hinduism.htm>.

1:2014:58). Brahminical social order is unique in a sense that it has been consecrated by the Brahmanical religious text, which is very rigid, the formation of caste as ethnic groups with different hierarchical social relationships (BAWS: 3: 2014:128). The main features of the caste prevailing through the past centuries may be described under nine characteristics: hierarchy, endogamy, and hypergamy; occupational association; restriction on food, drink and smoking; distinction in custom, dress and speech; pollution; rituals and other privileges and disability; caste organization and caste mobility (Srinivas 1980:5). Nandu Ram identified the four fundamental features of Caste system in India based on Ambedkar's "Caste in India" as: first, social exclusion or boycotting; second, mechanism for inclusion; third; transformation and spread of clans into castes; and fourth, religious Sanskrit texts which subscribe to the view of four *Varnas* (Ram 2006:6-11). He further argued that modernity introduced mobility which helped in declining of Caste system in India (Ibid. 53).

The specific form of ascriptive hierarchy and unequal distribution of power in India is known as the caste system. The hierarchical structure of ascriptively segmented occupational and endogamous castes, endowed with differential distribution of privileges/disabilities and sanctified by the dominant religious categories of *Karma* and *Dharma*, was certainly a pan-Indian phenomenon, though spread unevenly (Aloysius 1997:25). M. N. Srinivas (1966:3) described caste as undoubtedly an all-India phenomenon, in the sense that there are everywhere hereditary, endogamous groups which form a hierarchy. There are *Brahmins*, untouchables and peasants, artisans, trading and service castes. Relations between castes invariably expressed in terms of pollution and purity. Certain Brahmanical theological ideas such as *Samskara*, *karma*, and *dharma* were woven into the caste system. Thus, the ordering of different *Varnas* clearly intended to support the theory of *Brahminical* supremacy.

Brahmanical social order assigned the occupation, duties and position of the individual by birth not by worth. Brahmanical social order is divided into the four *Varnas* i.e. *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Shudra*, and "Untouchables" were outside the four-fold system. The social, political and economic status is decided by birth and there was no

escape from it. The first evidence of caste system in ancient India was found in *Rig Veda*,¹⁷ which preaches the principle of gradation of inequality and inheritance of occupation. This principle previously was flexible but later transformed into a rigid social structure with legal sanction and further division of the society into castes. There are more than 6000 castes in India. Castes are groups arranged in a hierarchy and placed with the principle of gradation of inequality.¹⁸

Similarly, the traditional Indian conception of Dharma¹⁹ aimed to maintain the Brahmanical social, economic and political order. Each and every individual of Brahmanical Dharma knew her/his responsibility to keep status-quo in the society. Failing to keep the Dharma was considered to be out of sync with the society. The penalty for breaking the Dharma was severe not only for the individual but also on the community (BAWS: 5: 2014: 159).²⁰ In comparison to Chinese society, it is the duty of the family to maintain the social, political and moral order whereas in the Brahmanical social order, it is caste as the unit of society which maintained the social, moral and legal code of conduct. Caste is the basic unit of Indian society, and it has all the responsibility assigned by Brahmanical *Dharma Shastra*.²¹ The fundamental difference between the Chinese “*Filial Piety*” and the Indian “*Dharma*” is that the former is social and political in nature, and the latter is religious and legal in its structure. The punishment meted out to the community for individual’s crime makes it worst social and religious system of the world. It is fixed by birth. As Ambedkar defined Brahmanical social order is like multi-

¹⁷ *Rig Veda* is an ancient sacred text and considered infallible. It is a supreme text in *Brahmanical* religious tradition. It had divided Indian society in Four *Varnas* i.e. *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Shudra*. It is based on hierarchy and gradation.

¹⁸ Caste is the sub-division of Varna. One Varna has thousands of castes.

¹⁹ Dharma in *Rig Veda* is used 58 times. It is used in six different senses. It is used to denote (1) Ancient custom, (2), Laws, (3) any arrangement which maintains law and order in society, (4), The Course of nature, (5) The Quality of Substance and (6) Duty of good and evil. B. R. Ambedkar, “Philosophy of Hinduism”, BAWS:5: 2014:82.

²⁰ B. R. Ambedkar explained that if one individual disobeys the rules then not only individual but also the people of the same caste to which that particular individual comes from, is punished for the crime. Recent Example reported in *The Hindu*, Dharmapuri in Tamilnadu, India, where the whole village was punished for breaking the law of the endogamy by one Ex-Untouchable boy. Online Source : <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/3-dalit-colonies-face-mob-fury-in-dharmapuri/article4076539.ece>.

²¹ *Manusmriti* is a text which has given detailed prescription of rights and Duties and provision for punishment to Brahmanical social order. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/manu.htm>.

storeyed building, which has no stairs, gate, and window, one has to die at the same position without any hope of escape from it.²²

Complex and agricultural societies were broadly marked by an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power among different castes, very rigid, hereditary occupations. This ascriptive inequality permeated all spheres of social relations and tended to divide the entire society into relatively isolated segments, such as orders, status groups, castes, etc. This inequitable power distribution system was legitimized by generalized religious and cultural concepts (Aloysius 1997:24). The situation of women and “Untouchables” was lowest in the Indian society. Women were subjugated to *Hindu* religious practice and patriarchy in the Indian society. Women were the lowest in the family and were the servant of the family with no property rights. To have complete control over women, certain rules and regulations were developed like child marriage, enforced widowhood and *Sati*.²³ This was the cruelest practice in the Indian civilization. As Marx wrote:

“We should not forget Indian barbarian egotism which concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had quietly witnessed the ruin of empires, the perpetration of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of the population of large town, with no other consideration bestowed upon them than on natural events, itself the helpless prey of any aggressor who deigned to notice it at all. We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part, in contradiction, wild, aimless, unbounded force of destruction, and rendered murder itself a religious rite in *Hindustan*. We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstance instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances, that they transform a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell on his knees in adoration of Hanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow.”²⁴

²² B. R. Ambedkar “Manogat” *Mooknayak*, no.1, 31 January 1920, translated in Hindi from Marathi by Shyorajsingh Bechain (2008) *Mooknayak*, New Delhi: Gautam Book Centre. P.24.

²³ *Sati* was obsolete *Hindu* funeral custom where a widow immolate herself on her husband pyre. It was banned by the British in 1829.

²⁴ Karl Marx, “The British Rule in India”, in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853. Accessed on 29/05/2015, for online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/06/25.htm>.

Karl Marx criticised Indian society for its social backwardness as static and regressive in nature. It hindered, he added, the mobility and freedom of thinking in the society. He considered social revolution to be central for reforming India and opined that caste and untouchability were major obstacles for building a successful revolution in India.

One fifth of the Indian population consists of “Untouchables”.²⁵ It is well known that there are variations in the form that untouchability assumes in different parts of India. “Untouchables” are “Unseeables” and “Unapproachables” in some parts of India. “Unapproachables” cause pollution if they come within a certain distance of a “Touchable” *Hindu*. “Unseeable” cause pollution, if they come within the sight of a “Touchable” *Hindu*. They have to get out from their caves in the midnight in order to keep themselves from the sight of caste-*Hindus*²⁶ do not see them and get polluted. “Unapproachables” consist of two classes. One class cannot come to certain distance while other of “Unapproachables” who cannot come so near that his shadow falls upon Caste *Hindus*. In some parts of India, Untouchables are not Unseeable and Unapproachable. It is only his physical contact which causes pollution. In some parts of India, they were not allowed to touch water and food (BAWS: 5:2014:242).

The “Untouchables” in India faces the worst form of exploitation and unspeakable cruelty in the human civilization. They were treated worse than animals. They were prohibited owning the property, education, using the common space, common street, and eating delicious food, wearing garments and clothes.²⁷ One fifth of the population has to live without resources and basic human rights and dignity, they were forced to eat dead animals, forced to work as bonded laborers at the “upper” castes’ land, and also were forced to do manual scavenging. Ambedkar argued that surely no civilization can be guilty of greater cruelty (BAWA: 5:2014:140). Ambedkar had a detailed prescription of the practice of caste and untouchability in the Indian village. He considered that Indian

²⁵ Currently Dalits forms 16.6% of the total population, according to 2011 Census of India.

²⁶ Caste Hindus is also known as Savarna or “Upper” castes.

²⁷ *Times of India* on 4th January 1928, reports about the Caste Hindus issues the rules for Balais that they must not wear gold ornaments, colored dress and metal utensils. Cited in BAWS: 1:2014:39-40.

village is not a single social unit. It consists of castes (BAWS: 5:2014:20-22). He identified these rules and regulations prevailing in the Indian society:

1. The population in the village is divided into two sections (i) Touchables and (ii) Untouchables.
2. The Touchables forms the major community and the Untouchables a minor community.
3. The Touchables lived inside the village and the Untouchables lived outside the village in separate quarters.
4. Economically, the Touchables form a strong and powerful community, while the Untouchables are poor and a dependent community.
5. Socially, the Touchables occupy the position of a ruling race, while the Untouchables occupy the position of a subject race of the hereditary bondsmen.

In every village, Touchables have a code of conduct which the Untouchables are required to follow. This code lays down both omissions and commissions which the Touchables treat as offences. They are as follows;

1. The Untouchables must live in separate quarters away from the habitation of the Hindus. It is an offence for the Untouchables to break or evade the rule of segregation.
2. The quarters of the Untouchables must be located toward the south since the south is the most inauspicious of the four directions. A breach of this rule shall be deemed to be an offence.
3. The untouchables must observe the rule of distance pollution or shadow of pollution as the case may be. It is an offence to break the rule.
4. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to acquire wealth, such as land and cattle.
5. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to build a house with tiled roof.
6. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to put on a clean dress, wear shoes, put on a watch or gold ornaments.
7. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to give a high-sounding name to their children. Their names be such as to indicate contempt.
8. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to sit on the chair in the presence of a Hindu.
9. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to ride on a horse or a palanquin through the village.
10. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to take a procession of Untouchables through village.
11. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community not to salute a Hindu.
12. It is an offence for a member of Untouchable community to speak a cultured language.

13. It is an offence for a member of Untouchables community, if he happen to come into the village on a sacred day which the Hindus treat as the day of fast and at or about the time of breaking of fast, to go about speaking, on the ground that their breath is held to foul the air and the food of the Hindus.
14. It is an offence for untouchables to wear the outward marks of a Touchables and pass Himself as a Touchables.
15. An Untouchables must conform to the status of an inferior and he must wear the marks of his inferiority for the public to know and identify him such as
 - (a) Having a contemptible name
 - (b) Not wearing clean clothes
 - (c) Not having tiled roof
 - (d) Not wearing silver and gold ornament.

A contravention of these rules is an offence (BAWS:5:2014:21-22). Next comes the duties which the code requires members of the Untouchable community to perform for the Touchables. As

1. A member of the Untouchable community must carry a message of any event in the house of a Hindu such as death or marriage to his relatives living in the other villages no matter how distant these villages may be.
2. An Untouchable must work at a house of a Hindu when a marriage is taking place, such as breaking fuel, and going on errands.
3. An Untouchable must accompany a Hindu girl when she is going from her parent's house to her husband's village no matter how distant it is.
4. When the whole village community is engaged in celebration of general festivals such as Holi or Dasara, the Untouchable must perform all menial acts which are preliminary to the main observance.
5. On certain festivities, the Untouchables must submit their women to members of the village community to be made the subject of indecent fun (Ibid).

These rules and regulations made the condition of Untouchables as bad as that of slaves.²⁸ The "Untouchables" in India were the worst sufferers of the civilizational social order. The very intervention from the West heralded a change in the old social order. This intervention resulted in mobility in the society. The moral and social order was questioned for the first time in the context of modern Western values. The modernity of the West successfully challenged the *Confucius* and *Brahmanical* social values. In case of India, secular laws were introduced although not in all spheres of life. Equality before

²⁸ B. R. Ambedkar compared the situation of the Slaves and "Untouchables", in "Slaves and Untouchables", BAWS: 5:2014: 5: 9-18.

law for all sections of the society including women was a major contribution of the Western modernity in the East. The Indian society is different from the Chinese society in the realms of rule and principles. Rules are devoid of morality and principles are loaded with morality. The Hindu religion follows the rules, not the principles.²⁹

Rules are practical; they are habitual ways of doing things according to prescription. But principles are intellectual; they are useful methods of judging things. Rules seek to tell an agent just what course of action to pursue. Principles do not prescribe a specific course of action. Rules, like cooking recipes, do tell just what to do and how to do it. A principle, such as that of justice, supplies a main head by reference to which he is to consider the bearings of his desires and purposes, it guides him in his thinking by suggesting to him the important consideration which he should bear in mind. This difference between rules and principles makes the acts done in pursuit of them different in quality and in content. Doing what is said to be good by virtue of a rule and doing good in the light of a principle are two different things. The principle may be wrong but the act is conscious and responsible. The rule may be right but the act is mechanical. A religious act may not be a correct act but must at least be a responsible act. To permit of this responsibility, Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules it ceases to be Religion, as it kills responsibility which is the essence of a truly religious act. What is this Hindu Religion? Is it a set of principles or is it a code of rules? Now the Hindu Religion, as contained in the Vedas and the Smritis, is nothing but a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. What is called Religion by the Hindus is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions (BAWS: 1:2014:75).

Chinese and Indian societies have been agrarian, and peasant-based economies. Since earliest times, 80-90 percent Chinese population consisted of farmers. The peasants were second in the social hierarchy after the scholars and officials who governed the state. Highest, governing officials and the class of large landowners from whom most governing officials sprang, the two remaining lower orders including the artisans and merchants; and a mixed bag of people whose occupations exclude them from the membership in the four-fold order at any level. The last group included soldiers, actors, prostitutes and others whose work was considered menial or disreputable (Grasso, etc. 1997:11). The land had been the primary source of subsistence in the Chinese society.

²⁹ B. R. Ambedkar, "The Annihilation of Caste: With A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi" printed from the third of edition of 1944. BAWS: 1:2014:23-96.

The division of land among the sons within the family is constantly checked the accumulation of property and savings. The village peasants have been the bedrock of Chinese society, and it is still built out of family units that are permanently settled from one generation to the next and depend upon the use of certain land-holdings. Each family household is both a social and economic unit, and its members derive their basic sustenance from working at fields and their social status from it. The life cycle of the individual in a farming village is still inseparably interwoven with the seasonal cycle of intensive agriculture upon the land (Fairbank & Goldman 2006: 21:22). Peasant's life has not normally been confined to a single village but rather to a whole group of villages that form a market area.

The traditional Indian economy was based on agriculture and land. However, the land-owning class was decided by birth according to religious principles. Certain castes can have land and do agricultural work, certain castes were prohibited from having land and property. Some classes were masters and others were labourers. This inequality in the Indian society was different from that of Chinese counterpart in terms of freedom of choice of occupation and restrictions imposed on the freedom of labour.

III. Society in China and India after 1850

Western intervention in China and India was an interesting development of mid-20th century. The influence of the West, in terms of introducing modern values and institutions in the East, was the greatest contribution accepted by Mao and Ambedkar in their respective societies. After the defeat, China and India felt humiliated in the hands of the British. However, it was also call for renaissance and led to the emergence of different social and political movements in both the countries. Social reform movement, self-strengthening movement, institutional and non-institutional changes in these two societies were some of the important outcome of the process. Institutional changes in the Indian society led to the development of the liberal democratic institutions while Chinese reaffirmed them in the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 and then the People's Republic of China in 1949. The ideas of a secular institution, education, a

democratic institution, equality, liberty and fraternity were introduced into the Eastern context.

1. Influence of Imperialism and Modernity on China and India

The defeat in the Opium War³⁰ left China in despair of losing the glory of *Middle Kingdom*.³¹ With the Western penetration increasing the Middle Kingdom was forced to sign many unequal treaties. This not only made China aware of real power of the West but also exposed its weakness. China changed its self-glorification attitude after the interface with the West. China had never belonged to a system of states dealing with one another that based on equality. However, it had been for several millennia a universe under her, only less powerful rulers were regarded as tributary to the Son of Heaven, the Chinese emperor. Secondly, except Buddhism from India and Christianity from the West, the Chinese have interacted with less powerful but culturally inferior kingdoms so that they tended to identify their civilization as superior. Thirdly, the ruling group has vested interest in preserving traditional principles of society and government that were the basis of its power (Schram 1989:5). Therefore, there were changes in the attitude of the Chinese since the collapse of the Middle Kingdom. The defeat in the hands of the West led to the self-transforming attitude in the Chinese people. The modern science and technology were given importance with the idea of learning from the West for self-strengthening.

The Western economic exploitative policy had played a revolutionary role in the social and political spheres of China and India. It led to a change in the economic and social dynamics in China and India. The modern form of production, transportation and finance superimposed upon the traditional patterns of the past. The West dominated China with its commodities, guns, greed, and ideas. The result was catastrophic and revolutionary (Isaacs 1961:1). Marx argued that China's defeat in the Opium War of

³⁰ China's defeat in the Opium War 1840-42 forced China to sign Treaty of Nanjing forced China to open five ports for British. Fairbank: 1976:165.

³¹ Chinese believed in *Middle Kingdom*. It is an empire between heaven and Earth and surrounded by barbarians.

1840 advanced Chinese experience countless difficulties in their search for truth from the Western countries. All the Chinese who craved progress would read any book so long as it contained the new teaching of the West and the modern culture of Western bourgeois democracy.³² Traditional Chinese society has undergone significant changes since the Opium War. It was the first point of the social structural development in modern China. The most important issue was a head-on collision between Chinese feudal and Western capitalist culture, which resulted in a defeat not only for China's rulers but its entire system. China's doors were flung open and struck a fatal blow to China's self-sufficient peasant economy, and it slowly began to disintegrate (Li Peilin 2012:10). The new pressure on the Chinese society generated conflict which soon accumulated, gathered momentum and drove the country and its people convulsively forward in search of a new solution (Isaacs 1961:1).

All these dissolving agencies acting together on the finances, the morals, the industry, and political structure of China, received their full development under the English cannon in 1840, which broke down the authority of the Emperor, and forced the Celestial Empire into contact with the terrestrial world. Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of old China. That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air. Now, England having brought about the revolution of China, the question is how that revolution will in time react on England, and through England on Europe.³³

The central argument is that they have woven a narrative of a combination of modernization and revolution. These changes can be seen in the nineteenth century. There was an ongoing struggle between external forces and internal forces and differences that shape the outcome of China's effort to modernize. The onset of modernization certainly brought revolution to China. Revolutions, we believed do not constitute mere alteration in the political framework of society. They are instead traumatic upheavals in the core fixture of a culture. Revolutions bring about radical

³² Karl Marx, in *New York Daily Tribunes*, on 14 June, 1853, in Dona Torr edit. (1968), *Max on China-1853-1860*, P.XVIII. (Online: web) URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/06/14.htm>.

³³ Ibid.

changes in the economic and political order of country; they produce a shift in consciousness and social structure and marked by the emergence of a new ruling elite, whose values achieve legitimation through acceptance by larger society. It has been said that revolutions are “rupture of conscience” (Grasso and others 1997: VIII).

Nineteenth-century Chinese history witnessed an ongoing struggle between the forces of modernity and the pull of tradition. Some elements of Chinese civilization were prepared for change, while others resisted it. Still another indigenous aspect of Chinese culture interacted with outside stimuli to produce new elements which were not found anywhere in the world. The dynamic of these tensions have given birth to a social, cultural and political order that is unique, vital and yet still in transition (Grasso and others 1997:X).

Lazzarini opined that the technological and cultural influence of Europe, while undeniably challenging Chinese self-perceptions and practice, was not as overwhelming as once thought. The intrusion of the West cannot be ignored, but it also cannot be treated as an irresistible force against which Chinese were constantly responding as helpless victim. Regardless of the extent of European influence; China had to confront powerful demographic, social and economic circumstances. The signs of distress afflicting Chinese society were the consequence of the forces at work, that were active in society from, at least, the mid-eighteenth century and in some cases much longer (Lazzarini 1999:3). Chinese imperial order survived for roughly three millennia till the beginning of the nineteenth century. It did so by creating a powerful symbiosis between state and culture that was legitimized during the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-A.D. 220) and by the official adoption of the teaching of *Confucius*.

Lazzarini further argued that what China faced in the centuries before 1900 was radically different in two fundamental ways from anything experienced before. First, its leaders had devised effective responses to domestic challenges that looked, at first, as if they could be handled by time-honored means. Second, they had to accept the task of finding their way in a larger world that was in the process of being reordered decisively

under European military, technological and economic power. In both cases, the rules of behavior and their justification came under relentless assault, and reliance on *Confucian* fixes seemed increasingly ineffectual (Lazzarini 1999:6).

Similarly, India stepped into modernity after 1850. This period remembered not only for the social upliftment but also for the political institutions and economic system that England established. It was a period of transition from traditional and feudal society to semi-feudal and a colonial society. As a result, caste and untouchability began to be weakened. Caste also took new form due to the development of other forces like state and economy in colonial state. The modern institutions, on the one hand, shook the caste system, they institutionalized and nationalized it, on the other hand (Nikolas Dirk 2001). Equality before law was introduced in this period.³⁴

An effective structural and territorial unification occurred under the British Raj was pivotal for the unity of India. It has been crucial for speeding up the social revolution in India. The introduction of modern and educational institutions was a revolutionary step. The East India Company introduced many bills for social reform. Nancy Gardner Cassels dealt with the legislations that were introduced by the East India Company in areas like female infanticide, child marriage, *Sati*, widow remarriage, *thuggee*, and rights of coolies, slaves, and migrant labour, and other social evils (Glucklich 1986, Cassels 2010). Social reform by legislation comprised a small but highly explosive element of British judicial activity. The Bengal Regulation 17 of 1829 (Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829), Caste Removal of Disabilities Act of 1850 (Act XXI of 1850), It was Macaulay's most controversial effort prior to the draft codes of civil and criminal law, *Hindu* Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, Inheritance removal of Disabilities Act XII of 1928, were introduced by the British and this legislation faced stiff opposition from the local masses especially *Brahmins* (Clucklich 1986).

³⁴ B. R. Ambedkar, "The Untouchables and the Pax Britannica", criticised British for not paying much attention to social reform and upliftment of the depressed classes while they helped British to settle in India. However, he acknowledged the contribution of equality before Law in empowerment of depressed classes. (Online : web) URL: <http://www.ambedkar.org/ambcd/49.%20The%20Untouchables%20and%20the%20Pax%20Britannica.htm>

Ambedkar also highlighted the social change unfolding during the period of East India Company and later in the British Raj. But they did not pay much attention to the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. He further argued that British realized after 1857 revolt that the way to social reform would lead to end the British Raj in India. Therefore, British never tried to intervene in the practice of the caste and untouchability.³⁵ Although the East India Company and the British Raj introduced some law but did not dare to ban the caste system and untouchability.

2. Social and Political Movements in China

Economic exploitation and Western modern values and their dissemination unleashed various socialist and nationalist movements in China. Nationalists and communists had come together to fight against the external imperialist exploitation. *Taiping* Rebellion, Self-strengthening movement, May Fourth Movement, intellectual revolution and communist movement were part of the anti-imperialist struggle. Social reform and political movement went hand in hand in China whereas social and political movements were separate in India.

i. Taiping Rebellion

The *Taiping* Rebellion was a peasant revolutionary movement against the landlordism and superstition in China. Mao consciously accepted the importance of this movement, which is famous for the social and economic equality and gender justice for the Chinese strata of lower section Mao believed that it laid the foundation of the Communist revolution. The nature of the movement was progressive from the point of view of social reforms. The *Taiping* Rebellion was the first social revolution and affected almost every province of China. The Feudal landlords successfully suppressed the movement with the help of foreigners, particularly the British.³⁶ It was a robust opposition to unequal *Confucius* social and political order with the demand for the equal

³⁵ B. R. Ambedkar, "Untouchables and Pax Britannica". (Online: web) URL:

<http://www.ambedkar.org/ambcd/49.%20The%20Untouchables%20and%20the%20Pax%20Britannica.htm>

³⁶ Karl Marx in *New York Daily Tribune*-1853-1860, Dona Torr, edit. Marx on China, P.X., Lawrence & Wishart : London.

property rights, women's equal rights and replacement of the old *Confucianism* with Christianity. The intensity of this movement led to great upheaval in the Chinese social order. The progressive elements of the movement recognized later by Sun Yat-Sen and Mao.³⁷

The Qing regime was almost overwhelmed by the widespread *Taiping* rebellions. The Qing Emperor's inability to check the British barbarians in 1840s Opium War which not only shook the imperial prestige but also led to a century of humiliation. Hong Xiuquan, the leader of the rebellion, failed fourth time in the Guangzhou examinations of 1843. He read some literature of Christian missionaries and became a militant evangelist for a moral and social life of serving the purpose of the one true God. He created an iconoclastic monotheism potent enough to set up the *Taiping* theocracy yet too blasphemous to win foreign missionary support, too intent on the one true God to permit cooperation with other secret societies like Triads, and too bizarre and irrational to win over Chinese literati, who were normally essential to setting up a new administration (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:207).

Franz Michael (1971) rightly observed that the modern history of China starts from the *Taiping* Rebellion, which not only tried to restructure the entire social and political order but also revolutionize the Chinese society. This movement was for complete rearrangement for social transformation although it failed.³⁸ Hong, who claimed himself as the younger brother of Christ, was the main propagator of the *Taiping* and preached the lesson of equality of all men and women, and common property rights. It was a great revolutionary idea for transforming the traditional, unequal social and political order of China. Grasso Etc. (1997:48) argued:

³⁷ Mao Tse-tung in his "On Democracy" considered it was part of the New Democratic Revolution or Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. See: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm.

³⁸ Franz Michael and Chung-li Chang (1971), *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, Vol. II, III, Reviewed by Yuji Muramatsu (1972) *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 31 (4) : 929-931, Online URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2052119>.

Taiping Rebellion was a unique event in the Chinese history. Its objective was not only to eliminate the Qing, which was considered a 'foreign dynasty' but to replace the entire Confucian system with a pseudo-Christian society. The movement's basic document "The Land System of Heavenly Kingdom" served as a sort of constitution to the new Taiping Social Structure. The system insisted on the communal sharing of wealth and property under the direction of the theocratic state. The family was to remain the basic unit of the organization, but it would be stripped of its paramount economic and social functions, which were to be transferred to the government. The leadership also promulgated strict law promoting social equality. The accumulation of private wealth and privilege were outlawed, and sexes were declared equal (among other, this meant the end of foot-binding and polygamy).

Christianity influenced the entire movement, and its core principles went against the principles of monarchy and capitalism. The self-strengthening movement originated after crushing the *Taiping* Rebellion movement. Since 1860, in memorials and edicts to the throne, numerous scholars began to refer "a changed situation" and recognised the necessity of strengthening oneself to meet the changed disposition of the heaven. In this case, the problems created by the foreigners and dynastic upheaval. In such circumstance, Chinese realized the importance of utilization of Western science and technology. It was important not to alter the basic framework of Chinese culture. The ideological sanction for self-strengthening ultimately was summed up in the slogan "Chinese learning for essential principles, and Western learning for practical application" (Grasso 1997:53). The importance of modern science and technology and strength of the Western power could be checked by using and allowing the science and technology to flourish China.

ii. Nationalism

After the defeat of the Opium War, different social and political movements emerged in response to the Western ascendancy. In this context, some of them aimed at reviving the Chinese old culture, and others focused on learning from the West. Science and technology remained the significant factors in the victory of the West. The emerging trend focused on the self-strengthening movement through learning from West. There were intellectuals and political forces that prepared to sacrifice not only the existing political system but also China's traditional culture in order to save the country. Initially,

these men were radical reformers, and they were no longer *culturalists* but nationalists (Schram 1989:6). After 1898, at least, virtually everyone in China, who has to have an impact on the future of China may be said to have been nationalist as opposed to Culturalist (Schram 1989:6).

Chen Duxiu³⁹ maintained precisely an opposite view that China's misfortunes came from her weakness and could best be cured by learning from the West. Others still discovered in the theory of imperialism a new basis for opposing the West politically. At the same time, injecting into their society something of the Promethean of the West toward the transformation of the society (Schram 1989:6). The important issue for the Chinese people was to save China from the imperialist exploitation at the cost of old culture. Schram (1989:7) argued that the first two decades of the twentieth century were the years during which tradition-oriented nationalism lost ground without disappearing altogether, and radical Westernization has its brief heyday. The ideas do not stand by themselves, unrelated to action. They often born out of social and had implication for action. The thoughts of Mao bear the imprint of historical context in which he grew up, and of the intellectual current to which he was exposed, and also to his own very strong personality (Schram 1963:3). When Mao came to power in 1949, he especially pointed out that the *Taiping* Emperor, Yen Fu, K'ang Yu-Wei, and Sun Yat-Sen tried revolution but failed. Mao studied their failure and succeeded (Payne 1961:27).

Of the two leaders, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, former was a Westernizer, who turned to communism as the most efficient method for modernizing Chinese society, whereas, the latter was a nationalist, who saw in the Leninist theory of imperialism a justification for his chauvinistic view (Schram 1963:15). Chen was a radical "Westernizer" in the early years of May Fourth Period, who tended to blame all of the

³⁹ Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) was a founding member of the CPC. He had been at Paris and learned about the French Revolution and returned to China and founded an influential Journal New Youth in 1915, Fairbank and Goldman: 2006:265.

China's misfortunes on her fault and weakness.⁴⁰ Li, on the other hand, under the impact of Japan's Twenty-One Demands, had written an essay in 1915 to glorify the Chinese people, which had stood in a superior position for fully four thousand years and crying out for national revenge (Schram 1963:15). China is not simply Westernized, though she has absorbed ideas and techniques from the West, these imported elements have not brusquely supplanted traditional mode of thought and behavior, but have been incorporated into a living fabric that contains not only much that is Western, but also much Chinese (Schram 1963:4).

The process of adaptation to the modern world, and more specifically to Western pressures, by the selective adoption of certain Western ideas, institutions, and technique, and the critical reexamination of the China's own tradition. This process constitutes the basic framework essential to an understanding of Mao's development. In place, this long, cumbersome definition, I shall use such term as "transformation of China", "adaptation to modern conditions, and even "modernization" or "Westernization" (Ibid).

The 1898 reform movement was an effort at institutional change on the part of ranking literati close to the throne. It began as a response to military defeat by Japan in 1895 but ended in the abandonment of the traditional Sino-centric worldview of the West (Merle Goldman ed. 2002:13). Where the cutting edge of reform in 1898 had been at the inherited political order, the intellectual campaign for a totally "new culture" which was symbolized by the "May Forth Movement" demonstration of 1919, was seen as an attack upon the traditional moral and social orders as well (Merle Goldman ed. 2002:13). The leadership of the later movement came from China's newly modernized universities and schools. In addition to anti-imperialism, its goal was the establishment of a scientific and democratic new culture purged of all relics of China's feudal past. In a generation, China's intellectuals had apparently moved from the questioning of traditional core values to their total repudiation (Merle Goldman eds. 2002:13).

⁴⁰ He exhibited this attitude as late as the fall of 1918 in his famous article "The Von Ketterler Monument," See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press 1951, P;14-15).

Intellectual change after 1890, must be studied in the light of the Chinese discovery of the “West” and not merely as the source of imperialist aggression or technological wizardry, but as a world civilization in its own right. Fung Yu-Lan, a leading neo-traditional scholar, has typically characterized the period between 1890 and 1920 as one of Chinese infatuation with the spiritual civilization of the West to be distinguished from the both the Sino-centrism of the dynastic era and the critical neo-traditionalism of the 1920s and 1930s.⁴¹ Chinese Marxist historians like Hou Wai-lu have linked this presumed infatuation with the West to structural change in the society the drive for industrialization of an emerging bourgeoisie, which like its European counterpart, found the scientific and democratic ideology of the Enlightenment a fit to express their socio-economic aspirations.⁴²

Joseph Levenson (1964) was more impressed with the evidence suggesting that Chinese reformers viewed the West and its intellectual claims with a good deal of ambivalence. There was tension between their commitment to universal values and their sense of cultural identity.⁴³ China’s own neo-traditional philosophers and their Maoist adversaries have been committed to *Confucian* values. They survived after the iconoclastic onslaught of the ‘New Culture’ and ‘May Forth Movement. *Confucianism* continued to guide the social behavior and spiritual life of many Chinese down to post-liberation times (Goldman eds. 2002:16). Marx argued in the following manner about the imperialism in China:

It was determined, first, by his fundamental conception of tragic contradiction inherent both in the condition of bourgeois existence, and in the entire period of the human civilization, that is to say, of class society in all its stages of dialectical movement. The importance of the stage reached by the bourgeois society is that it creates the classes and material prerequisite through which this civilization itself

⁴¹ Fung Yu-Lan (1941), *Hsin Shih lun in New Culture and Society*, Changsa., third printing Shanghai, Commercial Press-1948. Cited in Merle Goldman eds. 2002:15.

⁴² Hou Wai-lu, “Interpretive history of the modern Chinese thought” cited in Merle Goldman eds. 2002:15.

⁴³ Levenson (1964), *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, Vol. 1, University of California Press, cited in Merle Goldman eds. 2002:15)

(including civilization mongers' referred in your society) can be abolished and with them the pre-human stage of man's progress.⁴⁴

Marx's classic study of a progressive aspect of bourgeois development in India and its limitation also applies to China.⁴⁵ However, China witnessed immense changes. In the 'Communist Manifesto', Marx and Engels had already shown how modern industry by its cheap commodities and development of communication "batters down all the Chinese walls" "compels all nations...to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves", and was making "nation of peasants" dependent on national bourgeois," "the East on the West".⁴⁶

Communist movement in China starts from 1920, but the 'May Fourth Movement' provided the background for Marxism in China. The conditions for movement were already prepared by the intellectuals. Who attacked the old Chinese society and advocated reforms.

The important thing to understand in the Chinese and Indian resistance movements against imperialism is that the Chinese were nationalists, and Indian were *culturalists*. Chinese were ready to give up culture to get liberation from imperialism while the Indian 1857 revolt was cultural revolt not nationalist in any sense. Chinese conservatives were not opposed to modernity, but Indian conservatives were in complete opposition to modernity and science and technology. Indian revolt of 1857 was not for liberation of masses rather than it has been in opposition to the company's infringement in religious affairs. This is the main difference of the Indian national freedom struggle and Chinese self-strengthening movement.

The modern Western outlook influenced the self-strengthening movement and to make China capable as much as imperial powers were to adopt modern technology and science. The dominant narrative of modern Chinese history in both China and the West is

⁴⁴ F. Engels, "Anti-During", p.318; *Origin of the Family*; P.202f. cited in *Marx on China* 1968, p.XV.

⁴⁵ Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CCCPSU. June-august 1853. Pp.

⁴⁶ Marx in *Communist Manifesto*, acknowledged the contribution of Industrial revolution in the East.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>.

the narrative of modernization. The narrative begins with the Opium War of 1840 and the initial refusal of the imperial state and mandarin state to recognize the challenges posed by the West. This was followed by the Self-strengthening Movement where Western-leaning was sought to be confined to practical matters, the classic *ti-yong* dichotomy.⁴⁷

iii. May Fourth Movement

May Fourth Movement arose against the discriminatory treaty of Versailles in 1919 in which Chinese territory was handed over to Japan. This student protest later became the iconoclastic movement and spread across China. Some students and intellectuals led this movement. This is often called intellectual movement aimed at reforming Chinese traditional society. It was supported by the rising patriotic and anti-great power sentiments of the public which has been ignited first by the Twenty-one Demands of Japan in 1915 and then by the Shantung resolution in the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. The students and new intellectual leaders promoted the anti-Japanese campaign and a vast modernization movement to build a new China through intellectual and social reforms. They stressed the importance of Western ideas of science and democracy. Traditional Chinese ethics, customs, literature, history, philosophy, religion and social and political institutions were fiercely attacked. Liberalism, pragmatism utilitarianism, anarchism, and many varieties of socialism provided the stimuli (Chow 1960:1).

The most profound and lasting thrust of the May Fourth Movement was that social transformation, another focus was intellectual as well as political iconoclasm. Given these facts, it seems best to accept the broad definition and regard the movement as a vast upheaval affecting many aspects of society (Chow 1960:5). First of all, this was the first time Chinese intellectuals recognized the need for a complete transformation of traditional Chinese society. Before China came into contact with the modern West, her civilization had never been seriously challenged by any foreign influence except Indian

⁴⁷ Prasenjit Duara, (1998) "The Critique of Modernity in India and China", (Online: web) URL: http://ignca.nic.in/ks_41015.htm.

Buddhism, which had touched closely many aspects of Chinese intellectual and social life but had affected the political and economic system less (Chow 1960:13).

Shortly after this, the movement gradually got involved in politics and the united front of new intellectuals collapsed. The liberals lost their zeal from political activity, whereas the left wing of movement took the expedient political step of allying itself with nationalist to overthrow the warlord Peking regime. The Western attitude shifted from sympathy to antagonism toward the movement which constituted one major factor in the split. Therefore, socialism and nationalism became ascendant, and multitudes of complicated controversies were precipitated (Chow 1960:2). The effects of movement were widespread. They contributed to the rise of student and labor movement the expansion of Kuomintang and the birth of CPC (Chow 1960:2). The movement also accelerated the decline of old family system and the rise of feminism, and above all, the authority of *Confucianism* and traditional ethics suffered a fundamental and devastating blow and new Western ideas were exalted (Chow 1960:2).

3. Social and Political Movements in India

Social and political movements in India have had interesting trajectories since the 1850s. In contrast to what unfolded in China, as discussed above, Indian society witnessed the rise of social, and political movements with their distinctive features. One of them was of forces which took up the egalitarian social agenda were marginalized. The Nationalist movement was against only British not against social equalities existing within the society. Social equality was never accepted as most important agenda of the nationalist movement in India. Far from starting social reform, superstition and religion continued to be part of the fabric. There were two parallel movements, anti-colonial preferring only opposition to British and social reformers whose primary agenda was social reform first and political change later.

i. 1857 Revolt

The Revolt of 1857 by the Indian soldiers ended the East India Company's rule and led to direct rule by Britain, which continued till 1947. British India introduced institutional and non-institutional social and political changes in Indian society. One of the immediate reasons behind the 1857s revolt was religion and superstition.⁴⁸ British officials cited the reason that serving of cartridges which was compulsory to bite to remove the paper which was said to have been greased with the fat of bullocks and pigs. It was considered by the natives as an infringement of their religious prescriptions. Aloysius argued that the cultural and religious opposition to the British imperialism was not based on rational and national logic but irrational and superstitious. The resistance from Indian traditional forces in terms of protecting their own tradition and identity the abortive mutiny of 1857 is replete with conscious, systematic and collective public action to intervene in the existing and changing power relations, and to challenge the emerging oligarchy of and other twice-born caste across the subcontinent (G. Aloysius 1997:56).

British officials felt that the cause of the mutiny was to be found mainly in the provocation offered by insistence on greased cartridges. The revolt was consequently nothing more than irrational panic on the subject of caste among credulous and superstitious Sepoys (Metcalf 1995:47). Several instances and episodes reveal the aspect of the Army prestige and its influence over the people that Marx highlighted during the rebellion. For instances, in the 'Proclamation of Rani of Jhansi' there is a discussion of various stratagems that the Europeans employed to deprive the Indian of their religion and faith.⁴⁹

Hali summarized the 1857 revolt as it had neither been a national movement nor it resulted from any plot. It came about from the disobedience of soldiers who acted primarily out of ignorance or religious presuppositions and without any determination to mutiny against the government. Sir Syed opined that Military mutiny conveyed an idea of

⁴⁸ East India Company's official position was that it was only religious reason behind revolt.

⁴⁹ A.A. Rizvi, part IIIrd, pp.225-27. Cited in Rawat 2007:18.

“something more than the real fact, even he rejected to call it as popular rebellion.”⁵⁰ He pointed out the benefits of the British rule to *Hindus* and *Muslims* alike, such as ‘Peace’ protection of weak from the tyranny of the strong; freedom of religion, etc. He contended that “none of these were experienced before under the rule of anyone else.”⁵¹ He expressed his sense of relief and pleasure at the re-establishment of government and “the coming back of our just and imperial government.”⁵²

Raja Siva Prasad ruled out any political perspective of the rebellion and held it to be an incident of loot and plunder of criminal classes. Moreover, he further went on to defend the British regime, like Marx, for materialistic development. The bridges, canals, accommodation for travelers, hospitals, police, law, justice, education and science and the arts and the necessities and luxuries of life have been multiplied in our country by the company to an extent neither heard of nor imaginable by our predecessors. India has, so to speak, been converted from wilderness into a garden.⁵³

In contrast, V.D. Savarkar in his “*Indian War of Independence of 1857*” marked a significant departure from the modernization perspective and declared the 1857 Sepoy’s Revolt as the first war of the Independence. He wanted the book not to serve as a mere document in the annals of past but also as a source of inspiration and guidance for the future.⁵⁴ Savarkar was a champion of Indian culture, and a founder of the *Hindutva* philosophy. His glorification of the national freedom struggle without the social reform is no exception. The movement of Indian National Congress through political movement without social transformation was the main strategy of the mainstream politics and academics.

⁵⁰ Hafeez Malik and Moris Dembo, (Translated and Edited), Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s History of the Bijnor Rebellion, I AD, Oriental (Original Series, No.21), Delhi, Preface, VIII Cited in Rawat 2007:21.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 140-141 cited in Rawat 2007:22.

⁵² Ibid. pp. 208-211, cited in Rawat 2007:22.

⁵³ Raja Siva Prasad, The History of Hindustan, Part-II-IV, ed. Lucknow, 1890, p.120, cited in Rawat 2007:

⁵⁴ The Indian War of Independence, eighth ed., New Delhi, 1970, Introduction, p.XIV cited in Rawat 2007:24.

Marx considered 1857 insurrection was part of general anti-colonial struggle of oppressed nations. He saw that it was allied with European revolution that, in their opinion, was due to break out as a sequel of the first world economies' crisis that swept the European countries and the United Nations at that time.⁵⁵ Marx and Engels refuted the argument that tried to picture the insurrection as an armed Sepoys mutiny and to conceal the involvement of broad sections of the Indian population.⁵⁶ But Marx and Engels were unaware about the feudal division of India, the ethnic diversity of its population, the religious and caste antagonism among the people, and the perfidy of most of the local feudal gentry who led the revolt.⁵⁷

Bipan Chandra considered the 1857 revolt in positive aspect. The whole process of the anti-colonial struggle as the Indian national movement, in fact, provides the only actual historical example of a semi-democratic or democratic type of political structure being successfully replaced or transformed. He further believed that Indian national movement had never been a fight at one point of time rather than a prolonged struggle with the counter-hegemonic purpose (Chandra 1989:13).

The ideological position is the fundamental criterion of their choice of interpretation which can be seen in the analysis of Disraeli and Marx. Disraeli declared the rebellion 'foul and unjust' although national. Marx while highlighting the central factor of the rebellion supported its cause. He recognized the emergence of *Hindu-Muslim* unity as he observed that the *Muslim* and *Hindus* (were), renouncing their mutual antipathies against their common masters.⁵⁸ In the same way, Savarkar could read the value of '*Swaraj* and *Swadharm*' into the rebellion because of his own revolutionary ideas and the impact of radicalization which the partition of Bengal of 1905 had brought into the national politics (Rawat 2007:25).

⁵⁵ Karl Marx and Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence-1857-58*, Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CCCPSU. 2011:7. *New-York Daily Tribune*, July 1857 - October 1858 (Online: web) URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/india/>.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 9

⁵⁷ Ibid. 10

⁵⁸ Karl Marx in Iqbal Husain, p.61. In cited Rawat 2007:25.

Therefore, the feudal resistance to imperialism is seen in the positive light due to its backward and regressive nature. The resistance of imperialism is an interesting phenomenon, but the nature of resistance needs to be critically examined from the point of view of depressed classes. The idea of equality and social justice were nowhere on the radar of the social and political movement even though this reestablishment movement for feudalism with superstitious practice declared the Anti-imperialist struggle. This was the period of transition from tradition to modernity. The process of modernizing Indian society with the Western values was an interesting phenomenon of the nineteenth century in India. The colonial history is not merely a period of shame and servitude but also a period during which, in its peculiar way, India stepped into modernity. For our purpose, it was a period of great social and political upheaval in which we sought the emergence or non-emergence of a new national community (Aloysius 1997:21). India was not only divided, between Mohammedan and *Hindus* but between tribe and tribe, caste and caste. Moreover, Indian society was divided into a numbers of castes, regions, languages, and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, Marx acknowledged the role of the imperialist British in the Indian territorial unity. Marx opined;

All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of the Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, impart a particular kind of melancholy to the present misery of Hindu, and separates Hindustan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions and from the whole of its past history.⁵⁹

In 1853, Marx argued that although Britain had broken down the traditional and hereditary occupation of individual but these idyllic village-communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism. They restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. Moreover, England had to fulfill a double mission in

⁵⁹ Karl Marx on India 1853, Institute of Marx and Engels CCCPSU, 2011:13.

India, Marx argued, one destructive, regenerating the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and laying the foundation of the material foundation of Western society in Asia.⁶⁰ Marx added that for the first time changes were brought about in the Indian society, otherwise, it had been a long period when there was intervention from the outside forces in India. He commented:

Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successfully overrun India, soon became Hinduized, the Barbarian conquerors being by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilization of their subjects. The British were the first conquerors superior, and, therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by leveling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historical pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regenerating hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless, it has begun.⁶¹

The political unity of India, more consolidated and extended farther than it ever did under the Mughals, was the first condition of its regeneration in the British period. That unity imposed by the British sword would now be strengthened and perpetuated by electric telegraph. In the course of past 150 years, communities of considerable antiquity have become more fractured by the combined pressure of conflict along class lines and the loss of their substantial historical autonomy. Wholly new relationships between states and communities appeared after 1830, and a shift to relatively greater exogenous influences upon social, cultural and economic development was notable. Even when a degree of ideological coherence preserved in the persistent evocation of caste and religious identities and loyalties, the social worlds to which these ideologies refer and from which they originated had been completely transformed (Stein 1998:229).

ii. Nationalism

The declaration of the reign of the British Queen in 1858 led to institutional changes in India. The institutional changes and their implications on the social sphere of India initiated different social and political movements. Indian national movement was

⁶⁰ Karl Marx on India 1853, Institute of Marx and Engels CCCPSU, 2011: 26

⁶¹ Ibid. 26.

the most impressive movements against colonialism. This long struggle inside this vast country, together, encouraged the progress of similar movements elsewhere (Bipan Chandra 1989). The nationalist movement was impressive, but it did not take up the issues of social reform in the Indian society. The agenda of Indian national movement was to oppose British colonialism and demand independence. However, at the same time, it was silent on the social oppression of the Brahmanical social order. Anil Seal (1968:341) argued that early nationalist political activity in India during the 1870s and 1880s was not a consequence of changes in the economic structure rather than social and community-based. There were internal rivalries between castes, but not between classes. Further, he argued those groups that felt the similarity of interests were themselves more the product of bureaucratic initiative than of economic changes. These groups were Western educated. The building of new association that emerged from the Indian National Congress, primarily based on elites, rather than on classes. Seal opined that they moved into secular organizations but remained riddled with allegiances to their caste or community, their effort to conserve or improve the position of their prescriptive groups. Since these groups were usually castes, and since castes were unknown outside South Asia, this was obviously an elite of particular kind (Anil Seal 1968:342).

The impact of British government disturbed and in some places upset the traditional ranking of hierarchy and dominance in local society, thus increasing competitiveness between men of different communities and castes. Anil Seal (1968), argued that the Indian nationalism was the product of the British imperialism. These were an objective condition for the birth and growth of Indian nationalism. Indian nationalism was a process by which increasing numbers of Indians came to upon certain questions in the context of the country as a whole. However, narrow community interests might have started the process. Educated Indians, Zamindars and Merchants, Princes got conscious politically and disliked the British Raj. Gradual alienation of a group of Indians from the Raj can be explained in terms of political grievances alone. During the 1870s and 1880s, the beginning of mutation in the Indian politics which was to convert many of the Western-educated from collaborators into critics of the regime (Anil Seal 1968:23).

It was argued that uneven development between different regions and the competitiveness between various groups mean that there was little possibility of unity. Neither solidarity nor sympathy linked these elites with the societies to which they belonged (Anil Seal 1968:112). Gail Omvedt, in agreement with Anil Seal, argued that Indian nationalism, which rose in this period, was an upper caste and class led nationalism worried about their self and community interests. Thus, depressed classes' nationalism was in opposition to the Brahmanical nationalism and imperialism. Jyoti Rao Phule criticized the Brahmanical nationalism, as Omvedt argued;

'Hindu-Nationalism' which was emerging as a consequence of the elite organizing from the nineteenth century onward to define Indian society, and the majority of the Indian people, as essentially Hindu: not only they criticized distortion and 'excrescences'; they attacked Hinduism itself by arguing that it was in essence Brahmanical, caste-bound and irrational. They asserted that had not been the religion and culture but rather was an imposed religion; and that escaping exploitation today required the low castes to reject this imposition to define themselves as 'non-Hindu' and take new religious identity (Omvedt 1994:12).

Gaikwad (1998) argued that without Ambedkar's opposition to mainstream nationalism, the process of internal consolidation of the nation would not have been carried out enough to make a strong and broader nation (515). Guru (1998) deliberated that Ambedkar's criticism of national freedom struggle made the conception of nationalism broader irrespective of *Dalits'* direct participation (156).

Bipin Chandra believed that the Indian national movement increasingly moved toward a programme of radical agrarian reform. For various reasons, despite the existence of powerful leftist trend within the nationalist mainstream, the dominant vision in the Congress did not transcend the parameter of a capitalist conception of society (Chandra 1989:15-16). Socialism was a mere concern for the "upper" caste educated Marxists/Leftists because their existential social reality of the Indian society. The Marxist movement in India was led by a group of people from "upper" castes. According to Bipal Chandra;

The imperialist writers deny that India was in the process of becoming a nation and believe that what is called India, in fact, consisted of religious, castes communities and interests. Thus, the grouping of Indian politics around the concept of an Indian national or an Indian people or social classes is not recognized by them. There were, instead, they said, pre-existing Hindu-Muslim, Brahmin, Non-Brahmin, Aryan, Bhadrak (cultured people) and other similar identities. They say that these prescriptive groups based on caste and religions are the real basis of the political organization and, as such, caste and religion based politics are primary and nationalism, a mere cover (Cited in Chandra 1989:18).⁶²

Anil Seal argued, what from a distance appears as their political striving was often, on close examination, their effort to conserve or improve the position of their prescriptive groups (Anil Seal 1968:342). This also made Indian nationalism different from the nationalism of China, Japan, the Muslim countries and Africa (Ibid.). Thus, this school of historians treat the Indian national movement as a cloak for the struggle for power between various sections of Indian elite, and between them and the foreign elite, thus effectively denying its existence and legitimacy as a movement of the Indian for the overthrow of imperialism and for the establishment of an independent nation state (Chandra 1989:19).

In the whole process of nationalist struggle, social problems like caste and untouchability were completely neglected. The main difference between Indian and Chinese nationalism is that separation of social from political. Indian nationalist movement separated political movement from the existing social problems in India. The Indian National Congress' main focus was carrying out the national political movement, not social reforms. Even Marx (1853) profoundly preferred social revolution before going for mass mobilization for political movement in the case of India. Further, he questioned, "can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia?" Marx and Engels looked from the standpoint of the proletarian liberation struggle. They regarded the revolutionary impact of the far-reaching changes maturing in India and China with the dissolution of patriarchal and feudal relations and the gradual transition of

⁶² Bipan Chandra (1989) summarised the Cambridge Historians' major arguments.

those countries to capitalist development as a new important factor that would inevitably influence the prospects of impending European revolution (Marx 2011:7).

The Marxist organizations started in India in the 1920s after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The emergence of Indian Marxism, proclaiming a new theory of exploitation and liberation, asserting to have the best analysis of Indian society, it was rapidly picked up by some young, educated and mostly “upper” caste radical nationalists searching for a mass base of the movement and eventually founding new communist and socialist parties. It also began to assert a powerful influence on the thinking of left-congressmen such as Nehru and his colleagues (Omvedt 1994:24). This was the main reason for taking up the Marxist movement ahead without the social movement in this country. The monopoly of the “upper” castes in the Indian Marxist movement and explaining Indian social and economic reality by being in the same kind of group which was socially and culturally privileged and economically disturbed from the British colonial policies.

Marx very rightly observed that the ruling classes of Great Britain had an accidental, transitory and exceptional interest in the progress of India. Therefore, aristocracy wanted to conquer it, the “Moneyocracy” to plunder it, and the “Millocracy” to undersell it. However, the “Millocracy” have discovered that the transformation of India into a productive country has become of vital importance to them, and that, to that end, it is necessary to gift her with the means of irrigation and of internal communication (Marx 2011:27). Modern Industry, arising from the railway system, will dissolve the hereditary division of labour, upon which rest the Indian castes, that decisive impediment to Indian progress and Indian power (Marx 2011:29).

The weakest point of Indian Marxism was that it took the overriding reality of class and class struggle so strongly as to assert the fundamental irrelevance of every other sociological category. Caste was not only secondary but even non-existent for the Indian Marxists. Paradoxically, the influence of Marxism on anti-caste movements was thus to

widen divisions. Rather than evolving to an integrated theory combining economic/political/cultural factors, they focused on class and neglected caste.

Sharad Patil (1979) applied the combined approach based on what he claimed as the new methodology of Marxism-Phule-Ambedkar in India, where, he considered caste as an ideological system but on *Jatis* as entities, arguing that in pre-capitalist societies, *Jatis* were themselves basic units of production and exploitation in India. Gail Omvedt argued that the caste struggle could become a revolutionary movement only when it could have proposed an alternative, a more advanced system, rather than being simply a negative protest or a competitive struggle for more economic and socio-cultural rights within the framework of exploitation (Omvedt 1994:49). Of all the framework of analysis, Marxism provides beginning points for any understanding of processes of caste-class development in India during British rule (Omvedt 1994:82).

Some scholars do recognize the role of British rule in unsettling the caste system. Anil Seal (1973) argued that imperialism had engineered significant effect on the territories where it ruled. However, for good or ill, the imperial policy seemed to be the main force affecting colonial conditions. It emerged from an identifiable source, the official mind of the white hall or the contrivances of proconsuls, and so the study of policy making made a framework for the investigation of colonial history.

The ideology that underpinned the ‘new social movements,’ as highlighted the influential writings of Neo-Gramscian theorists such as Laclau and Mouffe seem significant. These scholars stress on the ‘democratic revolution’ as a major global revolutionary ideology. For example, emphasized the struggle for ideological hegemony without privileging class actors or particularly class positions, arguing that even working class struggles will not be revolutionary or progressive unless they are articulated in a context of general emancipation (Omvedt 1994: 16). Arguing for the increase of both repressive and emancipatory force with the spread of capitalism, they see the emancipatory project as connected to the spread of a broad democratic ideology with values of freedom, equality and autonomy; these are inherently subversive of all forms of

subordination and inequality, though subversion may be slow and protracted process (Omvedt 1994: 16). Immanuel Wallerstein stressed on the other aspect of labor in terms of slave labor, while we would add petty commodity production, and mediate caste forms, is being central to capital accumulation from the beginning. In these models also, not simply 'economic subordination' to the property holder but cultural community forms and force and violence play a major role. On this basis, we can construct, at least, the elements of a revised historical materialist understanding not only of the linkage between the 'economic base' and the superstructure but of economic process (Omvedt 1994:17).

The main framework for this movement is interpreted in the context of Marxism by the academicians. Two important assumptions can be made in the context. First, class remained the most important factor in determining the nature of exploitation and oppression. Second, the anti-imperialist movement against colonial rule and characterized in terms of its main organizations (such as the Indian National Congress) has been the overarching movement of the Third World countries (Omvedt 1994:14).

iii. Social Reform Movements

The above mentioned streams failed to give importance to social reform movement in their opposition to colonialism and imperialism. Social reform movement starts in India through the interface between European missionaries and progressive Indians. The movement against child marriage and Sati began in the British period and banned by law. Discussion on the social reform movement in India would be incomplete without the role played by different social and political groups and organizations. This movement can be divided into two parts. The movements that are run by *Savarnas*. They were focused on family reform but not the larger social structure. Child marriage and Sati became major issues for these elite *Savarna* social reformers.⁶³ The social-religious reform movements of the nineteenth century India, while manifesting unmistakable Western influences, were thus anxious to shield *Hinduism* from severe criticism. Their

⁶³ Ambedkar in his essay, *Annihilation of Caste*, he differentiated between family reforms and social reforms. He said that Savarana focused on the family reforms like Sati and Child marriage. But they never paid any attention to the problem arising out of social order like caste and untouchability.

objective was more to restore certain legitimacy to *Hindu* practices, and, in particular, to redeem the caste system. This approach was doubtless motivated as much by an 'elite' desire to remain at the summit of forms in family (Jaffrelot 2000:14).

Indian society is hierarchical, unequal, and divided into different castes, groups, regions, languages, and ethnicities. Indian society is highly discriminatory in every aspect. It is divided into four major *Varnas* and thousands of castes and sub-castes. The traditional religion-based ideologies, developed primarily by Brahmans, harking back to the laws of Manu and the creation of hymn of *Rig-Veda* were very much prevalent in the Indian common psyche. "Upper" caste social reformers tried to argue from scriptural justification for a change in or even abolition of *Jati* and *Varna* system (Omvedt 1994:22). Most of the "upper" caste movements were reformist (incorporative, 'Norm oriented'). And all the upper caste movements trends were also embodied in Gandhi's '*Harijan*' movement, which stood in the tradition of broad "upper" caste social reform tradition which wanted to cleanse *Hinduism* of its impurities, to 'lop off the excrescences' in the words of M.G. Ranade, i.e., to eliminate the diseased branches of the tree with the intention of fostering its growth (Omvedt 1994:10).⁶⁴ Braj Ranjan Mani (2005:200) argued that the rationalist writings of Roy and other reformers were influenced by the pragmatic thought through their exposure to the Western education, but they also had inherited a social situation and cultural milieu that was dominated by the Brahmanical world view.

The demand major trajectory of reform was led by the "Untouchables". Social reform movements from these communities are an anti-caste and anti-untouchability movement led by Phule, Periyar, and Ambedkar. Omvedt (1994) classified the *Dalit* and non-Brahman movement as anti-caste movements, as anti-systemic movements of Immanuel Wallerstein, or as functionalist sociological theory, as 'value-oriented

⁶⁴ Cited by Kumari, Jayawardhana, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, London : Zed Books 1986, p.80.

movements' as opposed to norm-oriented movements.⁶⁵ These movements challenged and sought to transform the fundamental structure of Indian society. The purpose of these movements was replacing caste and the accompanying social oppression, economic exploitation and political domination by an equalitarian society (Omvedt 1994:10). *Dalit* movement has been considered diversionary by Communist and INC because of its primary agenda of social reform (Omvedt 1994:14).

Susan Bayly (1999) argued that caste system had never been fixed. According to her, British Raj probably affected caste more directly than any previous movement. Economic modernization implied 'rapid industrialization and physical mobility' had been instrumental ushering in Changes in *Jati* and Verna identities (263). The development of modern means of communication favored the territorial extension of the frontiers of caste and emergence of horizontal solidarities (Jaffrelot 2011:147). Omvedt (1994:13) viewed that the entire *Dalit* movement in particular and anti-caste movements in general, are to be seen from the value-oriented or anti-systemic movement's perspective. Nevertheless, it has not been accepted in India. These movements are seen basically from a reformist point of view by the dominant left intellectuals of India. Whereas, the academic, and social sciences, have focused their efforts on understanding caste as structure without dealing with the movement against it. This is the most unfortunate event in the history of social reform movement in the world. The colonial rule provided an excellent opportunity to create particular context where important theoretical approaches entered the new ideological arena to serve first as an ideological legitimation of the system of caste hierarchy with racial theorization of caste and replacing or supplementing an increasingly questioned religious basis, and then, reversed and turned against its earlier proponent, as a theory to oppose caste domination (Omvedt 1994:23).

Susan Bayly points out that many pre-independence ethnographers from Britain 'portrayed India as a composite social landscape in which only certain people, those of

⁶⁵ Cited in Gail Omvedt, (1994:10), Immanuel Wallerstein's original paper "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concept for Comparative Analysis. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, 4 (September 1974).

superior “Aryan” blood had evolved historically in ways that left them “shackled” by a hierarchical, Brahmanically defined ideology of caste. At the same time large number of other Indians, those identified in varying racial term as Dravidians, as members of “servile” classes aborigines, wild tribes, and those so-called “mixed” racial origin- were portrayed as being ethnologically distinct from this so-called Aryan population, and where not all thought to belong to a ranked Brahminical caste order.⁶⁶ Omvedt argued that theories of the caste exist at two levels, one is fragmented, unconscious rules of behavior while elaboration of caste ideologies seeking to maintain order forms another (Omvedt 1994 21).

Jaffrelot (2011:149) argued that these caste associations were transforming themselves into interests groups and gradually acquired the feature of mutual aid structure. They founded caste-specific schools and co-operative movements. The movement and transformational capabilities of caste groups could not be explained from the anti-caste movement perspective (Jaffrelot 2011:149). Marx and Engels said about the Indian religion is at once a religion of sensualist exuberance, and a religion of self-torturing asceticism, a religion of Lingam, and of the Juggernaut, the religion of the Monk and of the Bayadere (Marx & Engles 2011:12).

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in *Hindustan*, was actuated only by the vilest interest, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. However, that is not the question. The question is can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crime of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.⁶⁷

The main heroes of the anti-caste movement were Phule, Ambedkar, E. V. Ramaswami at the national level and Narayanswamy Guru in Kerala, Achhutanand in UP, Mangoo Ram in Punjab. All of them attacked the social, political and economic exploitation. M. N. Srinivas rightly observed that Phule’s reforms and his social thought facilitated the non-Brahman movement in Madras (Srinivas 1962:20). In many ways,

⁶⁶ S. Bayly, “Caste and Race in the Colonial Ethnography of India”, in P Robb (ed.) *The Concept of Race in South Asia*, Delhi Oxford University Press, 1995,p170. Cited in Jaffrelot 2011: 152.

⁶⁷ Karl Marx, On India, *Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CCCPSU*.p.17.

Dharma and caste were at the centre of Phule's thought. His opposition to Brahmanism did relate not only to *Varna* system but also various other practices within the *Hindu* system. He suggested, certainly, Phule had played a pioneering role in the formation of the Non-Brahman movement and more precisely in the ethnicisation of caste.

Jaffrelot considered Phule as the first *Shudra* leader who successfully avoided the trap of *Sanskritization* by endowing *Shudra* and *Ati-Shudra* with an alternative values system. For the first time, they were presented as ethnic groups that had inherited the legacy of an antiquarian golden age and whose culture was, therefore, distinct from that of the wider *Hindu* society; second, his efforts on behalf of the "low" castes were not confined to his caste men only; he wanted to unite all Bahujan Samaj, and especially the *Shudra* and *Ati-Shura* (Jaffrelot 2011:155): Phule was the first "low" caste organizer in the Indian history. In 1857, he was attracted to *Arya Samaj*⁶⁸ but he kept his distance from the movement because he did not trust the "upper" caste reformers.⁶⁹ Omvedt (1994), argued that the anti-caste movement was part of the broader revolutionary democratic movement in India along with other progressive movements like national movement and communist and socialist led working class and peasant movements during Anti-colonial struggle. Therefore, ideologically and organizationally, they overlapped and contended with these movements. Gandhism, which was prominent if not hegemonic in the National Congress, and Marxism, exemplified both in the communist and the Nehruvian left within the Congress, creates the context of the movement and its ideology (Omvedt 1994:13).

The leadership of social reform movements never received any space in the mainstream political and social movement in India. The separation of political movement as an anti-colonial struggle from the social reform movement was an interesting phenomenon. The dominance of caste *Hindu* and elite in the anti-colonial struggle never considered social oppression in Indian society as a major problem. The leaders of anti-

⁶⁸ O' Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology*, op. Cit. p.223 Cited in Jaffrelot (2011:156).

⁶⁹ J, Phule , "A Warning" in *Collected works of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule*, Vol. II, op. cit. p.25, cited in Jaffrelot 2011:156.

colonial movement were opposing British dominance but at the same time, they were oppressors in the domestic context. The hypocrisy of anti-colonial struggle revealed that they were opposed to British exploitation but not opposed to the national level social and economic exploitation. The reasons are very striking in this context. Indian national congress and other Left organizations were dominated by the “upper” castes and classes. The role of Ambedkar in this context becomes important. For Ambedkar, social reform was the primary task to fight against the cruel social practice of caste and untouchability.

IV. Brief Biography : Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar

Enlightenment in China started with challenging the traditional *Confucius* values and held accountable for blocking changes. The defeat in the Opium War in the hands of the West not only changed the perception of traditional China in favor of science and technology but also targeted the mythical pride of the ‘middle kingdom’. However, in case of India, Indian defeat in the hands of the West led to the rise of the *Hindu* nationalism rather focusing on the Western education system and science and technology. Mao and Ambedkar thought were significantly influenced by the Western thinkers rather than their own civilizations’ thoughts. Mao followed Marxism, developed its methodology and heralded a remarkable change in the social, political and economic system of China.

The Chinese Revolution and the People’s Republic are the creations of particular circumstances and experiences inherited and transferred from China’s past. Western imperialism in China and India had played an important role in shaping the thoughts of Mao and Ambedkar in their respective countries. The role that imperialism played was profoundly revolutionary, albeit unintentionally. Imperialism was revolutionary not only in the social and economic sense but also culturally and intellectually (Meisner 1977:3).

A major difference in the way the two leaders emerged in their respective countries is that Mao became the unanimous leader of China, whereas Ambedkar suffered social exclusion of his movement. When Mao started his movement, Ambedkar

was a famous critic of Indian customs and practice. Ambedkar was more successful than Mao in his early age. Mao adopted socialism but he was free from the chains of direct rule of colonialism. Social reform in China was taken seriously by every stream of society and movement. The convergence of the social and political movements since 1840 eventually culminated developed into the greatest success of Mao. During 1857-1947 neither Congress nor Marxists paid any heed to social reform in the Indian society. However, Ambedkar's prime task was to fight social and political oppression in India. The separation of the political from social movements limited the success of Ambedkar, primarily because of caste-based social order.

Ambedkar differed from Mao on the means of realizing the objectives. He advocated democratic means and believed that though democratic means are slow but are far more enduring, stable and permanent. Ambedkar also articulated that economic power is not only the source and basis of source of power.⁷⁰ He subscribed to a political order having rights, democracy, and social welfare. He was critical of an order based merely on rights while socialism without a commitment to rights would tend to be authoritarianism. Ambedkar's agenda of state socialism is akin to the concept of state socialism advanced by Lenin following the Soviet Revolution (Rodrigues 2007:149).

1. Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong was born in December 26th 1893 in a middle-class peasant family in Hunan province of China. Mao developed a bitter relationship with his father from his childhood over the issue of physical abuse meted out to his mother. Conflict with his father began at the age of five or six and it never ceased until he left the village. His mother influenced Mao a great deal; she was deeply religious, a Buddhist, and therefore, averse to any form of killing. During childhood and in his early youth Mao attended the Buddhist ceremonies with his mother, sang Buddhist hymns, and believed that nothing

⁷⁰ B. R. Ambedkar argued that economy is not only a source of power, but religion and social privileges are equally powerful in the society. "Annihilation of Caste: With A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi-1936", BAWs: 1: 2014: 44.

was more criminal than the killing of the living things and nothing more necessary for salvation than the giving of rice offerings to the poor (Payne 1961:29).

Mao wrote an article in 1917, and at least three major influences are clearly discernible from it. The first is that of the philosopher-patriots of the early seventeenth century while stigmatizing the mystical tendencies in their view, had weakened China and made possible the Manchu's conquest. They advocated martial virtue and on practical activity as means of redressing the situation. The second is the emphasis on strengthening the military and opposing foreign incursion which Mao seems to have absorbed particularly from Liang Chi Chao. The theme was almost universal among Chinese writers at the time whether reformist or revolutionaries. Third is the magazine Hsin Ch'ing Nien (New Youth) from which Mao drew inspiration on strength and courage that reinforce the influence of Yen Yuan and Liang Chi-Chin and the individualism that constituted the most modern and Western trait in his personality at the time (Schram 1963:11).

Mao primarily drew his ideas from Marx-Lenin's thoughts and applied than to the Chinese social context. Although Mao believed in voluntarism as a deviation from Marx's base and superstructure binary, that led him to push toward new Marxism i.e. Gramscian concept of hegemony. Gramsci and Mao believed that revolutionary cultural work posed a real problem for intellectuals, who has originated in the old order (Todd 1974:154). Mao became a controversial figure after the communist revolution. The programmes like GLF and GPCR were his ambitious programmes but failed. He was responsible for the manmade famine that led to the death of millions. GPCR was an agenda to counter rival political groups within the party. CPC declared him 70 percent correct and 30 percent wrong and the pre-1949 period a success and post-revolution period as a failure.

2. *B. R. Ambedkar*

B. R. Ambedkar was born into an “untouchable” family on April 14th 1891 in Mhow of central India. His father was a *Subedar* major in the Army of British India. Ambedkar’s mother died when he was six-year-old. The family believed in the devotional “Kabira” school of thought. This bhakti school of thought found consolation in the human attributes of compassion, benevolence and resignation to God (Keer 2011:8). Ambedkar faced the agony of the Brahmanical social order i.e. caste system and untouchability for the first time he came to know that his hair defiled the purity of the barber’s razor as buffalo-shaving as a better and holier affair than tonsuring a human being who was his co-religionist and his countryman (Keer 2011:13). Ambedkar faced exclusion in his school and never was allowed to sit with the rest of the students and drink water from the common pot. Ambedkar faced social and economic crisis in his early life. Ambedkar went for higher education to Columbia University where he completed his Ph.D. in Economics. Then, he moved to London School of Economics and completed his M.Sc. and D.Sc.. Even his higher education could not make him equal in the eyes of common *Hindu* to be treated as an equal human being. When Indian National Congress and Left were fighting with the British for equal rights. Ambedkar was fighting for equal social rights within the *Hindu* social order.

B. R. Ambedkar became politically active soon after coming back to India in the twenties. He gave a memorandum to the Southborough Commission in 1919 where he demanded universal franchise for all Indians. He appeared before Simon Commission in 1927 and required special safeguards for the depressed classes. In 1927, he organized Mahad Satyagraha to claim the rights of Untouchables to take water from the public tank. He campaigned for entry to Kalaram Temple in 1930. Then, he went to participate in the Round Table Conference in 1931-32 held in London, which was organized to discuss the progress of future constitution of India. He demanded separate electorates and got it but later he was forced to withdraw it due to the opposition by Congress and Gandhi. His interface with Gandhi proved that he is the only leader of the depressed classes in India.

In 1936, Ambedkar formed Indian Labor Party and in 1942 Schedule Caste Federation. He has been appointed chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India in 1947. He was also the first law minister in the interim government of India. Apart from drafting the Indian constitution, he wrote important *Hindu Code Bill*, which was revolutionary aimed at emancipating *Hindu* women. In his later phase, he inclined toward Buddhism and wrote “*Buddha and His Dhamma*” and “*Buddha or Karl Marx.*” He converted to Buddhism two months before his death.

V. Summary

The Western intervention in China and India led to the nationalist resistance movement. It was revolutionary in the social context and exploitative in the economic realm. The intervention led to social change in the oldest civilizational states and societies. Modernity stepping into the East through the Western intervention was phenomenal in the 20th century. The change that had not been possible in the society for the last two thousand years had been possible soon after the intervention of the West. The fabric of the two countries had been set in motion by the process of the industrialization of the East in general and China and India in particular. The introduction of modern ideas, science and technology in China and India was revolutionary. The purpose of the Western countries was not to emancipate the East but to exploit them. Nevertheless, economic exploitation led to the advancement of the productive forces and changes in the society.

The social and political movements were carried out to fight against the external and internal enemies. However, in the case of India, political movements that were fighting with the colonial power kept silent on issue of social oppression within. The social movement that was fighting against social evils like caste and untouchability were sidelined from the mainstream political movement. The annihilation of caste and untouchability had never been the agenda of the Indian National Congress and Left movement in India. In China social and political movements were carried out at the same time. However, in the case of India, political movement was carried out to end the British

rule in India but kept suppression of Indian masses alive. Chinese social and political movement alliance were together while in India these two were separate.

China's social situation was very conducive to ensure the success of the peasant revolution. However, in Indian society with deep-seated hierarchy and economic inequality with complex religious sanction was not ripe for substantial changes. Class-based society in China was not only conducive to lead a political revolution but also provided an opportunity to strengthen the class consciousness of the masses. Mao's task was easy but it was not the same with Ambedkar. With this discussion on the broader context that facilitated the germination and evolution of various ideas in China and India as a backdrop, the next chapter delineates the context of social thought of Mao and Ambedkar.

Chapter 3

The Social Thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar

“Class Struggle will continue in the cultural sphere of socialist society”- Mao Zedong in 1966.

“History is witnessed that political revolution has always been preceded by social revolution”- B. R. Ambedkar in 1935.

I. Introduction

Mao and Ambedkar were two great social revolutionaries of the 20th century in Asia. Mao emerged as the tallest revolutionary in the Chinese modern history while Ambedkar was an eminent academician and social reformer in India. Their thought influenced not only their respective societies but also acquired importance in the rest of the world. Mao hails from middle-class peasant family while Ambedkar from a “lower” caste known as *Mahar*, classified as “untouchable”. Mao never went through the agony of caste-based oppression and untouchability, which Ambedkar faced it in his entire life. Mao’s social status as a peasant was second in the Chinese social hierarchy while Ambedkar’s social status was the last in the ladder of *Brahmanical* caste-based social system.

Their ideas pertaining to the social thought not only provide an explanation of Chinese and Indian societies but also ways for ushering in change. Their social activism manifested their methodologies used for social change in their respective societies. The methods for change had left indelible imprints on Chinese and Indian masses. Both Mao and Ambedkar were iconoclastic, subversive as well as constructivists. Reform remained

a fundamental feature of their approach. Mao's "Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution" (GPCR) was intended to eradicate the bourgeois elements in post-revolutionary society while Ambedkar's theory of social revolution included "The Annihilation of Caste" through the destruction of Varna system as well as Brahmanical Hindu Religion.

Mao and Ambedkar were pragmatic in their methods for social reform in which Mao superseded his predecessors.¹ Pragmatism and critical thinking were the main premises of social thought of Ambedkar and Mao. Use of violence was necessary as a principle for Mao while contextual for Ambedkar. The influence of Western modernity, scientific methods, and technology had their imprint on their social thought. Ambedkar considered social reform a prerequisite for political and economic democracy and his proposition for the annihilation of caste and burning the Manusmriti was iconoclastic in India. The burning of Manusmriti by Ambedkar and destroying the "Four Olds" by Mao were two epoch-making and revolutionary moments in India and China respectively. Reconstruction of egalitarian society was a central aim of both the leaders. The debate on base and superstructure became inevitable to scrutinize success of Cultural Revolution. The shift in Mao's position with the experience of the political revolution had been a major issue of debate.

With this brief introductory overview, the current chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the "theory of social change" of Mao and Ambedkar. It delineates the philosophical roots of Mao and Ambedkar's theory of social change. Idealism and Materialism are discussed in the second section to identify the philosophical origins of the theory of social change of Mao and Ambedkar. Mao's departure from materialism to idealism in the Cultural Revolution is also assessed locating it in the socio-historical context. Destroying "Four-Olds" and Burning Manusmriti as part of the iconoclastic movement are part of this section. Third section deals with the reconstruction of society in Mao and Ambedkar's thought. The reconstruction of societies is based on egalitarian values.

¹ Andrew Walder (1977) argued that Mao was idealist more than Materialist. Voluntarism is accepting the human agency in the materialist change in the society. It goes against Marxist dialectical materialism for historical change.

II. Theory of Social Change

Social change had primacy in the thought of Mao and Ambedkar. Their theory of social change demanded a total destruction of the society based on inequality. Ambedkar employed reason and rationality while Mao viewed violence to be necessary for social change. Social Change was common for Mao and Ambedkar. Destroying the “*Four Olds*” and burning *Manusmriti* were the similar instances in bringing about social change. Mao and Ambedkar’s theory of social change included a radical transformative agenda. For Mao, it meant to uproot the feudal and bourgeois culture while for Ambedkar elimination of caste culture is central. In “*The Annihilation of Caste*”, he posited that the attempt for political liberation from the British would not lead to the real liberation (*Swaraj*).² He declared that social change was necessary for successful political change.

1. Mao’s Theory of Social Change

The central question of the Marxist theory of social change was the debate between ‘*base and superstructure*’. The key theoretical problem of the Marxist theory of social change was that politics and ideology cannot exert any influence in the economic realm (Knight 2007:157). Most of the scholars who have studied Mao have highlighted that Mao has deviated sharply from orthodox Marxism through his emphasis on the superstructure. Moreover, his attributes to human consciousness favours a significant capacity to influence the economic realm. Mao was, thus guilty of voluntarism, idealism, and utopianism and was consequently a most unorthodox Marxist (Benjamin Schwartz 1955, Schram 1969, Maurice Meisner 1977, and Fredrick Wakeman Jr. 1973, Knight 2007).

Mao’s view on social change was very significant for the practice of Marxism in Chinese society (Knight 1983, Mark Selden 1971, Schram 1969). What influence do economics, politics, and ideology exert on society? How a theoretical perspective on

² M.K. Gandhi wrote ‘*Hind Swaraj*’ and published in 1909. British banned its Gujarati version while English translation ‘*Indian Home Rule*’ was allowed. *Swaraj* become very popular term in Anti-Colonial Struggle as commonly used by Indian National Congress.

social change influences a political party or the state's approach to the formulation of policy? Mao was deeply engaged in mastering the Marxist theory in order to apply it in the Chinese context (Knight 2007:18). Mao in his writings "On Contradiction" (1937); "On One Party Dictatorship" (1938); and "On New Democracy" (1940), tried to address the problem of social change and its causes. Mao ultimately attempted to discover an appropriate role for politics, ideology and culture within the orthodox Marxist theory of social change (Knight 2007:159). Knight argued that Mao's theory of "*New Democracy*"³ laid the foundations for social change and claims that both ideology and culture have a limited role, contrary to materialism. Mao successfully tried to be a pragmatist, not dogmatist (Knight 1983:24-25).

Mao went further and accepted class struggle in cultural sphere and used violent means to resolve the contradictions in a socialist society. The advocacy for Cultural Revolution led by Mao made him less materialistic and more pragmatic and idealist. Mao's move from materialism to idealism was a pragmatic move and made him a more practical leader. Mao's Cultural Revolution was part of the class struggle in the cultural and ideological field. Mao called for destroying *four olds*, old culture, old ideas, old habits, and practices. The move from the theoretical to practical arena was quite a mechanical one. Mao was consequently branded a "*Voluntarist*", an idealist and utopian for his ideas that had deviated from the presumed economic determinism of Marxism (Walder 1977:103, Knight 2007:47). As Lucian Pye opined that Mao grew up to turn Marxism on its head by glorifying voluntarism, and human will-power in the historical process (Lucian Pye 1976:117). Many scholars have misinterpreted Mao's understanding of the Marxist theory of social change. They suggested that Mao turned his back on the materialist philosophy of Marxism, glorifying the capacity of ideas to transform society (Knight 2007:9).

³ Mao wrote "*On New Democracy*" in 1940. He argued that Chinese revolution consists of two stages. First phase is democratic revolution and second, socialist revolution. (Online: Web) URL: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm.

Marxist's materialist interpretation of history neglected the cultural facets of society such as ideology, philosophy, religion, tradition, which undoubtedly influenced man's activities in all the epochs. For instance, Engels elaborated the materialist conception of history which underscores the centrality of the production and reproduction of real life, but he rejected to believe that it is the only determining factor (Ranadive 1983:4). Mao's socialist revolution was first consciously worked out revolutions in history, with leading forces fully conscious about their aims and objectives (Ibid. 3).

The social thought of Mao can be divided into two phases, pre-revolution (1949) and post-revolution. Marxist materialist influence on Mao's social thought was high in the pre-revolution period, while idealism more robust during the post-revolution period. Nevertheless, he continued with the wave of social reform that started in the wake of defeat in the Opium War. The upsurge of the social reform in China started since the 1840s (Mao 1940).⁴ Mao's early writings reflect his consistent fight against superstitious and religious practices. During the period of intellectual revolution, Mr. Science, and Mr. Democracy were the slogans that became very popular in China.⁵

The intellectuals vehemently attacked traditional social values in favor of modern values. They tried to destroy the outdated social and cultural structures that had been an obstacle to the establishment of democratic and modern values.⁶ Mao acknowledged the revolutionary role of the "May Fourth Movement" and its iconoclastic nature in favour of social change even before the formation of the communist party (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:323). It was an attempt to broaden the social reform movement and facilitate intellectual revolution. The process of modernization through Westernization necessarily had a greater role in the destruction of the old social structure and later required that changes be introduced during the communist movement.

⁴ Mao Zedong in "On New Democracy" explains the starting process of the social reform called Chinese revolution is part of the World Revolution at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm.

⁵ Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy was the slogan of "New Youth" Magazine started by Chen Duxiu, founding member and head of the Communist Party of China (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:267-68)

⁶ New Cultural Movement led by Hu Shi, a student of John Dewey and pragmatism, also became a leader in the advocacy of scientific methods of thought and criticism. The value of science in technical studies had long been incontrovertible (Fairbank and Goldman 2006:266-67).

Mao in “New Democracy” argued that there were different stages of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The Opium War, the War of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Sino-Japanese War, the Reform Movement of 1898, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, the Revolution of 1911, the May Fourth Movement, the Northern Expedition, and the War of Agrarian Revolution were part of the bourgeois democratic revolution. These stages are inherent components of the New Democratic and Socialist Revolution. Mao acknowledged progressive element of the bourgeois movements for larger solidarity. He further argued that all these stages bear the character of a bourgeois-democratic revolution because they wanted to push out the external intervention but were not intended to establish socialism through a democratic revolution. Mao considered this process as an unavoidable course of history (MSW: 2:1965:237-238).

Mao maintained that the prerequisite condition for the accomplishment of a democratic revolution through reforms in social conditions in such a way that they can retain the egalitarian values in the social relations. Mao was not hesitant to consider the progressive character of the bourgeoisie revolution as part of the larger socialist revolution. Moreover, he finally accomplished the socialist revolution successfully. The bourgeois democratic revolution was not only opposition to the external enemy but also feudal attitude in the social relationships. The bourgeois democratic revolution was instrumental in educating masses about socialism. In a sense, bourgeois democratic revolution was for social reforms. Social change is a prerequisite for socialist revolution therefore, without social reform, socialism cannot be accomplished.

Mao considered that the social classes like working class, peasantry, intelligentsia, and all the progressive sections of bourgeois, revolutionary workers, peasants, soldiers, students, and intellectuals, and businessmen, are the requisite forces to accomplish the anti-imperial and anti-feudal democratic revolution under the leadership of the workers (MSW: 2:1965 :238). Mao tried to make the movement broader to counter the imperialist enemy. He further argued that the role of intellectuals in the Chinese Democratic Revolutionary movement was very important, which was clearly manifested in the both Revolutions of 1911 and May Fourth Movement of 1919. The relationship

between the intellectuals and masses was necessary; else intellectuals achieve nil (MSW: 2:1965: 238). Mao considered the role of intellectuals as that of a prominent one and Gramsci's idea of the organic intellectual. The social movement that was being carried out during this period had consensus among the nationalists and revolutionaries on the necessity for change in the society.

Stuart Schram opined that Mao emphasised on practical knowledge. Mao's changing ideas of dialectics on class struggle, the political and psychological roots of his ideas were remarkably more important than the intellectual ones (Schram 1986). The importance of Mao's ideas lies in their applicability to the practical situation of China. Womack (1986) argued that Mao operated under ideological framework of pragmatism for improvement of ideological parity and the elimination of bourgeois influences (36). The comparison of China's social reform movement to that of India seems to be more strong and vibrant. Mao considered social reform movement inevitable phase as part of the New Democratic Revolution for socialist revolution. But in India, anti-colonial struggle by Left and nationalists rejected the need for social reforms. The Indian National Congress and Left never took part in the social reform and were mainly focused on opposition to the exploitative colonial oppression. In this context, Ambedkar's social reform movement was being part of his version of democratic revolution gains centrality.⁷

i. Mao's Idealism and Materialism

Mao's social reform struggle had certain elements idealism, utopianism and voluntarism.⁸ Several scholars viewed it was a clear departure from dialectical materialism. Fann opined that the materialism and idealism are the primary method of inquiry rather than theories in Mao's thought (Fann 1972:115). Marx argued that he had

⁷ Gail Omvedt (1994) made the proposition that Ambedkar's social movement was part of the Democratic Revolution.

⁸ Andrew Walder (1977:103) discussed Mao's voluntarism in greater details.

turned Hegel's idea of dialectics upside down.⁹ Hegel's dialectical idealism subverted by Marx interpreted history through the process of dialectical materialism. Mao had also turned Marx's materialism upside down to make theory more pragmatic. Marx propounded in 'German Ideology' that it is the material condition that shapes the consciousness and not vice versa i.e. consciousness shapes material conditions. Dialectical materialism is the core principle of the Marxist theory. The mode of production decides the social relationships. The social relationships, culture, ideas and consciousness are the products of the material condition, which forms the base and shapes superstructure. Marx in *German Ideology* (p.39) articulated that the ideas of the ruling class were the ruling ideas in every epoch. The class that controls material force in society forms its intellectual force. Therefore, the proletariat must exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeois in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture.¹⁰

Bob Avakian (2008) views that further development of the Marxist theory constitutes yet another Mao's immortal contribution to the theory of Marxism. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness.¹¹ The material condition determines the consciousness but not the other way around. The major shift from classical Marxist to the New Left developed that the emergence of a preoccupation with the role played in the society by ideas, ideologies, and culture. The chief concern of many New Left intellectuals has been to explain how Western ruling class secures the willing consent of the governed to legitimize the bourgeois rule.¹²

Nick Night (2007) argues that a significant aspect of the study of Mao has been the lack of conformity between Mao's thought and orthodox Marxism. Mao in his version

⁹ Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* criticised the German Idealist tradition.

https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_German_Ideology.pdf.

¹⁰ Mao Tse-tung, "Chairman Mao on Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Peking Review*, September 26, 1969, p. 9. Cited in Bob Avakian 2008:210.

¹¹ Marx, Preface and Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, FLP, Peking 1976, p.3, cited in Bob Avakian 2008:211.

¹² E.G. Ralph Miliband, "The State in Capitalist Society" (London, 1969), *New Left Review*, cited in Nigel Todd 1974:148

of Marxism, was not in accordance with some core principles of Marxism. The economic determinism is one of them. Mao's understanding of the relationship between economic base and ideological superstructure was unorthodox (Knight 2007:47). Mao believed that if superstructure i.e. ideas and culture hinder the progress of economic base then change in political and culture became necessary. The general understanding of history was that matter determines the ideas. However, accepting the influence of idea on matter does not go against materialism. Rather than it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism (MSW: 1:1965:335-336).

Mao tried to search for a theoretical formula for social change where superstructure could have a role other than that of the economic base. The argument in favor of superstructure has its capacity to influence the development of society through obstruction and facilitation a change occurring within the economic base. Mao's inclination to perceive historical causation, a dialectical process was reciprocal between base and superstructure (Knight 2007:162). Mao acknowledged the contribution of superstructural institutions like party and state to the base. However, he could not elaborate this case so profoundly (Knight 2007:166).

Roland Lew (1975) argued that "On New Democracy" is an important and paradoxical document, in which Mao defined "three levels of society, economic, political and cultural, and explores the relationships among them." The given politics and economics manifested the particular culture with an ideology. Both have reciprocal relationships in terms of the influence upon each other. He further explained that "politics is the concentrated expression of economics. It is our fundamental view of the relation of culture to politics and the relation of the politics to economics."¹³

Lucian Pye (1976) argued that "Mao grew up to turn Marxism on its head by glorifying human willpower in the historical process."¹⁴ Mao went further by accepting peasantry as a progressive force against the presupposed view of orthodox Marxism. He

¹³ Takeuchi, ed., Mao Zedong ji VII, 149; "*Selected Works of Mao tse-tung*" Vol. 2, 340; Mao Zedong Xuanji II, 624, 330-31. In the original text, Mao does not refer to economics as the base (Jichu). Cited in Knight 2007:167.

¹⁴ Lucian Pye (1976) focused on the psychological factor of Mao's success in China. He said Mao was more charismatic than Marxist.

considered peasantry including industrial proletariat that would lead to a modernizing socialist revolution (Knight 2007:47). Stuart Schram (1989) posited that non-conformity of Mao with the Marxist and Leninist doctrines led him to contextualize and adapt Marxist ideas to the Chinese context.

The major debate between Karl Wittfogel's "*Legend of Maoism*" and Benjamin Schwartz's "*The Legend of the 'Legend of Maoism'*" was about Mao's new brand of Marxism. Mao outlined, Schwartz (1960) argued, the new brand of Marxism because of completely different socio-historical condition of China from Europe. It was, he added, non-conformist from classical Marxist view. He further opined that Maoism was a different view of thought i.e. political, organizational principles, military strategy, and economic programs from the classical Marxism. Maoism was a result of regional context which was not thought about by Marx. Wittfogel (1960) strongly opposed this interpretation and argued that world communism is a monolithic movement and Chinese communism inspired from Soviet communism. Wittfogel rejected the existence of Maoism and considered Chinese communists as part and parcel of Marxism of their Soviet patrons.

Walder (1977) demonstrates that Mao's articulation of reciprocity between economic base and superstructure was not a departure from basic conception of Marxism. Mao's analysis of Marxism and its base-superstructure binary pushes his thought toward pragmatism (116). Pfeffer and Walder introduce a critical and more flexible study of Mao's pragmatism. It had evaporated under the glare of economic pragmatism and rationalism that have dominated in both China and the West during the 1980s and 1990s (Cited in Knight 2007:158).

Todd (1974:148) compared the thought of Gramsci and Mao and tried an intense analysis of the ideological superstructure during the interwar decades. Despite the fact that they had no contact with each other, both thinkers reflected some important similarities in their own areas of thought. Todd (1974:150) articulates that intellectuals had provided for the core of the membership of the Chinese Communist party. Intellectuals were the force behind the foundation of the CCP, Li Ta-Chao was himself an

intellectual as one of the founding members. In the absence of the working class, the Chinese intellectuals modified Marxism as suited to the Chinese conditions. Meisner (1967:251)¹⁵ identified that intellectuals had the important job of bringing enlightenment and leadership to the mass movement. The Chinese revolution is an outcome of the intellectuals in terms of mobilization and enlightenment.

Todd (1974) observes that Mao and Gramsci, despite their departure from Marxism deal with similar problems and perceived solutions even before the revolution had occurred. Mao considered cultural advancement as a necessary prerequisite for the socialist economic foundations. Mao wrote when the superstructure (politics and culture) hinders the development of the economic foundation, political and cultural change becomes necessary (Fann 1972:112).¹⁶ Mao in *New Democracy* (1940) articulated thus;

We, communists want to change China that is politically oppressed and economically exploited into a China that is politically free and economically prosperous. We also want to change China that is being kept ignorant and backward under the sway of the old culture into enlightened and progressive China under the sway of a new culture.¹⁷

Mao advocated new culture for New China. He considered old culture detrimental to the progress of society. He opined that the old culture was incompatible with the new political system. Mao gave much importance to cultural change along with political advancement in his idea of New Democratic Revolution. Todd (1974:152) posits that Mao outlined the cultural condition of China. Further, he argues that prevalence of foreign imperialist culture with the passive semi-feudal *Confucian* culture gave rise to the native bourgeois culture. It is considered dangerous for the development of social movement. Mao and Gramsci focused on the role of intellectuals in the counter-hegemony. Mao explicitly said that intellectuals should support the CCP and they should read Marx and Lenin's thought and should work for the masses by subordinating themselves to the party. Mao clearly posits that proletarian culture serves the proletarian

¹⁵ Maurice Meisner (1967), "Li Ta-Chao and the Origin of Chinese Marxism", Cambridge, Mass.p.251

¹⁶ Mao Tse-tung, "*On Contradiction*" MSW: 1:1965:326.

¹⁷ Mao Tse-tung, "*On New Democracy*", MSW: 2: 1965:340.

cause, an expressed cause through culture would serve the political perspective (Todd 1974:155). Mao focused on the local culture, not bourgeois culture, but the point is how egalitarian it was. How can there be a proletarian culture without communism? How can proletarian culture be progressive in the feudal mode of production?

Mao (MSW: 3:1961: 69-70) at the “*Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* (1942 May)”, said that there are different fronts for the liberation struggle, that are pen and the gun, the cultural and military fronts. Moreover, he acknowledged that the military constitutes the core of the liberation struggle but only relying on it is not sufficient. Therefore, we need a cultural army, which would play an indispensable part to defeat the enemy. The Cultural Army has shaped and supported the CCP in the Chinese Revolution. China’s feudal and comprador culture that serves the imperialist aggression, but weakens their influence. Marxism means living Marxism, not Marxism in the word only. Then we can also solve the problem of the sectarianism (MSW: 3:1961:79). How to achieve the purpose of educating the masses? Then our comrades should raise the standards, or should we devote ourselves to popularization? Our literature is for the peasants, workers and soldiers, therefore, popularize it among these classes. Raising standards means making them more advanced from their level. What we need to popularizes what is needed and accepted by the peasants, workers and soldiers. Before the educating these classes, we need to learn from masses (MSW: 3:1961:80).

Walder (1977) discussed Mao’s voluntarism for significant social change through a revolutionary strategy. It considered human will as the primary causative agent in producing social change.¹⁸ First, the relative importance of Mao on the subjective human effort in activist politics over objective economic force to obtain social change was praiseworthy. Second is that Mao’s method was contrasted with Marx’s deterministic interpretation of the world history and identifies the role of social classes for the specific stage (Walder 1977:103). He clearly observed that “Marx and Mao, presenting Marx as economic “determinist”, and Mao as a “Voluntarist” rife with Hegelian and *Confucian* influences” (Ibid. 109). Further, Walder (1977) argued that Marx was so determinist as he

¹⁸ Holubnychy (1964), *Complex Analysis of Mao thought*, cited in Walder 1977:103.

has been projected, and he gave no significant role to superstructure for producing a change in the society (116).

Schram (1969:266) argued that Mao faced a situation where Marxist economic determinism was not useful. Mao's voluntarism constituted political and human factors which he inherited from Lenin. '*Sinification*¹⁹' was a necessary condition to make Marxism more adaptable to China. Mao's Marxist theory marched from abstract theory to the Chinese backward society through practice. Mao has established a new method as "voluntaristic" for analysis and social change. He considered human will to be a crucial factor for change rather than the economic base (Walder 1977:104).

Wakeman (1973:294)²⁰ in "*History and Will*" focused on self; 'Neo-Kantian's concept of reason creating a social form that liberates the self from the customs. Mao's commitment was more than Marx for continuous and unending historical change. Mao acknowledges the human agency and self in creating a consciousness for liberation which offered him more importance in the history of Marxism. Marx considered class consciousness for the formation of a class. The binaries like 'determinism versus voluntarism', superstructure versus base and human will versus objective economic forces, were resolved in the political thought of Mao and his experiment in China. Nevertheless, Marx never considered these terms as different but as independent factors (Walder 1977:106).

Schram primarily concentrated on Mao's unique mass campaigns for political mobilization. Therefore, he declared Mao to be extreme '*Voluntarist*.' The role of voluntarism in mass mobilization is a significant aspect of Mao's political strategy. Holubnychy (1964:3-4) disagreed with this conception and argued that Mao's idea of practice was absolutely deterministic as he asserted that human consciousness decisively rooted in the mode of production. Making the Marxist theory more adaptable to the

¹⁹ Schram (1963:113-14), A Communist is a Marxist Internationalist, but Marxism must take on a national form before it can be applied. Mao "On the New Stage", Report to the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party from October 12 to October 14, 1938) in Schram (2004:4:458).

²⁰ Fredrick Wakeman, (1973), *History of Will: Philosophical Perspective of Mao Thought*, Berkley: University of California Press. Cited in Walder 1977:104-105.

Chinese condition is seen from the most deterministic point of view. Theory and practice are seen in compatible mode (Ibid).

Engels explains that the common “undialectical conception” of a determinist interpretation steadily overlooks the importance of superstructures’ elements as a possibly autonomous foundation of social change. He accepted that base was not isolated from the influence of superstructure. It is superstructure which produced social change. Engels argued that state is a crucial part of the superstructure which shapes the economic base decisively. It can increase the production and channelise in a particular direction. Moreover, through misguided policies, it can impede the economic progress that could be disastrous for both the base and the superstructure (Marx and Engels 1955:442).²¹

On Mao’s Cultural Revolution, Althusser propounded that Mao in “On Contradiction” explained the elementary scheme of Cultural Revolution which was a project to bring about the alternative modernity (Kang 1995:250). Cultural Revolution was obviously the culmination of Mao’s idea of class struggle at the superstructure level. Althusser argued that issue of the mutability of contradiction in the Marxist dichotomy of base/superstructure has been brought up by Mao in his “On Contradiction”. Mao’s theoretical realization of the GPCR was in the articulation when he advocated the revolutionary role for theory and superstructure (Kang 1995:250).

Mao’s other approach to the masses was that he told the artists and writers to learn the language of the masses to know their thoughts and feelings. Mao (1942:72-73, Chan 2003: 125) proposed that the revolution must depend on an army with guns. However, he argued that the military alone was not enough. Therefore, the cultural army was an indispensable part of the revolution to defeat the enemy. He acknowledged the contribution of cultural army during the May Fourth Movement. Its main goal was to shape China and the revolution by rolling back the influence of the feudal and comprador culture, which serve imperialist aggression (Chan Adrian 2003). The nature of culture should be progressive and efficient; it can also be effective when it is directly taken from

²¹ Karl Marx (1955), *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, Cited in Walder 1977:111-112.

people. Mao emphasizes on the art and literature and culture that were a major part of his strategy for the mobilization of masses for revolutionary work.

Althusser found the opportunity in Mao's Cultural Revolution to address the serious reductionist and economic determinist problem associated with classical Marxism. For him, binary of base and superstructure was a crucial problem. First, Althusser's complex body of works focused on 'problematic' of critique of capitalist modernity' by looking for substitutes in theory and practice of Lenin and Mao. He saw Stalin failing in building an alternative modernity. Therefore, Althusser moved toward the GPCR. Second, Althusserian 'problematic' perceived the point for reading of the problematic of Mao's thought. It was an attempt to interpret Mao's 'problematic' through a 'symptomatic reading'. The central 'problematic' of Mao's thought consists of Cultural Revolution and its vital link to build an alternative modernity. Third, Mao's problematics and the contemporary Western critical theories of modernity and postmodernity invariably focus on the issue of culture, as exemplified by Althusser's "Chinese connections" (Liu Kang 1995: 235-236). Liu Kang discussed Althusser's problematic of critique of capitalist modernity and the link between alternative modernity and Mao's cultural revolution. He further explained that the relationship between these two goes against the position in "On Contradiction." He has focused on two features of Mao's contradiction as understood and expounded by Althusser as particularity of contradiction and 'mutability of contradiction' (Liu Kang 1995:236).

Althusser's eagerness about Chinese revolution and particularly Cultural Revolution was a consequence of search for a substitute to Stalinism in Post-Stalin USSR. Stalinism assumed economism by way of heavy industrialization and bureaucratization, thus deviant from the socialist and communist goal of democracy. For Althusser, Chinese revolution was a left-wing critique of Stalinism. Mao attempted an alternative modernity in Cultural Revolution in China. Althusser's misperception of historical conjecture and even misjudgment of the Chinese Revolution then become comprehensible from the perspective of modernity or critique of modernity (Liu Kang 1995:240).

Althusser's two essays 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' and 'Materialistic Dialectic' were about Marxist materialist dialectics. Overdetermination was Althusserian 'problematic of critiquing' determinist rationality. Mao's 'On Contradiction' provided sufficient base for his project of constructing alternative modernity. Althusser's attraction to Mao's idea of contradiction became perfect for providing alternative modernity and served his purpose of 'problematics of critique' of capitalist modernity (Liu Kang 243).

Liu Kang (1997:69) opined that Gramsci was not only thinking of hegemony and Cultural Revolution, but Chinese Marxist Mao applied Cultural Revolution in practice. Qu Qiubai and Mao in the 1920-30s at the same point of the time Gramsci formulated the concept of hegemony. In the 1960 upheaval in the West i.e. France and US and East and China, i.e., Cultural Revolution had a significant influence on the Cultural Studies. Althusser rediscovers the values of both Gramsci and Mao's "non-economist" and "anti-deterministic" that prioritize superstructure and cultural change (Liu Kang 1997:70). Gramsci's theory of hegemony and Chinese Marxist Theory of Cultural Revolution are mutually illuminating.

Althusser argued that the process of modernization has replaced both Communist and Cultural Revolutions in the 1950s. The teleological and economic determinism underlying several models of modernization and modernism was widely accepted afterward in China and abroad. Present PRC leadership's point of view, Marxism was only for foregrounding the idea of modernity and legitimize the regime rather than any dream and objective of socialism. In the primary stage of socialism of socialist market economy, it has been used for justification of a predominant discourse and the ideological states apparatuses for economic development. It is forestalling political and ideological transformation. The pro-capitalist modernization ideologies rejoiced by the final integration of China into capitalist development and modernity. Mao's ideas and practice including Marxism has been rejected in the post-revolutionary time (Liu Kang 1995:254).

2. Ambedkar's Theory of Social Change

Ambedkar followed the tradition of pragmatism which has its root in the tradition of Left-Hegelian²², Critical Marxists and John Dewey.²³ He considered the role of human agency and consciousness to be crucial in changing the history of mankind. He also opined that historical progress is not only a reflection of materialistic change but also the result of active people's efforts. State, politics, and the individual have a significant impact on the course of history. Ambedkar articulated that the decision of human beings do play an important role in the materialist progression of history (BAWS: 1:1979:213). Ambedkar followed the critical and pragmatic method to nudge the Indian society toward social change. He made rationalism the base for critiquing Indian society and pragmatic method for bringing about the changes. Ambedkar's method of social change includes criticizing society based reason, rationality, and morality. The caste struggle is also the class struggle but in the field of culture.²⁴ Caste struggle is not only reduced to culture but economy as well (Mathew: 2007:25).

Ambedkar identified that social oppression was more prevalent than political and economic exploitation in India (BAWS: 1:1979:68). Ambedkar not only promoted the destruction of oppressive society but also stood in favor of constructing an egalitarian society. Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity are core principles of an ideal society, according to Ambedkar. Fraternity is a fundamental and foremost feature of Ambedkar's idea of a perfect society. He argued that ethics and morality are requisites for an egalitarian society. For the progressive political system, progressive society is required for retaining that system (BAWS:17-III:2003:480). Ambedkar strongly criticized the Indian caste system and untouchability. He considered the destruction of Hindu religion to be

²² Young Hegelians prepared the ground and opened the way for Karl Marx (1818-83), notwithstanding his criticism of Hegel. He called himself as the Representative of Young Hegelian Philosophy and ironically if not scathingly, as the Critical School. Young Hegelians are Left while Old Hegelians are Right (Strydom 2011:24-25).

²³ Pragmatism took heritage from Left-Hegelians tradition, thus function in the sense of mediating theory and practice in social life (Strydom 2011:25, 36, 37). John Dewey was Ambedkar's teacher and he influenced Ambedkar's thought (Mukherjee 2009:345).

²⁴ Ambedkar considered "Caste is enclosed class". He argued that caste is not only division of labour but also division of labourers. Caste struggle is very much similar to class struggle but is not same. B. R. Ambedkar, "Castes in India", BAWS: 1:1979: 15.

necessary for the annihilation of caste and abolition of untouchability (BAWS: 5: 2014:68). Ambedkar burnt the *Manusmriti* in a public protest.²⁵ As it approved not only social oppression with coercive measures but also provided legal and religious sanction with graded inequality and hierarchy in the society (BAWS: 17-I: 2014: 24). Ambedkar believed that cultural and social changes are compulsory either before or after the political revolution.²⁶

Ambedkar in his famous essay “*The Annihilation of the Caste*” elaborated on how caste system had retained unequal social and political, economic relations in the Indian society. Caste is part of culture and society besides being part of the economic relations (Mathew: 2007). Ambedkar argued that history bears out the proposition that political revolutions have preceded by social and religious revolutions. Even Indian history supports the same conclusion (BAWS:1:1979:43). Ambedkar further argued that can a serious student of economics reject the other influencing aspects of society than economics. He made a strong argument in favor of the culture and religion that affect the society as a whole (Ibid. 44).

Mao in his cultural revolution tried to reduce the gap between manual and mental labor, but Ambedkar went further and advocated the need for dismantling the stigma attached to manual labor in the Indian society. The dignity of labor was crucial for Ambedkar. Gopal Guru posited that Ambedkar’s notion of dignity was ingrained in the division of labour and resultant rotational process. Ambedkar’s conception of dignity of labour is linked with the principle of purity-pollution that stamp stigma on the physical. The “upper caste” mind seeks to stigmatize not just the body but the mind as well. That is the most interesting reason as to why Ambedkar emphasized the dignity of mind as well

²⁵ Ambedkar burned *Manusmriti* at Mahad on 25th December 1927. It was part of the Iconoclast movement led by Ambedkar in modern India.

²⁶ In “*Annihilation of Caste*” Ambedkar argued that cultural and social changes are necessary either before or after political revolution. BAWS: 1: 1979.

(Guru 2014:224).²⁷ Ambedkar located dignity of labour in the transformation of man from nature to culture (Ibid):

Social change was primary for Ambedkar. The methods that Ambedkar employed for social change were different from that of Marxists. He emphasized on social aspect of oppression in the Indian history. The caste oppression was so much so that annihilation of caste was first priority for him. Ambedkar in “Revolution and Counterrevolution” argued that Indian history is nothing more than the struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism (BAWS:3:1987:267). The battle was fought between egalitarian and oppressive cultures. The class struggle in the social arena had been a unique phenomenon in the Indian history. He viewed the rise of Buddhism as a revolution in ancient India and compared it with modern French Revolution. Although it began as a religious revolution later it became a social and political revolution in India.²⁸ Brahmanism represents the oppressive culture while Buddhism enunciates egalitarian values.

Ambedkar began a debate by articulating that social revolution was a prerequisite for successful political change. He advocated for the annihilation of the caste in India. In his essay “*The Annihilation of Caste*” in 1936, attacked the caste system and its sanctified authority of Hindu religion. The whole idea is that the Indian Brahmanical social order is devoid of reason, rationality, morality and fundamental principles of society. He started criticizing the Indian National Congress for putting the agenda of social reform in the backseat during anti-colonial struggle. Indian nationalists believe that their priority is to uproot the British colonial power. The elite social groups opposed political oppression by the British on one hand but were silent on the social oppression within society on the other. Ambedkar proposed annihilating Hindu religion with its religious text, Vedas and Shastras. Another stream of movement was socialist, which was the target of Ambedkar’s attack for not taking up social movement as a key goal. Ambedkar posed a very pertinent question to the Socialists and Marxists in India for neglecting the idea of social change as

²⁷ Gopal Guru (2014), “Two Conceptions of the Dignity of Labour: Gandhi and Ambedkar” in Akeel Bilgrami ed. (2014), *Marx, Gandhi and Modernity*, Essay Presented to Javed Alam, New Delhi: Tulika Books,

²⁸ Ambedkar, “Revolution and Counter-Revolution”,f BAWS: 3: 151-429.

a pre-condition for political change and mobilization. He considered that social oppression is crueller than political and economic oppression. So the change in the political sphere leads nowhere without a change in the society.

i. Ambedkar's Idealism and Materialism

Brahmanism is a spirit against the idea of equality, liberty, and fraternity. It has developed through a historical process of Brahmanical religion. Brahmanism by and large stands for graded inequality besides creation of caste system and untouchability, the formation of oppressive social system, stigmatization of physical labor and division of the village society.

Ambedkar's thought on Brahmanical social system emanated from the critical and educational perspective. Ambedkar was a grave critic of the Hindu Brahmanical system. Effecting change in social structure and cultural fabric of society that promote inequality in the society are fundamental to Ambedkar's thought. Ambedkar started his theoretical, academic and political activism by critiquing unequal social and cultural aspects of the society. Ambedkar viewed social reform as requisite for any change in the society as a whole. Moreover, political change will go in vain without changes in the society.

Creation of caste system is an important part of Brahmanism. Ambedkar had argued in his "*Castes in India*" that endogamy maintained the caste system. Endogamy was not only developed as it had become a popular form of culture but had also become legally applicable. For maintaining endogamy, three features were required Sati, enforced widowhood and child marriage.²⁹ The Brahmanical social order practiced these three features to maintain the caste system. Ambedkar felt the necessity to attack the old traditions and culture to create a new culture. Ambedkar pointed out that law (Manusmiriti) and religion became part of the Indian culture, in which the caste system is a unique feature, not only in India but also in South Asia. Ambedkar's fundamental

²⁹ B. R. Ambedkar, "Caste in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development", Paper read before Anthropology Seminar of Dr. A.A. Goldenweiser at The Columbia University, New York, USA. On 9th May 1916, *Indian Antiquary*, May 1917, vol.XLI. BAWS:1: 1979:1-22.

concern was to destroy the caste system. Ketkar (1909)³⁰ opined that caste system is a vast one, both theoretically and practically, and warned that as long as caste in India does exist, if Hindus migrate to other regions on Earth, Indian caste system will become a world problem.³¹

Ambedkar rejected the old racial justification of the caste system and further argued that the population of India is a mixture of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians, and Scythians. In the beginning, they might have come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, but due to the unceasing exchange, they evolved a common culture. Ambedkar further argued that there was no thorough amalgamation of the various stocks which make Indian homogeneous, but cultural unity is the sole criteria of Indian homogeneity. Ethnically, Indians were heterogeneous, but cultural unity made them homogeneous (BAWS:1:1979:6) However, homogeneity in case of caste became a too difficult a problem. The parceling of the homogeneous community is the caste system, and the “explanation of the genesis of caste is the explanation of this process of parceling” (Ibid.).

After the critical evaluation of caste system, he concluded that absence of intermarriage and securing endogamy was the essence of caste (Ibid. 8). Exogamy has been the fundamental feature of Indian tribal society; hence it proves that the endogamy came from outside of India. If exogamy was Indian creed and none dared to break it, how could endogamy become too prevalent in India? The superimposition of endogamy over exogamy was a creation of caste system in India (Ibid. 9). The fundamental tendency of any group is to assimilate with another caste goes reverse (Ibid.10). “Origin of caste refers to the origin of a mechanism for endogamy.” (Ibid. 14).

Ambedkar (BAWS: 1:1979:15) expounded that “caste is an enclosed class”. He further observed that an individual is a member of a particular class, and society is consisting of classes, and they may be social, economic and intellectual. It was the class

³⁰ Ketkar (1909), *The History of Caste in India*, Cited in Ambedkar, *Caste in India*, BAWS:1979:1.

³¹ Ketkar (1909), *The History of Caste in India*, p.4. Cited in Ambedkar, *Castes in India*, BAWS:1979:1:4. Ketkar prediction came true after hundred year, British Parliament outlaws Caste based Discrimination as Indian diaspora live in a good numbers. For more see, (Online: web)- <http://dsnuk.org/2013/04/25/the-uk-parliament-outlaws-caste-based-discrimination/>.

that first made itself into a caste (Ibid. 15). He forwarded the theory that the prevalence of the customs in the *Brahmin* priestly class made this encirclement. The harsh adherence to these customs and the social supremacy assumed by clerical class in all ancient societies are adequate to demonstrate that they were the inventors of abnormal association”, established and preserved by unnatural means (Ibid). Some classes closed the door for others while others found closed against them. First is the psychological interpretation while the other is mechanical, although, they are corresponding. These two reasons explain the wonders of caste formation (BAWS: 1:1979:18).

Ambedkar elaborated that imitation of the same practice spreading to other groups. The features of the imitation are: (1) that the source of imitation must enjoy prestige in the group and (2) there must be numerous and daily relations among the members of the group. He observed that the cruel practice of Sati, enforced widowhood, and child marriage were sacred to maintain a passion for high social status (Ibid. 19). Moreover, those who imitate accordingly also retain their high social status, but those who maintained distance from these cruel practices either sidelined or relegated to “lower” castes. These violent practices played a significant role in the making of the so-called “upper” status. Those who believed inflexible social relations were accorded the “lowest” status among all Castes. A prominent feature of the caste system was not economic status but brutal social practices in the society and started with the subjugation of women. Ambedkar emphasized how violence had also played a role in these customary practices. Later, its acceptance in the public conscience made it more tenable and secured.

Ambedkar had identified the concept of caste and class together. The role of the class in the initial stage and formation of the caste and cultural status later, led to permanent dominance of one class over another. Caste played an imperative role maintaining the class-based economic relations in India. The destruction of caste would also lead to the elimination of the class-based exploitation in India. Class creates caste for defending itself. It is a fortification of class-based exploitation (Ibid. 22).

The comparison of Gramsci and Ambedkar provide some interesting insight to understand the cultural oppression in the society. Ambedkar and Gramsci have been major figures in the subaltern and cultural aspects of the study. Cosimo Zene (2013) has compared Gramsci and Ambedkar in the context of *subalternity*. He has argued that in terms of Gramscian methodology 'integral history' was applied to the study of *subalternity* in South Asia, then Ambedkar and *Dalits* were to play a relevant role in the various accounts (Zene. 2013. XVI). Gramscian concept of 'subalternity' as holistic approach involving a socio-cultural critique of *subalternity*, clearly points toward the movement of the *Dalits* from self-pity to self-consciousness, most forcefully expressed in the experience of *Dalit* women (Rao 2003, Rege 2006, Narayan 2006 in Zene: 2013: XVII).

Ambedkar was clear in his mind that the road to liberation and salvation (*Mukti*) includes political, social, legal, constitutional, religious and economic components and it was a long and painful journey. Gramsci and Ambedkar's moral fabric of their human and political commitment to Dalit/subaltern brings them very close. They are upholding Gramsci's intellectual and moral reform and Ambedkar's social and moral consciousness of society (Zene 2013:1). Zene argued that Gramsci and Ambedkar both found inspiration from Marxism. They criticised religion but considered it culturally and politically important. Both assessed the presence of subaltern through social, cultural and historical critical analysis, and sought to negotiate a rightful place within the state, society and history for these excluded individuals (Ibid). The subaltern would provide the alternative as the active protagonist of their destiny, to achieve consciousness and collective will aided by the role of the leaders and intellectuals (Ibid).

Much stigma is attached to the labor of *Dalits*. Thus, Ambedkar appealed to the regime of rights, requiring political action as a way to insert *Dalits* into the global history of dehumanization. While the engagement with global history becomes a potent tool in the hands of Ambedkar, it tells us also that India is not the only place where stigma flourishes (in Zene 2013:18). *Dalit* thought was truly experimental and was among the

first to take up and creatively transform and vernacularize Marxism.³² The stigmatization of the labor is a fundamental phenomenon to understand the dynamics of caste and class system.

Gopal Guru's (2013) comparison of Gramsci and Ambedkar is much more enlightening in understanding the role of the Indian society and politics and in shaping and orienting Ambedkar's thought and its application in the Indian society. Further, re-contextualizing Gramsci in this way also helps us to access both ethical stamina and political calibre of Indian society vis-à-vis Ambedkar.³³ Guru held that Gramscian concepts of organic intellectual and hegemony had a bearing on understanding both the ethical and political character of Indian civil society. The re-development of these ideas to the context of India enables us to judge whether the Indian civil society is hostile or hospitable to the idea of recognizing Ambedkar as an organic intellectual. Moreover, it opens up the possibility of evaluating whether Indian society has developed the ethical stamina and acquired the political imagination to accept Ambedkar as a thinker of universal status (Guru 2013:88).

Gopal Guru observed that Gramsci made two important points, first; organic intellectuals have a role in the history of bringing the systemic crisis to pave the way for a transition to socialism. It is like a transformative agenda before them. Second, they also have a moral challenge to develop both intellectually and politically from being specific intellectuals to becoming universal intellectuals. Therefore, keeping Ambedkar in this framework, Guru's purpose was to provide an alternative vision of emancipation and to highlight the 'epistemological transgression' on which he certainly embarked, constituting an essential part of his conception of what Gramsci called the organic intellectual and counter-hegemony (Guru 2013:89).

Further, Gopal Guru observed that two core Gramscian categories, hegemony and organic intellectual provide the context for expansive understanding of Indian society which can form the basis for a comparative perspective between Gramsci and Ambedkar

³² Cited in Zene 2013:18.

³³ Guru 2013:87, in Zene ed. 2013.

(Guru 2013:90). Guru endorsed that Ambedkar and Gramsci both were subversive, and Ambedkar's caste background does not sabotage Gramscian categories. Dealing on How Indians neglect Ambedkar's contribution as an organic intellectual (Ibid.).

In pre-colonial days, there was no need for *Brahmins* to deny the intellectual claim of Dalits. The hegemonic claim of Brahminical social order on non-*Brahmins* was complete. However, *Dalit* intellectual with transgressive capacity "upper" caste intellectuals were forced to take recognizance of the calibre of Dalit thinkers. This "upper" caste recognition was expressed through denial (Guru 2013:92). Guru identified the limits of the organic intellectual in the caste-ridden society. The limited role of the intellectual in the caste based society played a vital role in sidelining Ambedkar from the mainstream society. In case of Mao, his acceptance in the Chinese society was broader than Ambedkar's in Indian society.

Gopal Guru opined that cultural assertion had been through imitation of the cultural hegemon to offend the tormentor. The process of Sanskritization acquires a negative power that can then be deployed to challenge the cultural power of social dominant. The social history of *Dalit* assertion indicates that the repeated attempts have been made to subvert the tormentor. It has been possible through imitating the tormentor's cultural symbols. The subaltern seeks to annoy the master through the imitation of the master's lifestyle. Imitation denies the dominant an exclusive hold over cultural power that flows from cultural symbols. Thus, the emergence of negative consciousness is the initial subjective condition needed to challenge the hegemonic class (Guru 2013:95). Negative consciousness plays a significant role in shaping the fully grown *Dalits'* consciousness, Gopal Guru argued. Imitations of cultural practices of tormentor were prohibited to the "lower" social status group people, and their assertion emerges where they managed to perform them in their social status.

Ambedkar argued that Brahmanism stands against the reason and morality. His entire edifice of the arguments is based on reason and morality. He stated that a Hindu would prefer to be inhuman rather than touch an "untouchable" (BAWS: 5:1979:29). Ambedkar attacked the *Hindu* social order with reason and morality. Ambedkar's

criticism of the Indian society is very critical and moral. *Dalit* has to perform his duties without remuneration (BAWS:5:2014: 22). “The Untouchables by reason of their helplessness cannot refuse to carry out these duties and *Hindu* village does not hesitate to exact them since they are so essential to the maintenance of his prestige” (Ibid.23). Punishment for these offences is collective though an individual may have committed the offence (*Ibid*). The cultural safeguards were developed to maintain the cultural oppression in the caste-based exploitation system. The fundamental feature is that legal and religious principles were part of the common culture and consciousness.

Ambedkar argued that agriculture would be the main source of living in an agrarian economy, but even this opportunity is not available for untouchables in a Brahmanical society. First, purchase of land is beyond their means, and second if an “untouchable” has money to buy land, he has no opportunity to do so. Indian villages that violently exclude “untouchables” from having any right of being a human being, and survival for dignified life. In some parts of India, the “untouchables” who were employed at the “Touchables” agriculture field, paid a wage as *Gobaraha*. It shows the moral standard of the “Touchables” and question of the dignity of the “untouchables”;

“*Gobaraha*” means privy corn contained in the dung of an animal. When the crop is fully grown and reaped and dried, it is spread on the threshing floor. Bullocks are made to tread over the corn in order to take out the corn of husk by the pressure of their hooves. While treading over the corn, the bullocks swallow up the corn as well as the straw. As their intake is excessive, they find it difficult to digest the corn. Next day, the same corn comes out of their stomach along with their dung. The dung is strained, and the corn is separated and given to the Untouchables workmen as their wages that they convert into flour and make into bread (BAWS:5:2014:23-24).”

This is an example of *Brahmanism* where labor has no respect and remuneration. This experience of the wage labour and caste system produced an ultimate example to learn about interdependence of untouchables and their undignified labour, class and caste, the base, and superstructure. Thus the prime task of Ambedkar was to eliminate the stigma attached with labor in Indian society. Stigma is not only attached to labor but also to the people in the Indian society. Brahmanism is not limited to culture, economy and wage labour but also to the division of village and their living place in the society.

This practice gave worst status for “untouchables” in the village and highlighted the nature of an Indian ideal religious village unit. “The *Hindu* social order is based on the inexorable law of Karma or destiny which is fixed once for all and can never be changed. This destiny has no relationship to the individual. An Untouchable, however, superior he may be mentally and morally, is below a Touchable in rank, no matter how inferior he may be mentally and morally (Ibid. 25).” Indian society which was a village society was institutionalized for practice of caste and untouchability. Ambedkar opined that Indian “the Indian village is the very negation of the concept of Republic” (ibid. 26).³⁴ There is a sharp division between Touchables and Untouchables and deep antagonism between two in the Indian village and society. “When the Touchables and Untouchables meet, they meet not a man to man, individual to individual but as members of the group or as nationals of two different states” (Ibid. 63).

Ambedkar compared untouchability with Slavery and Serfdom. He argued that the class compositions in other societies were based on economic and social consideration. He identified that the Slavery and Serfdom had no foundation in religion but Untouchability was rooted in the Brahmanical religion. Untouchability does produce a social and economic advantage to the *Hindus*. This is the broad explanation why Slavery and Serfdom have vanished and why Untouchability has not.³⁵ Further, he explained the violence against the Untouchables in the society:

If the Hindu observes Untouchability, it is because his religion enjoins him to do so. If he is ruthless and lawless in putting down the Untouchables rising against his established order, it is because his religion not only tells him that the established order is divine. Moreover, sacrosanct but also impose upon him a duty to see that this established order is maintained by all means possible. If he does not listen to the call of humanity, it is because his religion does not enjoin him to regard the Untouchables as human beings. If he does not feel any qualm of conscience in assaulting, looting, burning and other acts of atrocities against the untouchables, it is because his religion tells him that nothing is a sin that is done in defense of the social order (BAWS: 5: 2014: 89-90).

³⁴ Ambedkar disputed with the conception that Indian villages are small republics. He explained the relationship between Untouchables and Touchable.

³⁵ Ambedkar wrote “Untouchables and Slaves”, BAWS: 5:2014:9-18.

Those who comparing slavery with Untouchability to defend its practice must understand the difference that legally the slave was not a freeman but socially he had freedom necessary for his growth while legally, an untouchable was a freeman but he had no freedom for development of his personality (BAWS: 5:2014:91). There is a very obvious contradiction; to explain this paradox one needs to understand the role of religion in this context. While religion was on the side of the slaves and it has been against the Untouchables. The Roman law declared that the slaves were not a person, but the religion of Rome refused to accept that rule. The *Hindu* law professed that the Untouchables were not persons, contrary to Paganism; the *Hindu* religion not only acknowledged that law but extended it to the social field with its all apparatus (BAWS: 5:2014: 91-92) Ambedkar further argued that *Hindus* have been lacking conscience and morality and posited that:

Not having a conscience, the Hindu has no such thing in him as righteous indignation against the inequalities and injustice from which the Untouchable has been suffering. He sees no wrong in these inequities and injustice and refuses to budge. By his absence of conscience, the Hindu is a great obstacle in the path of the removal of Untouchability (BAWS:5:2014: 99).

The argument is based on the interpretation of the *Manu's* text. *Hindus* knew three principles of social interaction in daily life. The first, prohibition against inter-dining; second, prohibition against intermarriage; and third prohibition against physically touching classes of people. Irrespective of education and intellect, *Hindus* followed these three principles as sacred principles. The first two barriers make up the Caste and third made Untouchability. Ambedkar concluded that abolishing untouchability is not possible without the annihilation of caste.³⁶

Another feature of the *Hindu* social order is based on the principle of graded inequality. The principle of graded inequality is the most important factor in self-preservation, although, previous three principles are important but are not enlarged in self-preservation. The way graded inequality function is explained thus;

³⁶ B. R. Ambedkar “*The Annihilation of Caste: With A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi*” Undelivered Speech prepared for Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal of Lahore 1936, proposed that Untouchability will not go until caste exist and caste cannot be destroy without destroying Vernas and it is impossible to destroy Verna without destroying Hindu Shastras. BAWS:1: 2014: 23-96

The higher is anxious to get rid of the highest but does not want to combine with the high, low and the lower lest they should reach his level and be his equal. The high want to overthrow the higher who is above but does not want to join hands with the low and the lower, lest they should raise his level and become equal to him in rank. The low is anxious to pull down the highest, the higher and the high, but he would not make common cause with the lower for fear of the lower gaining a higher status and becoming his equal. In the graded inequality, there is no such class as a completely unprivileged class except the one that is at the base of the social pyramid. Privileges of the rest are graded. Even low is privileged class as compared with the lower. Each class being privileged, every class is interested in maintaining the social system (BAWS: 5:2014: 102).

Thus, Ambedkar indicated that there was no possibility of formation of solidarity among the weaker sections or oppressed in the Brahmanical society. To have solidarity among the oppressed one must destroy the Brahmanism first. Brahmanism not only aim to contribute oppression programme but it also has a goal to retain it for forever. It is a system with a mechanism for perpetual social, economic and cultural exploitation. It subverts any possibility of revolt and resistance or any change of formation of solidarity among exploited.

Castes are a new form of the Varna system that derives its sanction from the *Hindu* religious sacred book Vedas, which are propagated to be infallible. Therefore, it has religious endorsement and by a virtue of it has become sacred and eternal. To the *Hindu* caste is holy and caste is everlasting (BAWS:5:2014:102). Ambedkar advocated for three class alliance (*Shudra*, *Ati-Shudra*, and Tribes) for mobilization against this cruel sacred practice of *Hindus* religion. It is not that no attempt has been made to unite them. During 1919-1953, the non-Brahmin Party tried to unite all the non-Brahmin castes into one political organization to destroy the dominance of the *Brahmins* (BAWS:5:2014:115).

Another attempt was made for the unity of the Labour classes of different castes by the Communists. They preached that there is an identity of interests of the working class, no matter to what community they belong. There is a need to develop class consciousness and then form a class unity. As long as they are united they could employ the terrifying power of the numbers to break down the economic order than the immediate downfall of the social order of the *Hindus* is bound to go to pieces. However,

the practical result is that the *Shudra* and criminal³⁷ and primitive tribes are more hostile to the Untouchables than they are to the *Brahmins*. Indeed, it is the *Shudra*, who acts as the police force of the *Brahmins* for repelling the attack of the Untouchables on *Hindu* social order.

If the Hindu social order was based on inequality, it would have been overthrown long ago. But it is based on the graded inequality so that the *Shudra* while he is anxious to pull down the *Brahmin*, he is not prepared to see the Untouchable raised to his level. He prefers to suffer the indignities heaped upon him by the *Brahmins* to join the untouchables for general leveling down of the social order. The result is that there is nobody to join the Untouchables in his struggle. He is completely isolated. Not only he is isolated, he is opposed by the very classes who ought to be his natural allies. This isolation is one more obstacle in the removal of the Untouchability (BAWS:5:2014:116).

Ambedkar further argued that unless Touchables realized that what a tragedy as for the Untouchables, and what a crime it is of the *Hindus*. The cruel system of the Hindu social and religious life is worst in the human history. Brahmanism is thus a tenacious exploitative system with the social, economic, political and cultural component. It is also fully protected from revolt and resistance.

III. Social Reforms in Practice : Iconoclasm

Mao and Ambedkar were keen on social change. In bringing about change, they emerged as two iconoclasts of their kind. Iconoclastic movements in China and India have unleashed potential for social change. Mao tried to destroy the feudal social order and four olds during Cultural Revolution while Ambedkar burnt the sacred religious text at a public ceremony. The iconoclast movement in modern India to a different plane. Ambedkar attempted for the annihilation of caste.

1. Destroying Four Olds

Mao called for the destruction of Four Olds and advocated the elimination from Chinese society. He considered that they maintained the bourgeois mind and false

³⁷ This is a term that is used by the British during the Colonial era.

consciousness in the masses. Red Guards were asked to attack Four Olds, i.e. old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. Although, Mao called for the elimination of these unwanted bourgeois elements in the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee in 1966 (Weatherly 2006:74). Red Guard channelized their energy in destroying four olds.

Mao's Socialist Revolution of 1949, was the rejuvenation of China. Although China began to modernize since 1850. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it received robust impetus. Mao's real task started after the revolution when he established communism in the truest sense. Mao's real test began after 1949, and later he realized that the major hindrance to the establishment of communism was identified after the socialist revolution. The mindset is embedded with culture was not disappearing even after change in the establishment of socialist means of production. Mao started an ambitious programme to build Socialist China, Peoples' Commune, freedom of expression and reform in education and finally started the Cultural Revolution in 1960. The inevitable consequence of the negligence of mindset led to the maintaining of unequal social relations and made egalitarian values ineffective.

Mao's failure in the 'People's Commune' programme resulted in harsh criticism.³⁸ It was the programme after the revolution intended to realize communism in the truest sense. For this programme, Mao started collectivization of land into the communes, consisting one thousand to twenty thousand families owing the same field. The common education, common workplace, common dining and lodging were started as part of the ambitious programme. It was an attempt to build the culture of the collectives. The communes also had competition for achieving high production and getting awards from the government. In this programme, the local party officials and bureaucrats had arbitrary power in the decision-making process. Therefore, the bureaucratization developed at the local party level and disastrous events followed due to the consequences

³⁸ Frank Dikottor (2010), and Jung and Halliday (2005) criticised Mao for his failure of the economic program i.e. People's Communes. This led to the internal party conflicts and prepared the ground for starting the GPCR.

of the same attitude. Mao tried to create collective culture through people's communes as without collective culture, communes will fail drastically.

The programme's failure was a huge disaster in the human history of the world. The attitude of the local party leaders led to man-made disaster in China. The collective farming turned to be places of negativity in the countryside. Natural calamities and man-made disaster in the period led to starvation and suicides of the farmers. Due to the failure of program approximately 45 million people died. Lin Piao replied to Mao that you and I were responsible for the mass deaths of the people. Then he was soon attacked (Dikottor : 2010).

Failure of the People's Communes and criticism from the rival groups led Mao to start the Cultural Revolution. The whole argument was that those feudal elements were still in the minds of the people, and there was a need to eradicate through the Cultural Revolution. Mao realized that the bourgeoisie tendency has resulted in a regressive attitude which leads to being dealt with the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was another programme of Mao, which also failed and paved the way for the revisionists to come to power.

Cultural Revolution was last resort of Mao for political empowerment of masses. Cultural Revolutionaries targeted the four olds; old thought, old culture, old tradition and old habit. It was an attempt to create new political culture and democratize the relationships between students and teachers and farmers and party officials. Collective work ethic and critical values developed in the Chinese village through education in this decade (Dongping Han: 2008:123).

Dongping Han (2008) came forward to rescue Mao from the criticism of Cultural Revolution in a case study of Jimo County wherein he rejected the allegation on Mao for mass destruction. He successfully challenged the Deng official line of criticizing Mao's Cultural Revolution and focused on the political and cultural problems encountered in this region. The central argument is that a collective economy cannot function well without a democratic culture.

Han's central theme is that the efforts to attain social equality and to ensure economic development are not contradictory as proved to be in the case study of Jimo County (Dhongping Han:2008). In this study, he provided substantial evidence of empowerment of farmers through the democratization of relations of farmers and party officials in Jimo County. Educational infrastructure and equal education with no discrimination were promoted. It was an attempt to advance democratic and egalitarian values for the sustenance of communism.

The Chinese government's official evaluation of Cultural Revolution serves to underline the idea, currently very much in vogue around the world, that efforts to achieve development and endeavors to attain social equality is contradictory. The remarkable currency of this idea in China and internationally is due, at least in part, to the fact that such an idea is so convenient to those threatened by an effort to secure social equality. This study of Jimo County has challenged this idea. Jimo County, during the Cultural Revolution decade, shows that measures to empower and educate people, at the bottom of society, can also serve the goal of economic development.

Han (2008) is not critical towards Mao's justification of Cultural Revolution without criticizing him for taking the leap from semi-feudal society to socialist society. Mao had to pay the cost of a leap to overcome the gap between feudalism to Socialism through Cultural Revolution. Mao's Sinification of Marxism in the Chinese context, where society was still in premature economic and social relationship to afford the communist economic and social relations, consequently led to Cultural Revolution. The orthodox Marxism like Maoist's previous to Cultural Revolution did not make any attempt to understand the cultural aspect of the society. Cultural and social relationships in the society are also determinants in the economic relationships. Mao's need for beginning Cultural Revolution also proved later by subsequent theoretical justifications.

Han's (2008) argument goes against the classical Marxist theorization of base-superstructure debate substantially and argues that without social reform and equal education, there is no possibility of the establishment of socialism in any society. Han focused on the revisionist practices of CCP cadre developed after 1949. The communist

revolutionaries became rulers; they saw the luxurious appeal, sumptuous five-course meal, shiny cars and special schools, clinics and catering to the urban elites. Some of them became envious of the life of wealthy urbanites (Han: 2008:10).³⁹ In this new context, the rural poor, like the rural spouses of many veteran Communist Party leaders, became dispensable. Just as many communist party leaders divorced their former rural wives after they entered cities, so the communist party divorced itself from former allies in the countryside.⁴⁰

In comparison to the rural-urban life, rural citizens were second class citizens in spite of collectivization of land and development of village infrastructure. The peasantry was still treated as stupid and ignorant *Xianbalao* (a derogatory term for rural residents) under communist rule. Rural people's income lagged behind those of the urban residents. Urban workers enjoyed free medical care, and their family members could get fifty percent refund for their medical expenses from the state. Farmers had to pay their medical bills. There was no health insurance in China's rural areas, and there was little access to modern medical care before Cultural Revolution. Urban workers had paid holidays, weekends, paid sick days, insurance against injury and retirement pension. Farmers had none of these benefits. The government rapidly expanded educational opportunities in urban areas. However, in the countryside like Jimo, many rural children were denied formal education for lack of space in the schools (Han:2008:11).

In 1953, critique from the Liang Shuming, a conservative social reformer, asserted how "peasants were in the ninth hell while the urban workers were in the ninth heaven." His dissent aroused the anger of Mao, who lashed out at the Liang with ruthless

³⁹ Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong Xuanji (The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung)* Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1977, Vol. 5, 329. Mao mentioned in his speech at the second meeting of the Eighth CCP Central Committee on November.15, 1956, that in 1949, many CCP leaders demanded to raise salaries because capitalist had five dishes at their meals. Cited in Han 2008:10.

⁴⁰ There are no statistics regarding communist leaders divorcing their former rural wives, but it appears to have been a common phenomenon. There is a film *Niheng Dongxia de Shaobing (Sentry under Nihng Lights)*, which is a story about the PLA in the first week after entering Shanghai. Chen Xi, one of the main characters of the film, began to compare his rural wife with the urban young women and began to despise her. It is symbolic of the mentality of the victorious army. Cited in Han 2008:10.

sarcasm.⁴¹ After the revolution, corruption and abuse of power became widespread among the rural Communist leaders. In the Jidong (the Eastern Part of Jimo) 404 out of 625 CCP cadres, more than 66% were found guilty of corruption charges in anti-corruption and bureaucracy campaign (sanfan yundong) in 1951.⁴² In January 1953, Ji Chuanfu, the deputy Militia Chief of Jidong beat up 288 people, forced 107 people to kneel down, and caused four suicides in 14 villages.⁴³ The CCP cadres were supposed to be different from the old type of officials they were expected to be servants of the people (Han: 2008:13).

It was comparatively easy to destroy the power base of landlord gentry's class by distributing their land and wealth among poor villagers. However, it was expected to take time to evolve a new political culture in the place of the old one. Therefore, the communist built a new house on the ruins of the old with the revolution, but the air of the old society still permeated this new house. The former oppressors of the village slide into certain habits well known to traditional upholders of law and order and needed to be treated culturally.⁴⁴

Huang Yanpei suggested to Mao that it was comparatively easy to uphold morality and integrity before the victory, but it was difficult to maintain the same integrity after achieving it.⁴⁵ It only proves that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely". The collectivization of the means of production did not transform everybody into the equal owner of collective and did not empower the farmers politically or economically to the extent expected. Instead, it turned farmers into dependents of the collectives in the same way it turned factory workers into the dependents on the modern

⁴¹ Mao Zedong, "Pipan Liang Shuming de Fandong Sixiang" ("Criticizing Liang Shuming's Reactionary Thought") Mao Zedong, Xuanji (Selected Work of Mao Zedong) vol.5:107; in this article Mao did not answer Liang Shuming's criticism of the communist rural policy directly. Instead he attacked Liang's History and integrity. Mao's attack was highhanded and unreasonably harsh. Cited in Han 2008:11).

⁴² Jimo Xianzhi, 33:39, cited in Han 2008:12.

⁴³ Jimo Xianzhi, 35, cited in Han 2008:13.

⁴⁴ Hinton, Fanshen, 225, cited in Han 2008:13.

⁴⁵ In 1946, attracted by report of Yenan's unique political climate, six democratic personages (minzhu rensbi) from Chongqing, the capital of the nationalist state, travelled to Yenan to inspect what was going on in the communist controlled areas. Huang Yanpei, one of the six visitors, made some remarkable observations.

industry (Han: 2008:15). The attitude of the local party officials post-1949 period, clearly pointed out by Dongping Han (2008) in the following words:

“Leaders in these Jimo villages were frequently arbitrary and ruthless in managing village affairs. To protect their authority, they made and enforced harsh and arbitrary rules and regulations in the village. During the food shortage of 1959-1960, when villagers were hungry, village leaders stipulated that anybody caught stealing collective crops would be fined ten times then a quantity he/she stole. Of the 268 households in Xiaopu village, 84 households had been fined. Of 84 households that were fined, 30 percent were reduced to begging outside of the village.⁴⁶ Subjected to official abuse, some villagers even choose suicide as a way out. Yu Jiushu, a villager from Henan village, Lingshan Commune, Jimo County was recruited as a worker by a state enterprise during the Great Leap Forward. When the Leap failed he lost his job and had to return to his former village. However, the leader in his village refused to give him his share of grain on the ground that he did not bring his grain ration paper back with him to the village. Yu Jiushu was forced to share with his mother what was only one person’s grain ration. A full share of grain ration was hardly enough during the time of grain shortage; a half share of grain ration made life literally intolerable. In the end, Yu Jiushu’s mother committed suicide to avoid the starvation of both her son and herself’.⁴⁷

The attitude of the Communist cadre was not very different from the previous ruling class. The arguments given in favor of the Cultural Revolution turned out to be contradictory, in such a way that questioned the entire attempt of revolution. The very argument of authoritarianism is justified to eradicate these mentalities rather than adopting the same attitude and manifesting it in a more comprehensive way. The logic of the authoritarianism collapsed when the same communist-bureaucratic mechanism would reflect the old traditional power-based psyche.

Cultural Revolution was Mao’s last resort after previous campaign failed to do job. It was different from all previous political campaigns. However, for the first time in the CCP history, it circumvented the local party bosses and stressed the principle of letting the masses empower themselves and educate themselves. In the period of Cultural Revolution, four olds were attacked i.e. old thought, old culture, old tradition and old

⁴⁶ Jimo Xianzhi 34:54. Cited in Han 2008:16.

⁴⁷ Jimo Xianzhi, 34:56, cited in Han 2008:17.

habits. The proclaimed goal of the campaign was to change old ways of thinking and old habits. The Red Guards argued that the superstitious ceremonies and practices were sheer deception and harmful to social progress (Han:2008:53). One of the clichés of cultural revolution was that Mao's thought would become a weapon in the hands of ordinary people in transforming the old world with a new one. Mao's works promoted the idea of equality between leaders and the led, ultimately promoted the political empowerment of ordinary villagers (Han 2008:65).

Mao's essay "Serve the People", had several direct messages for the masses. First, it advocated that CCP and army have no other goal than to serve the people. Second, that CCP and CCP officials should welcome the criticism and act on it. Third, it declares that everyone in the revolutionary ranks is equal regardless of rank and position held. This essay encourages common masses to criticize fearlessly local party leaders and other bureaucrats (Han 2008:66-67).

Rebecca E. Karl (2006:696) opined that to eradicate the historical imprint of the culture from the minds of the people in the Cultural Revolution was a very difficult task and puts it thus;

The conceptual and actual project of erasing the temporal incommensurabilities between culture as an unevenly lived experience of a historical movement that the now-ness of politics as a demand for transformative actualization can be thought and tried only at the expense of abolishing the complexities of the quotidian every day of populations and peoples unevenly absorbed into the political economy of society and value. This would seem, is an impossible and possibly utopian project (Rebecca E. Karl 2006:696).

It was Mao's attempt to use the same method which was successful to bring change in the economic and political areas. Without paying much attention to that political and economic change were quantitative while cultural was qualitative. Mao did make a mistake of using same method for quantitative and qualitative change.

Lung Chang Young (1973) critiqued the mainstream scholars like Schram and Meisner for ignoring the social thought of Mao. He draws the line of Mao's social thought through the division of period into two parts: pre-1949 and post-1949 PRC. In the Pre-PRC phase, Mao was influenced by the economic determinism of classical

Marxism. In second phase, he slightly changed through the experience of the communist regime about the culture, which provides justification for the Cultural Revolution. In this period, he gives importance to the social status and inequality issues like gender inequality, manual and mental labor.

In the Post-PRC-1949 period, Mao moved from the economic determinism to the social and cultural aspects of the society. There were reasons for Mao to move from economic determinism to culture to deal with rapidly transforming problems of social inequality in China. Mao did not only redefine the concept of class but also moved beyond classical Marxist and Leninist definition of class. He considered class status and power as equally unique aspects of the reality of social disparity (Lung Chang Young 1973: 52). Mao redefined that “class” as not only an economic concept but also cultural category. Significantly, it stands for the division of population by ideology (Starr 1971:616). Therefore, the bourgeois class will continue long after the downfall of old economic order, the simple reason was that its ideology has permeated in the superstructure as well as base in the society. The continuous revolution was to synchronize the rate of alteration in the superstructure with that in substructure. Mao asserted, “The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, anti-Marxist ideology will continue to exist for a long time. We still have to wage a protracted struggle against it” (Lung Chang Young 1973: 52).

“To perpetuate their domination at the top, the group “relied first on knowledge, secondly, on money, and thirdly, on the military. These three categories correspond to the basic categories of the power resources are normative, utilitarian and coercive” (Lehman 1969).⁴⁸

Mao’s assumption essentially was that Cultural Revolution was necessary because of prevailing state and party apparatus was controlled by the bourgeois ideology and thus was producing to generate capitalist style socio-economic relations. The only means was political awareness to be created in the masses and stimulating revolutionary ideals and altering state structure through proletarian ideology (Meisner 1977:311).

⁴⁸ Lehman, Edward W. 1969 "Toward a Macrosociology of Power", *American Sociological Review* 34, August: 543-565 cited in Lung Chang Young: 1973:47.

Mao warned that the CPC was not only at the risk of turning to revisionism but also to Fascism. He described Socialist Education Movement as foreshadowing the chiliastic fervors of the Cultural Revolution. It is a struggle that calls for the education of man. It is a struggle for the reorganization of the revolutionary class armies for a confrontation with the forces of feudalism and capitalism which now feverishly attacking China. He wanted to nip their counter-revolution in the bud. He asserted that they must make it a great movement to reform the bulk of the elements in these counter-revolutionary forces and turn them into new men, who would join hands both in production and scientific experiments. CPC will take extra step forward in fetching a more outstanding and better party. the party cadre has to be versed in politics as in business. They will then no longer be lofty bureaucrats and overlords, no longer divorced from masses. It would merge them with the masses when they become truly good cadres.⁴⁹

According to Meisner (1977:288), Mao put forth his thesis that class struggle exists in socialist society at the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee in September 1962. The two most important points discussed were; the virtual dissolution of the communes and the disintegration of collective farming, in general, accompanied by the appearance of quasi-capitalist socio-economic relationships and the resurgence of traditionalist attitudes and practice in the countryside. The second was the increasing bureaucratic character and method of the communist party in general and the widespread corruption that pervaded local rural party organs and cadre in particular (Meisner 1977:289).

Therefore, the original goals of movement were to restore collectivism in the countryside and re-establish the communes as functioning socio-economic units and to cleanse the party of corruption and minimize bureaucratic elitism. The aim was not only to root out corrupt practices but also to expose the collusion between party cadres and

⁴⁹ Draft Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC on Some Problems in Current Rural Work, May 20, 1963, text translated in Richard Baun and Frederick C. Teiwes, Ssu-Ch'ing *The Socialist Education Movement of 1962-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press:1968), Appendix B, p. 68 and pp.62-71. Cited in Meisner 1977:290.

rich peasants and their exploitation of the majority section of the rural population. The method to carry out the campaign was to set the masses in motion through the organization of the poor and lower middle peasants associations (Meisner 1977:289).

Mao, by contrast, never had arrived at so firm a Leninist belief in the revolutionary and ideological infallibility of the party as an institution. He believed in the party as the repository of “proletarian consciousness.” It has been mitigated by an equally strong faith that the true sources of revolutionary creativity resided in the masses themselves, and particularly in the peasantry. For Mao, the party was as much the pupil of the masses as it was their teacher (Meisner 1977:292). In the end, most of the countryside was untouched in this movement. The party, in any event, did not demonstrate that it has little taste to set the masses in motion, nor is there much evidence that the masses were inclined to mobilize themselves.

Mao’s cult has been developing since the 1940s. The popularization of Mao’s writing and the veritable canonization of his thought during the rectification campaign of the early 1940s contributed to the rapidly growing personality cult. The perception of him as a savior and the star of salvation undoubtedly were reinforced by the victory of 1949. The growth of Mao’s cult was temporarily retarded by the impact of Khrushchev’s 1956 speech denouncing Stalin and his cult of the personality (Meisner 1977:296).

Following the campaign launched in 1960, to turn the PLA into a “Great School of Thought,” Lin Piao proceeded to use the school to educate the entire nation and to deify Mao and his thought in the process. It was the political department of the Army that published the first edition of quotations from Chairman Mao in May of 1964 (Meisner 1977:297).

The noted philosopher Feng Yu-lan and the historian Wu Han (vice-mayor of Peking as well as a professor at Peking University) has suggested that traditional *Confucian* thought, especially the concept of *jen* (Humanism) offered a universally valid system of ethical and moral values and a rich cultural legacy that could and should be inherited and appropriated by contemporary socialist society (Meisner 1977:300). The controversy that emerged over these and other subjects eventually came to focus on two

Marxist theoretical issues: the proper interpretation of historical materialism and the appropriate understanding of dialectical materialism. The non-Marxist participant generally held an orthodox Marxist view in a deterministic fashion, the Marxist propositions that determining “consciousness” as opposed to the voluntaristic Maoist emphasis on the decisive role of the superstructure (and particularly consciousness) in transforming objective historical and social reality (Meisner 1977:301).

The theoretical debate culminated in a bitter ideological controversy on Dialectical Materialism in 1964. The difference was popularized and oversimplified in Yang’s formula that “two combines into one” constitutes the fundamental of dialectics, as opposed to Mao’s insistence that “one divides into two”. Whereas Mao held that unity of opposites was temporary while the struggle between them was absolute and eternal, Yang and his disciples stressed the mutuality of opposites and the unity of the contradictions as the primary law of dialectical materialism and socio-historical development (Meisner 1977:302). The law of contradiction is law of the ‘unity of the opposites’, is the basic law of ‘dialectical materialism’.⁵⁰ Dialectics, in essence, was the study of the contradictions. The fundamental problems in understanding this law, are;

“two world outlooks: the universality of the contradiction, the particularity of the contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of the contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction” (MSW:1:1965:311).

Mao’s role of leading Cultural Revolution was to destroy the symbols as a physical object. But it was impossible to remove them from the minds of the people. Violent means can destroy cultural objects in quantity but not in the quality. Cultural Revolution needs to fight the minds of the people with radical education and social reform movement. The deep imprint of culture could not be erased by using direct physical means.

⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Conspectus of Hegel’s “Lecture on the History of Philosophy” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed. Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249. Cited in Mao 1: 311

2. *Burning Manusmriti and Annihilating Caste*

Ambedkar, unlike Mao, paid considerable attention to the qualitative change for social change in India. Burning Manusmriti was one of the examples which covered both the qualitative as well as quantitative components. Ambedkar had been actively taking part in the movement which was based on the consent of the people. The burning of Manusmriti proposed by Ambedkar with his followers on 25th December 1927 was never expected at that time. In an interview given to T.V. Paravate in 1938, he said, “The bonfire of Manusmriti was quite intentional.

We made a bonfire of it because we see it as a symbol of injustice under which we have been crushed across the centuries. Because of its teaching we have been ground down under despicable poverty and so made the clash, stacked all, took our lives in our hands and performed the deed.⁵¹ Ambedkar compared the meeting with the meeting of 24th January 1789 when Louis XVI of France had called a meeting of French people’s representatives. That meeting witnessed the killing of the King and Queen, execution of elites, bringing a fifteen-year long civil war.

The significance of the conference was not grasped by the people although this revolution was a beginning of prosperity of not only France but also the whole of Europe and later revolutionized the entire world.⁵² One of the greatest iconoclasts for all times, Ambedkar was hammering out the false ideas from their outworn sanctuaries. This act was one of the greatest sacrilegious act ever since the days of Luther upon the egoistic bigots, custom-mongers and non-changers on earth.

⁵¹ *The Indian National Herald*, dated 31st December 1927, cited in BAWS: 17-I: 2014:25.

⁵² Dr. K. Jamanadas, “Manusmriti Dahan Din”, (Online: web) URL: http://www.ambedkar.org/Babasaheb/Manusmriti_Dahan_Din.htm



Ambedkar's sculpture of drinking water from Chowder Tank (Above) at *Mahad*. He did movement for drinking water in 1927.⁵³ According to *Hindu* religious law, untouchables were not allowed to take water from public tank. Ambedkar's statue (below)⁵⁴ inside the same tank where he was not allowed to drink water. It symbolizes the assertion by his followers.



⁵³ Online Source: <https://dramedkarbooks.com/2015/03/20/20th-march-in-dalit-history-mahad-satyagraha/>

⁵⁴ <https://dramedkarbooks.com/2016/03/20/mahad-satyagraha-a-clip-from-dr-babasaheb-ambedkar-movie/>

December 25, 1927, is, therefore, a red-letter day in the annals of India as it was on this day that Ambedkar burnt the old Smriti and demanded a new one in order to reshape the *Hindu* code governing the life of so vast a people. The *Mahad*⁵⁵ thus became the Wittenberg of India (Keer 1995:101). Ambedkar further argued that the problem of the untouchability was a class struggle between caste *Hindus* and the Untouchables and was not the issue of injustice against one man but injustice by one class against another. The most interesting thing is that the “class struggle has relations with social status”. This struggle shapes the relations among classes. The struggle starts for equal treatment as it claimed (BAWS:17-III:118, Bakshi 2000:17).

Ambedkar raised a very pertinent question: Can one have economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order? He further argued that political change without social change would be like building a palace on the heap of dung. It will be like a sand tree that will be uprooted by a little storm. Ambedkar made a strong argument in favor of social reform before political reform and propounded that “history wears out the proposition that political revolutions have always been preceded by social and religious revolutions.” Luther was a precursor of the political liberation of European people. These will be sufficient to prove that the freedom of mind and soul was an essential and initial condition to the political development of the people. He also argued that Buddha’s social revolution led to the establishment of Mauryan Empire political revolution in ancient India (BAWS:1:1979:43-44).

Ambedkar raised another very significant question: Can Socialist ignore the problem arising out of social order? The socialists of India, following their fellows in Europe, are seeking to apply the economic interpretation of history to the facts of India. The economic analysis of Europe cannot subscribe and apply in India. They propound that;

“Man is an economic creature, his activities and aspirations are bound by economic facts, that the property is the only source of power. They, therefore, preach that political and social reforms are but a gigantic illusion and that

⁵⁵ *Mahad* is in Raigarh District of Maharashtra, where Dr. Ambedkar started his agitation called *Mahad* Satyagraha to take water from Chaudar Tank in 1927.

economic reform by equalization of property must have precedence over another kind of reform. One may join issue on every one of these premises on which rests the socialist case for economic reform having priority over every other kind of reform. One may contend that an economic motive is not the only motive of by which man is actuated” (BAWS: 1:1979:44).

Ambedkar criticized Indian socialists for not paying much attention to the social and cultural reform in India. Therefore, he further argued that:

“Is it enough for a socialist to say “I believe in perfect equality in the treatment of various classes? To say that such a belief is enough is to disclose a complete lack of understanding of what is involved in socialism. If socialism is a practical program and that is not merely an ideal, distant and far off, the question for a socialist is not whether he believes in equality. The question for Indian Marxist is whether he minds one class ill-treating and suppressing another class as a matter of system, as matter of principle and thus allow tyranny and oppression to continue to divide one class from another” (BAWS: 1:1979:46).

Ambedkar questioned political mobilization for seizure of the political power without social reform. He considered the consciousness of fraternity and shared interests in the masses makes a political movement successful. The caste system divided Indian proletariats into thousands of castes. Would the proletariats of India combine to bring about socialist revolution? Ambedkar believed that if one man treats another man with equal respect then only one person feels that another man with whom he is acting is actuated by feeling of equality and fraternity and above all of justice (BAWS: 1:1979:46).

Ambedkar further asked; how a socialist state can function without dealing with the problem of prejudices that mark Indian people perceive the distinction of clean and unclean, high and low. He suggested that if socialists want to make socialism in practice, then they must diagnose the problem of social reform is a prerequisite and no escape from it. If he does not take account of that, then he would be compelled to take account of it after the revolution. He said that “caste is the monster that crosses your path.” The socialists cannot secure political reforms, and cannot secure economic reforms unless they kill this monster” (BAWS:1:1979:47). Ambedkar further argued that:

“Caste system is not merely a division of labor, but also a division of laborers. Civilized societies undoubtedly need a division of labor. However, in no civilized society is a division of labor accompanied by this unnatural division of laborers into watertight compartments. The caste system is not merely a division of

laborers which is quite different from the division of labor it is a hierarchy in which the division of laborers are graded one above another” (BAWS:1:1979:47).

Further, Ambedkar opined that “an ideal *Hindu* must be a rat living in his hole refusing to have any contact with others.” No *Hindu* has consciousness of kind, but every *Hindu* has consciousness of his caste. Therefore, *Hindu* was not a society or a nation. But they are an amorphous mass of people. The similarity in the customs, belief and thought, they obtain all over the continent but does not constitute a society. Man does not make a society by just living in physical proximity but they constitute a society and have things in common which is different from similarity. Communication is a crucial part of forming a society. This attitude is antagonistic to the community life and egalitarian values. An anti-social spirit is found in *Hindus*. A *Brahmin’s* main interest is to protect his interests against the non-Brahmin community as a whole (BAWS:1:1979:52). Ambedkar criticized the *Hindu* social order from the moral and ethical point of view.

“The effect of caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed the public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu’s public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is a charity but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of another caste.” (BAWS: 1:1979:56-57)

Ambedkar wanted to reconstruct a society based on “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity”. His ideal society must be a mobile one with a numbers of channels for facilitating a change. There should be many interests consciously communicated and shared among communities. Put it differently; there should be social endosmosis, and fraternity is a foundation of that society. Ambedkar called fraternity as another name of democracy. Democracy does not work without fraternity (BAWS: 1:1979:57).

Ambedkar considered cultural oppression more dangerous than anything else. Therefore, he emphasized on the cultural and social reforms before the political revolution. Ambedkar argued that political tyranny is nothing compare to social tyranny. Moreover, a reformer, who defies society, is a much more courageous man than a

politician who defies the government. He gave importance to the social aspect of the tyranny in the *Hindu* society (BAWS: 1: 1979:68).

Ambedkar attacked religion for blocking reason in the minds of the people. Ambedkar held religion and culture responsible for observing caste and oppression. They observe caste because they are deeply religious and culturally embedded; it is a religion that inculcates the notion of caste in the minds of people. The real remedy is to destroy the sanctity of the *Shastra* (*Ibid*). Caste has a divine basis (*Ibid*. 69).

Ambedkar considered social reform as necessary prior to political change and examined the limitation of doing it in India. Marx's famous quotes "you have nothing to lose except your chains", makes no sense in caste-ridden Indian society where the social and religious rights are distributed in gradation and hierarchy, therefore, some lose more, and some get less. One can have a general mobilization of the *Hindus*, to use a military expression, for an attack on the caste system (BAWS: 1:1979:72).

Ambedkar considered caste system antagonistic to reason. Can you appeal to reason and discard caste as being contrary to reason? Is a *Hindu* free to follow reason? Here there is no place to reason in *Hinduism*. A *Hindu* must follow *Veda*, *Smriti*, or *Sadachar* instead of reason. Rationalism is condemned to interpret the *Vedas* and *Smritis*. It is considered wicked as atheism. *Hindu's* cannot resort to reason when *Veda* and *Smiriti* cover a matter. Reason is not an option in case of conflict between *Veda* and *Smiriti*. Therefore, A *Hindu* is not permitted to practice his intellectual faculty (BAWS: 1:1979: 72-73). The wall built around Caste is unconquerable and the material, it is built of the combustible stuff of reason and morality. *Veda* and *Shastra*, which deny reason and morality, must be destroyed (BAWS: 1:1979:74-75). Ambedkar articulated that reason and morality were powerful weapons in the hands of the reformer (BAWS: 1 :1979:74).

IV. Reconstruction of Society: Equality, Liberty and Fraternity

Mao and Ambedkar were iconoclasts and subversive and they were deeply committed to the reconstruction of the society. Reconstruction of the society was as important as destroying the old social structure. The prominent and common thing for both the scholars is that irrespective of the different methods employed in destroying it, they had maintained a similar method to rebuild it. Mao and Ambedkar's core principle for reconstruction of the society laid in equality.

Egalitarianism was the ultimate objective for Mao and Ambedkar.⁵⁶ A classless and casteless society based on egalitarian principles was a major goal for these two leaders. Mao believed in radical egalitarianism. Ambedkar not only advocated for the destruction of in-egalitarian culture but also considered egalitarian culture necessary for an egalitarian society. Mao's Cultural Revolution was quite mechanical, but Ambedkar's was creative. Ambedkar did not seek happiness in material comfort alone, and material condition could not solve all human problems. Religion was essential for human happiness. As Ambedkar argued that man does not live by bread alone, so mind needs the freedom of thought. Religion creates hope in the people and drives them to do useful things. He declared that he would have struck with a society whose people preferred bread to the culture of the mind. Man was also a cultural being who could hardly live without religion.⁵⁷

For the reconstruction of the society, Ambedkar, like Marx and Mao, was very critical of *Hindu* religion. He argued that religion that discriminates between two followers is incomplete, and the religion that treats millions of its believers worse than animals and imposes upon them unbearable disabilities was not a religion. Religion was not for injustice and "Religion and slavery are incompatible (Keer 1990:92)." Ambedkar linked religion with social enlightenment and morality. "Social standards must judge

⁵⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, Manifesto of the Republican Party of India, RPI stands for liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. BAWS: 17-II: 2014:151.

⁵⁷ B. R. Ambedkar on the occasion of the Conversion, delivered his speech in Marathi on 15th October 1956, BAWS: 17-III: 2003:541.

people and their religion based on social ethics. No other standard will have any other meaning if religion is held to be a necessary asset for the well-being of the people”.⁵⁸

Ambedkar and Marx condemned religion. However, what Marx meant by the opium of the people was not to be found in Ambedkar’s conception of religion. Ambedkar’s concept of religion had a close link with social morality, people’s empirical welfare. There is a major clash in the field of morality between Marx and Ambedkar. Marxist believed in class structure of society. As Lenin said: Marxist morality is class morality. It entirely subordinated to the interests of the class. It is resulting from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Its purpose is to destroy the old, exploiting societies and stand for building up a new socialist society.⁵⁹ As Marx opined that the “history of mankind hitherto has been as a society of class struggle.”⁶⁰ The society has hitherto moved in class antagonism. Therefore, morality has been a class morality. Morality has been used for justification of dominant and interests of bourgeois.⁶¹

Jatava (1997) argued that the Marxist concept of morality, which safeguards the interests of the proletariat, was not acceptable to Dr. Ambedkar. It was not truly human morality. The Marxists made the same mistake that the capitalists did by adhering to their morality. The class morality would lead to the antagonistic class interests and justification for action in favor of one class against another. The entire human society, with class moralities, would degrade itself, and justice would no longer be the basis of social life.⁶²

Ambedkar essentially opposed to the concept of class morality. He believed in the universal morality applicable to all people irrespective of caste, race, gender, and class, the common rules of morality for a just social order. Common universal and sacred rules

⁵⁸ B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 124 , cited in Jatava:1997:36.

⁵⁹ Lenin, “The Task of the Youth League”, *Marxist archive* Online URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm>

⁶⁰ Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Online URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>.

⁶¹ Engels; Anti-Duhring, at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1877/anti-duhring/ch07.htm>

⁶² B. R. Ambedkar, *Buddha and Karl Marx*, BAWs:3:2014: 439.

of morality would protect not only the best but also the weak and would safeguard the growth of the individual.⁶³

Ambedkar did not deny that economic forces had an important role to play, yet he was not prepared to accept that they were the only factor in determining the course of history as Marxists insist. In essence, it was the man who was responsible for just and unjust social order. Things required a man to serve the interests of society.⁶⁴ According to Ambedkar, religion, social status and property and authority were all sources of power, and one dominates another in terms of the context. That is the only difference. Further, he argued that economic reform alone could not alter India's social fabric. A drastic change in the socio-religious structure of the country was essential to any socialist reconstruction (Jatava 1997:40). Ambedkar disagreed with the historical economic interpretation of history by socialists and Marxists in India.

I can't see how a socialist state in India can function for a second without having to grapple with the problem created by the prejudices which make Indian people observe the distinction of high and low, clean and unclean...if the socialists want to make socialism a defining reality then they must recognize that the problem of social reform is fundamental and that for them there is no escape from it. The socialist order prevalent in India is a matter that a socialist must deal with.⁶⁵

One can, thus, attack the doctrine of economic interpretation of history adopted by the socialists in India. However, he recognized that the economic interpretation of history is not necessary for the validity of the socialist contention that equalization of the property is only real reform and that it must precede everything else.⁶⁶

Ambedkar rejected Marxism as an alternative for social reconstruction. If Marxism refused to allow man liberty, the Brahmanical varnas lacked equality among in its adherents. He said that man cannot exist by merely eating food. He has a mind that needs food for thought (BAWS: 17-III: 2003:537). Religion instills hope in man and drives him into activity. *Hinduism* killed the enthusiasm of the downtrodden; I found it

⁶³ B. R. Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, 1957, BAWS: 11:2014: 322-335.

⁶⁴ B. R. Ambedkar, "Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah", BAWS: 1: 1979:5-6.

⁶⁵ B. R. Ambedkar, "The Annihilation of Caste", BAWS: 1:1979:36.

⁶⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, "The Annihilation of Caste", BAWS: 1: 1979: 34.

necessary to change my faith to Buddhism.⁶⁷ Ambedkar embraced Buddhism and said that it is a complete solution to Marxism and communism.⁶⁸ Ambedkar stands in favor of the ideal society. His ideal society consists of two essential principles: first, the one in which the individual is an end in itself and purpose of the society is the development of his personality. It needs a balance between society and individual liberty. The subordination of individual is possible in case of his betterment and only to the extent necessary. The second; associated life of the members must be based on the consideration founded on liberty, equality, and fraternity⁶⁹

An individual has no place in a caste society whereas Ambedkar proposed a society believed in an individual is the end. A person's relationships with other class and caste people were already fixed, whereas Ambedkar's ideal society relationships are to be based on equality, liberty and fraternity (Massey 2003:107). Ambedkar concluded that any good society has to go through two tests: a test of justice and test of utility. In fact, this judgment was from the point of view of caste-based social order (Ibid).

Soske identified the two-fold struggle led by Ambedkar: first, a reconfiguration of liberal democracy to the point of conceiving it as a social democracy, very close to Marxian socialism. The second, a struggle to subvert the oppression of the state toward minorities so as to achieve a share of power for subaltern groups within the state.⁷⁰ Sokse has certainly demonstrated that it was the lack of agency of both law and constitutional structure of the postcolonial state, which impelled Ambedkar to search for an alternative form of agency which would uphold a different set of values, not part of the law and the state, but belonging to the moral order: a civic religion which would allow the creation of a new socio-cultural community as the power capable of producing social consciousness and a shared moral order, through rationalization and ritualization of social values (Zene eds. 2013:20).

⁶⁷ Keer: 1990:499. Cited in Jatava: 1997:43.

⁶⁸ B. R. Ambedkar "*Buddha and Marx*" BAWS:3:2014:441

⁶⁹ Ambedkar, *The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Principles*. BAWS: 3:2014:95.

⁷⁰ In Zene ed. 2013:19.

Massey argued that Ambedkar discussing the meaning of liberty in his work. He divided liberty into two parts, civil and political liberty. The Civil liberty comprises: first, liberty of movement, which is opposite of arresting a person without due process of law; and second, liberty of expression, which consists of liberty of thought, reading, discussion and writing; and third, liberty of action. Political liberty comprises framing the law and taking part in the formation of the government.⁷¹ He further added three more components to the realization of liberty, with social equality, economic equality, and education that were made available to all.⁷²

Ambedkar underscored that fraternity is essential for good society. There cannot be a society without fraternity. The only reason behind his rejection of the violence to get the immediate results was that in the longer period it would be tough to build fraternity among them. His disagreement with Marxist communism was that violent means and dictatorship cannot build up a fraternal society.⁷³ Ambedkar highlighted certain fundamental issues common to all human beings, although having differences in physical strength, artistic skill, material wealth, or mental capacity. The nature and manifestation of the fundamental characteristics that appear in all human beings can be summed up as ‘moral equality’. Stress must be located on the term ‘moral’ since no lucid proponent of moral equality has been doubtful. It reflected in ethical values, a belief to be continued, and acknowledgment of right to be appreciated as a society deprived of any respect for human personalities is a gang of robbers.⁷⁴

Fraternity is another name for empathy. It consists of feelings which lead an individual to equate himself with the good of others. That good of others becomes to him a natural necessity for his physical conditions of our existence.⁷⁵ Fellow feeling is an

⁷¹ Ambedkar, *The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Principles*: 3:1987:98. Cited in Massey 2003:108.

⁷² Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, BAWS: 3: 1987: 39-39. Cited in Massey 2003:108.

⁷³ Ambedkar in his book “Buddha and Karl Marx” argued that one reason behind his rejection of Marxism was their acceptance of violence as principle and no possibility of building a fraternal society. BAWS: 3: 1987.

⁷⁴ Ambedkar, *The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Principles*, BAWS: 3: 1987: 98.

⁷⁵ Ambedkar, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, BAWS: 3: 1987: 44.

indispensable principle of a just society. In an ideal society, there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared.⁷⁶

For Ambedkar, democracy was essentially an institution improve the society. A democratic society must be marked by unity, loyalty toward public end and sympathy with peoples. It includes two things. First, is the attitude of mind, an attitude of respect and equality for fellow beings. The second is a social organization free from rigid social barriers.⁷⁷ We need to make our political democracy a social democracy. The political democracy cannot exist in the absence of social democracy. Social democracy means a way of life, which allows liberty, equality, and fraternity with trinity not separately. The divorce of one from another is to destroy the very purpose of democracy.⁷⁸

Fraternity is the core principle for Ambedkar while Mao considered permanent contradiction of different social and economic classes as central. Ambedkar argued that antagonism in the society would lead to the disruption of the progress of the human being, while in Maoist theorization contradiction was the necessary force for the development of socially. Ambedkar further argued that the authoritarianism of one class over another class cannot be retained for long, while Mao believed that it is necessary for maintaining equality in the society. Ambedkar gave considerable importance to the morality of the society and propagated Buddhism as a moral religion for masses.⁷⁹

Liberty is another core principle for rebuilding the relations in the society for both Mao and Ambedkar. For Mao, social equality is limited as long as to maintain economic equality in the society. While, Ambedkar considered liberty fundamental for the development of human being in his ideal society, and he also highlighted that liberty and equality are complementary to each other in the society.

Gopal Guru observed that Ambedkar gave no public expression to his religious beliefs but focused primarily on what he expected of religion, as a social institution and

⁷⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, BAWS: 1:1979: 56.

⁷⁷ B. R. Ambedkar, Ranade, Gandhi, and Jinnah, BAWS: 1:1979: 222.

⁷⁸ Constituent Assembly Debates, Official Report, book no. 5, Vol. XI, 14-26, November 1949, New Delhi, 1999, (Third reprint) p. 979. Cited in Massey 2003:115

⁷⁹ B. R. Ambedkar, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, BAWS: 11: 1992: 323

how *Hinduism* fell short of his expectations. M.P. Rege has stated that Ambedkar was a man of deep sensibility.⁸⁰ Ambedkar said that there was no agreement on what exactly the term religion stood for, but he was using it to mean theology.⁸¹ Again, while the word theology could be used to refer to either mythical theology or civil theology, he said that he was using it to mean natural theology.⁸² It is the doctrine of God and the divine, and an integral part of the theory of nature. Such a theology propounded three theses: (a) God exists and is the author of what we call nature of universe; (b) God controls all the events that make up nature; and (c) God exercises a government over mankind in accordance with sovereign moral law.⁸³ Religion means the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance, the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which men live as a moral order.⁸⁴

Ambedkar had been a strong advocate of morality in religion. Moreover, his philosophy of religion was not merely a descriptive or even an analytical science. It was a normative science. In so far as it deals with the teaching of religion, philosophy of religion becomes a descriptive science. In so far as it involves the use of critical reason for passing judgment on those teachings, the philosophy of religion becomes a normative science.⁸⁵

Ambedkar went on to specify a philosophy of religion to discuss in three perspectives: its theology; second, the ideal scheme for which a religion stands; and third, the specification of the criteria to be adopted for judging the ideal scheme of the divine governance portrayed by religion (Gore 1993:231). Ambedkar further explicated that to know the philosophy of any movement or any institution, one must study the revolutions that the movement and institutions have undergone.⁸⁶ There had been two type of the revolutions; one relating to the content of its teaching, its conception of the relation of

⁸⁰ Rege, M.P. (1991), *Ambedkar on Religion: The Secularist*, No. 128, March-April 1991, pp.29-41. Cited in M.S. Gore 1993:230.

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ BAWS: 1987:3, cited in Gore: 1993:231.

⁸⁴ BAWS: 1987:3, cited in Gore: 1993:231.

⁸⁵ BAWS: 1987:5, cited in Gore 1989:231.

⁸⁶ BAWS: 1987:3, cited in Gore 1993:232.

God to man, of society to man to man. Second was more significant; it was a revolution that had paralleled the movement of society from its savage stage through the antique stage to the present civilized stage. It had brought about change in the conception of relationships between God, society, and man.⁸⁷

Ambedkar also expounded that in ancient society, men and their God formed a social and political as well as a religious whole. Modern society consisted of human beings alone. It put God outside human society though God remains relevant to it. Nor did the earlier society conceive of humanity in general. It could only think in terms of its particular group entity (Gore 1993: 232).

Therefore, Ambedkar characterized two religious revolutions as external and internal. The former revolution accompanied a growing secularization of life and consisted of reducing the field of life within which the authority of religion would prevail. The second revolution had to do with the subjective content of religious idea with the scheme of divine governance for human society. Ambedkar's judgment would be that Hindu philosophy served neither of two the ends; neither social utility nor justice for the individual. However, he started his critique of *Hinduism* saying that the *Hindu* was not prepared to face an inquiry.⁸⁸ He argued that religion was a social force. Those who denied the importance of religion fail to realize how great was the potency and sanction that lay behind the religious ideal as compared with the purely secular ideal. Secondly, to argue that all religions were good was a false notion.⁸⁹ Everything depended on what social ideal a given religion held out as a divine scheme of governance. As far as *Hinduism* is concerned it is a diatribe against its denial of the concept of individual dignity and justice (Gore 1993: 234).

If *Hinduism* were to lay a claim to justice, it could only be in the purely legal and not moral sense. For in the legal sense whatever was in conformity with the law was just. In the moral sense, justice was involved in recognition of human equality. So far as *Hinduism* is concerned, inequality is the soul of *Hinduism*. The morality of Hinduism is

⁸⁷ BAWS: 3: 1987: 13, Gore 1993:232.

⁸⁸ B. R. Ambedkar, "Philosophy of Hinduism", BAWS:3:1987:22

⁸⁹ B. R. Ambedkar, "Hindu Social Order and Its Essential Principles", BAWS:3: 1987:96

only social. It is unnatural and inhuman to say the least.⁹⁰ Ambedkar examined whether *Hinduism* served the interests of utility, if not of justice. Ambedkar's conclusion was based on *Hindu* law rather than *Hindu* philosophy. Ambedkar pre-empted this contention, saying that there was no distinction between moral and legal philosophy in *Hinduism*. *Hindu* morality did not stand at the level of individual conscience, and in this sense, a *Hindu* was a social, not a moral being (Gore 1993:235).

Following Thomas Huxley, who condemned Upanishads as a philosophy of withdrawal from the struggle for existence. He also quoted Lala Hardy in support of his criticism of Upanishadic philosophy.⁹¹ The *Hindu* had no conscience. To put it in plain language, what *Hindus* call religion is a law or at best-legalized caste ethics. Frankly, he refused to call this code of ordinance, as Religion.⁹²

Gore observed that Ambedkar wanted the *Hindus* to adopt a reason-based set of moral principles, applicable to all segments of society, and consistent with needs and dominant values of the present. Ambedkar equated caste with *Hindu* religion, and he considered caste not only an anachronism but unjust and, therefore, unethical. To Ambedkar, religion should, above all, be a set of moral principles that would sustain society. Caste did not provide these principles. In his emphasis on moral values as different from spiritual values, one sees what made Buddhism a natural choice for him at a later stage (Gore 1993:237).

For Gore (1993:238) Ambedkar's point was that even a *Hindu* may practice morality, but that is caste-bound. Individuals accepted the obligation to abide by these moral norms only for interaction within his caste, but not equally between castes. It was the social, moral and spiritual message of Buddhism which attracted him not only to accept but also to join Buddhism. However, being a leader of "people," Ambedkar was hardly in a position to make a purely personal choice in this important matter without considering what it would mean for its followers. *Hinduism* stood for inequality and Buddhism stood for equality.

⁹⁰ B. R. Ambedkar, BAWS: 3:1987: 13, Cited in Gore 1993:235

⁹¹ B. R. Ambedkar, BAWS: 3: 1987: 85, cited in Gore 1993: 235.

⁹² Ibid.1:1979:78.

Buddhism preached working for the well-being of all, for their happiness and for fostering love for all. That which promised equal opportunity was the true religion.⁹³ In contrasting Buddhism with Communism, Ambedkar articulated that Communism rests on force. Once the strong dialectical materialist failed, the Russian people would rebel, and there would be anarchy.⁹⁴

James Massey (2003) had argued that Ambedkar has an alternative model of society. He opined that alternative social order and just society that is envisioned by Ambedkar seemed to be an appropriate model for the Indian social system replacing Brahmanical hierarchy and unequal social order. The alternative paradigm of the social order to the existing social order based upon the caste system is rooted in Justice. Conversion to Buddhism is a major paradigm shift in the life of the Untouchables, which provides a new avenue for social interaction in the society.

Ambedkar, while framing the constitution, was in the process of creating a mechanism for the democratic social order or society based upon justice. Democracy is not a form of government but a kind of community. Equality, liberty, and fraternity were the core pillars of Ambedkar's just society (Massey 2003:102). He considered that justice is simply another name for liberty, equality and fraternity.

Education is considered as a means for building a new society. Mao and Ambedkar had paid much attention to the education in their respective societies. Education is deemed to be the most revolutionary activity and contributed to the liberation of the masses all over the world. Education is all about the cultivation of mind and behavior. The role of education for both Gramsci and Ambedkar was extremely significant in liberation. The contemporary South Asian scholars are propelling the *Dalit* question to be recognized as a national and international question. *Dalit* is the process through which the caste subaltern enters into the circuit of political commensuration and the value regime of "the human" (Rao 2009: 264 in Zene 2013:12).

⁹³ Raghuvanshi, n.d. pp.133-142. Cited in Gore: 1993:251.

⁹⁴ B. R. Ambedkar, Speech at Conversion, 15 October 1956, BAWs: 17-III: 2003:555.

Mao viewed the role of education to be critical and used as a liberating force in China. Mao advocated equal education for all, and it was his foremost agenda of the communist party before the establishment of PRC in 1949. However, when he came to power he focused more on urban education at the expense of the countryside. The communists had criticized social inequalities inherited in the educational system when they were in opposition. Once they came to power CCP officials began to establish themselves and their relatives in cities. Therefore, the exclusive nature of education which was responsible for keeping urban and rural divide continued under the communist regime, and even some key urban schools are promoted for quality education and which were accessible to communist elite and officials (Han 2008:23).

From 1949 to 1956, government revenue in rural Jimo more than tripled, increasing from 2624000 yuan in 1949 to 8398000 yuan in 1956.⁹⁵ However, educational expenditure in rural Jimo actually declined from 789000 yuan in 1953 to 721000 yuan in 1956.⁹⁶

Mao, Zhu De, and Deng Xiaoping originally came from rural areas, and could distinguish themselves because of the educational opportunities they had enjoyed. They were aware of the importance of education in rural areas, but they did not do it just because nationalist and Qing Dynasty rulers before them did not do so. However, CCP differed from its predecessors but its rural education policy for most of the period before Cultural Revolution was not much different from that of their predecessors (Han 2008:33). The argument given in favor of keeping key schools advanced for the development of science and technology would not justify unequal education policies among rural and urban areas (Han 2008:34).

As Meisner opined Mao started “Socialist Education Movement” to counter the bureaucratization of Chinese political life. It reversed socio-economic policies that Maoists condemned as “revisionist” and they believed that they were creating a new form of capitalism. It revitalizes a collectivistic spirit and consciousness both within the party and in society as a whole. It was an endeavor to implement his vision of radical social transformation through existing party and state institution (Meisner 1977:288).

⁹⁵ Jimo Xianzhi 451. Cited in Han 2008:24.

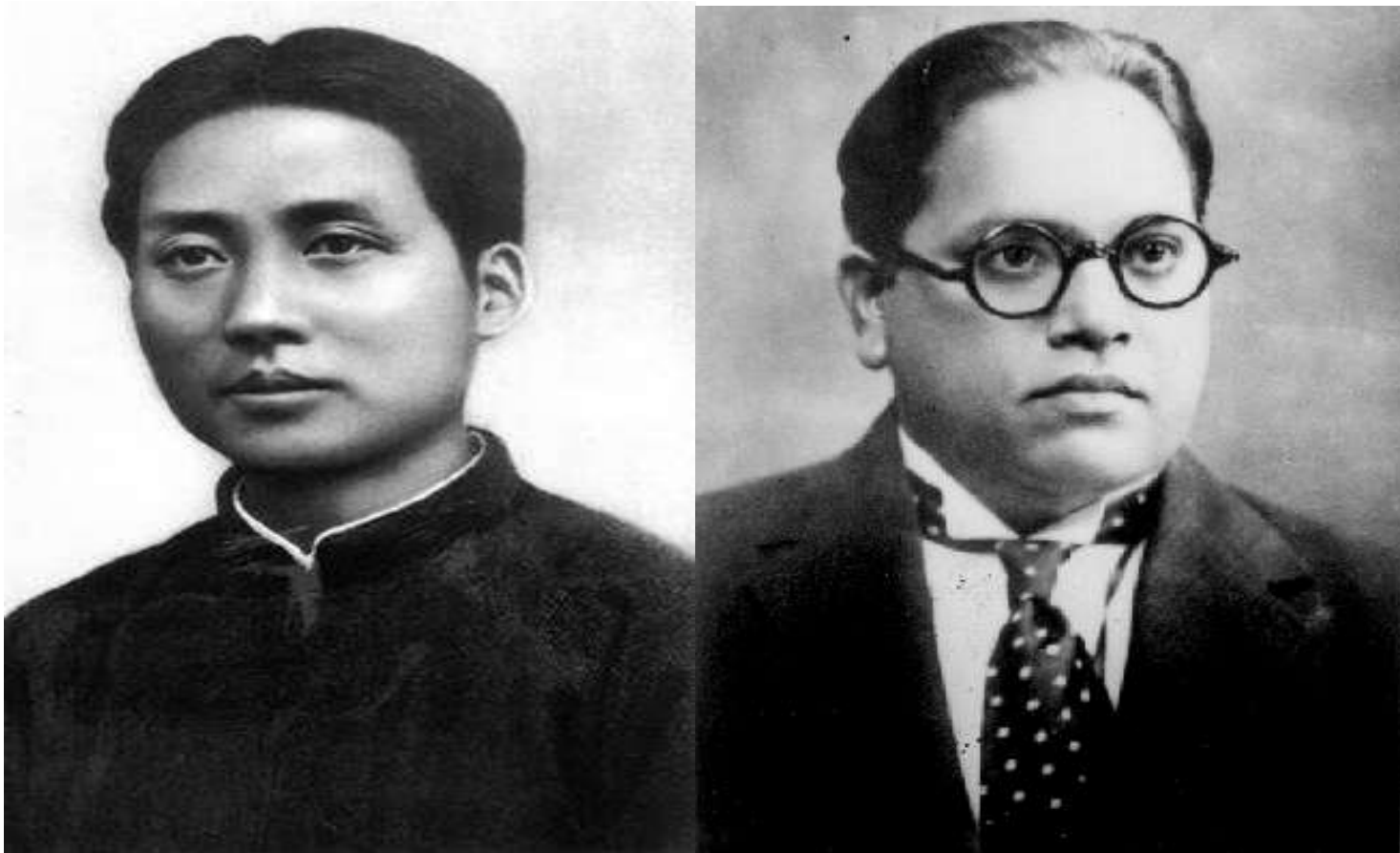
⁹⁶ Jimo Xianzhi 456. Cited in Han 2008:24.

V. Summary

The social thought of Mao and Ambedkar did play a critical role in their respective societies. Their thoughts stand for deconstruction as well as for reconstruction of the society and employed different methods to achieve social equality. Mao used revolution to carry out social reform in China and succeeded to a great extent both before and after the establishment of PRC in 1949. Ambedkar's social reform in India was a conscious attempt to build an egalitarian society through cultivating the mind. Ambedkar's approach to destroying the old social structure was primary because of the exploitation. Ambedkar focused on critical and moral education for building an egalitarian society in India. Ambedkar's advocacy for moral education had a significant role in the society. Mao and Ambedkar were iconoclasts in opposing the oppressive social structure and advocating for social change.

Mao's journey from materialism to idealism was a result of pragmatism. The social thought developed through the process of experience and experiment of Marxism. The influence of pragmatism on Mao shifted the root of his social thought from materialism to idealism. Influence of pragmatism on Ambedkar's social thought restricted him to use violence as a means in the Indian society. The fault line between the social thought of Mao and Ambedkar is the means, not the ends. Means for subversion are different while means for reconstruction of the society are common. Both wanted to build a society based on egalitarian principles while giving much space to education.

Mao argued that class struggle continues in the realm of society. In terms of theory, Mao moved from base to superstructure but could not change the means to bring about transformation in the cultural sphere. Mao's pragmatic method forced him to fight class struggle in the field of superstructure but could not improve the means to effect change in the superstructure. Ambedkar used non-violent means in addressing social oppression. Social and Cultural hegemony can only be fought by the counter-cultural means. Ambedkar did indeed succeed to a great extent, though much remains to be accomplished.



Young Mao Zedong, Online: <http://www.keyword-suggestions.com/eW91bmcgbWFv/>.

Young B.R. Ambedkar Online: <http://www.ambedkar.org/>.

Chapter 4

Political Thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar

Philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways. However, the point is to change it- Karl Marx¹

I. Introduction

Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar were the pioneering political leaders of the 20th century of Asia. They piloted political movements in their respective countries from the early 1920s. Both were towering personalities with innovative political ideas. Their political idealism is paramount from the vantage points of both the present national and international politics. They fought for justice and upliftment of the weaker sections. Mao emerged as a prominent leader of the CPC and played a crucial role in the establishment of PRC. Ambedkar started his movement from the early 1920s and emerged as one of the greatest leaders of the Depressed Classes in Indian history. He pioneered the political movement for the rights of the depressed classes for more than three decades. He became the first law minister of Independent India. Ambedkar chaired the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India. He struggled in a society which treated him as an untouchable. Of all the factors, education played a significant role in the rise of Ambedkar to the national political scene. He challenged the Congress leaders like Gandhi and others.

¹ Karl Marx on “Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach”, First Published, as an Appendix to Engels’ Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical Germany Philosophy, 1886. Marx, Engels Selected Works, Volume One, p.13-15. Translated by W. Laugh from German, Copyleft: Marx/Engels Internet Archive (Marxist.org.) 1995, 1999, 2002.

The Marxist-Leninist theory primarily influenced Mao's political thought. Marx prescribed his theory for advanced capitalist society while Mao adapted it to the national situation of China. In other words, Mao modified Marxist-Leninist theory and applied it to the Chinese context. The application of Marxism to the Chinese situation was a significant contribution to the advancement of Marxism. Mao's thought included; peasant movement, On Contradiction, On Practice, New Democracy, and Permanent Revolution.

Ambedkar, on the other hand, was an accomplished academician and a philosopher. He developed his ideas in the context of India. He carried out a social movement parallel to the anti-colonial struggle. He developed his ideas of social and political democracy, representation and rights, and methods for mass mobilization. He advanced the thought of building unity among *Shudra* (Peasants), *Ati-Shudra* (Landless Laborers) and Aborigine Tribes (Zelliot 2013:199). Ambedkar said that his political philosophy was embodied in three principles; equality, liberty and fraternity and they are drawn from none other than Buddha.² In an interesting comparative analysis of “*Buddha or Karl Marx-1956*”, Ambedkar rejected Marx's idea of dictatorship and violence as a principle.³

John Dewey's pragmatism had influenced both Mao and Ambedkar.⁴ His influence was manifested in the realm of political ideas and activism of Mao and Ambedkar. The political ideas are the means to realize the ends. For Mao and Ambedkar, ends were same but their methods were different.⁵ Methods differed according to the nature of the respective societies. Mao and Ambedkar were practical leaders, and the

² B. R. Ambedkar, My Philosophy of Life, All India Radio Broadcast of Speech on October 3, 1954, BAWS: Vol.17-III, 2003:503.

³ B. R. Ambedkar, Buddha or Karl Marx, Address on 20th November 1956 at “World Buddhists Council” Conference at Kathmandu, BAWS: Vol. 17-III, 2003:549.

⁴ Eleanor Zelliot (2013:11), said that Ambedkar received training from John Dewey at Columbia University and applied it to the World around him in India. For more on John Dewey's influence on Mao, see Li, Y. (1989). *Chinese and Western Culture and Early Thought of Mao Zedong*, Chengdu: Sichuan University Press. Cited in Xiaodong Niu (1995), “The Journal of Educational Thought” (JET)/ Revue de la pensee Educative, Vol.29, August, 1995, pp.129-147. At: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23767673>.

⁵ B. R. Ambedkar compared Buddha and Marx and argued that their purpose was the establishment of an egalitarian society, however proposed different means for the same proposed goal. Ambedkar criticised Marx for his idea of dictatorship of the proletariat and violent means.

ultimate goal of their political thought was to change the respective political system. Mao and Ambedkar believed in two different types of democracy where the former believed in the dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary pre-condition for maintaining equality in the society while the latter emphasized in the process of the democratization based on the three principles i.e. liberty, equality, and fraternity. The acceptance of violent means for the establishment of the equality in the society was not acceptable to Ambedkar while it was the necessary means for Mao Zedong.

Mao proposed permanent revolution as the perpetual dictatorship of the proletariat over socialist society. It has no space for the exercise of political power and freedom of expression. Ambedkar was particular about free speech with the full exercise of political rights. He believed in individual rights and dignity for securing material equality. Ambedkar never wanted to exchange liberty with equality while he wanted a balance between the two. Ambedkar's idea of democracy considered normative values essential for socialism and democracy. Mao united the peasants and working class for revolution while Ambedkar organised peasants (*Shudra*), working class (*Ati-Shudra*) and Aboriginal tribes (Zelliot 2003:198-199).

Against this basic backdrop, the chapter maps the influence of pragmatism on Mao and Ambedkar's theory as well as practice. They emphasised practice more than theory. The major issue which they shared is that they remained flexible in theory but maintained consistency in practice. The principle of pragmatism was found in both the leaders. Mao's essays "On Contradiction" and "On Practice" do reflect the element of pragmatism. Second section focuses on the idea of democracy in the writings of the two leaders. Mao's conception of New Democracy and People's Democracy contrasted with Ambedkar's idea of democracy with representative government. The idea of permanent revolution and democratization were common but under two different regimes of governance. The issue of dictatorship and democracy are discussed with a focus on their practice. The last section deals with Ambedkar's engagement with the British and INC for more than three decades.

II. Theory and Practice

Mao and Ambedkar maintained consistency in practice while being flexible in their revolutionary ideas. Practice is important to this tradition. This proves that Mao and Ambedkar were pragmatic more than doctrinaires. Mao prominently said the practice is only criteria of a theory, and it is validated in the field.⁶ Ambedkar followed the same path with core pragmatic principles.⁷ Mao and Ambedkar changed their methods and principle according to the time and context. The principle to which Mao and Ambedkar were deeply committed for change.

John Dewey's famous quote "If not ends then what else justify the means" underpinned their commitment to practice."⁸ Means are essential for success. He said the means have an important bearing on desired results. Mao used violent means while Ambedkar rejected it for Indian context. Means are a reflection of practical experience in the society, and its success depends on the appropriate means. Therefore, inconsistency of means with practical condition can be misleading and disastrous. Means are used by Ambedkar and Mao are different and had been drawn from their respective experiences.

Political change has been central to the political thought of Mao and Ambedkar. Their political thought constituted the basis for the establishment of an egalitarian society. The methods of political mobilization were pragmatic. Their political thought and activism have been the force behind the two leaders. Socio-economic background of both Mao and Ambedkar has been crucial in their successful political mobilization. The material condition was a major issue for them for consolidating their methodology for bringing about change in polity and society.

⁶ Chairman Mao on Mao Zedong Thought, This article is reprinted from *Beijing Review*, 2. Jan 14, 1980, pp. 23-26. Online at: <https://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1980/PR1980-02b.htm>.

⁷ *Columbia Alumni News*, 19 December 1930, p.12. Cited in Eleanor Zelliott 2013:69, Dr. Ambedkar and America, Introductory remark, By Prof. Eleanor Zelliott, A talk at the Columbia University Ambedkar Centenary, 1991. Eleanor Zelliott was an American scholar and done extensive research on Ambedkar in the early 1960s. (Online: web) URL: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ambedkar/timeline/graphics/txt_zelliott1991.html.

⁸ John Dewey on "Their Morals and Ours" Published: New International, 1938, (Online: Web) URL: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/comments/dewey01.htm>.

The nature of Chinese and Indian societies and their reactions to the egalitarian ideas has already been discussed in the previous chapters. The purpose of Mao and Ambedkar's political thought was not to be abstract and impractical. However, their intention was to understand the real problem of Chinese and Indian masses. The language of their political thought was the language of the masses and not abstract theory. Mao's departure from orthodox Marxism is a reflection of his practical understanding of Chinese society, as being semi-feudal and conservative was not appropriate for adopting the leadership of working class as methodology of bringing about a revolution in China. The mobilization of peasants in Chinese society was a more practical idea in terms of the application of Marxism to the Chinese Context. "*Sinification*"⁹ of Marxism according to the Chinese situation finally paved the way for capturing political power in 1949. The method of mobilization of peasants for the revolution was another radical departure from the traditional Marxist framework. Empirical experience is a very crucial factor in the thought of Mao and Ambedkar. The successful application of their ideas to the concrete situation of China and India made them successful leaders of their respective societies. Pragmatism has been the basic foundation in their lifelong emancipatory struggle. They were true theoreticians and practitioners.

Mao was influenced both directly and indirectly by radical ideas of Dewey. He got the first impression about pragmatism from his teacher, Yang Changji, who was a close friend of Dewey's representative in China, Hu Shih. Yang Changji introduced Mao to Hu Shih in 1918 at Beijing University. Mao attended Hu Shih lectures at Beijing University regarding traditional Chinese philosophy and pragmatism. Mao accepted his viewpoint ardently (Li 1989:37 cited in Xiaodong Niu 1995: 131-32).¹⁰ When Mao went to Beijing for the second time in 1919, he attended Dewey's guest lectures on "Three Contemporary Philosophers" (William James, Henri-Louis Bergson, and Bertrand Russell). Mao was impressed by Dewey's lectures and decided to study Western

⁹ Stuart Schram (1963: 112-14) used the term *Sinification* for Mao's modification of Marxism in Chinese situation.

¹⁰ Li, Y. (1989). "Chinese and Western Culture and Early Thought of Mao Zedong", Chengdu: Sichuan University Press. Cited in Xiaodong Niu (1995), *The Journal of Educational Thought (JET)/ Revue de la pensee Educative*, Vol.29, August, 1995, pp.129-147. At: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23767673>.

philosophy by using “Three Contemporary Philosophers” as a textbook (Li 1989:26).¹¹ Dewey went to lecture in 1920 at Changsha; Mao was actively organizing the presentation and in producing the official record. For more clarity, Mao discussed these ideas with friends. It was the time when Mao was greatly influenced by Dewey’s philosophical thought (Li 1989:26).¹² Mao believed that pragmatism could constitute an effective weapon to fight against feudalism (Xiaodong 1995:132).

Similarly, Ambedkar has been highly influenced by John Dewey’s pragmatism since his University of Columbia days. Ambedkar attended each and every lecture of Dewey and prepared the notes. He was a keen observer of Dewey and was a great fan of his ideas and philosophy. He revered Dewey in his political thought and activism at his home in his life. Ambedkar’s political ideas are mostly drawn from his “Democracy and Education.”¹³

1. Mao Zedong on Theory and Practice

Mao’s thought is a fusion of theory and practice. From the inception of the CPC, Mao was actively taking part in the political activities. Apart from his initial inclination toward anarchism,¹⁴ he retained the position of practitioners of Marxist theory in China. Maoism is not popular in the dominant Western discourse. However, African, Latin American and Asian countries derive much insight and inspiration from the Maoist tradition. That is because they find the ideological creativity in Mao’s theory and practice as being attractive (Mohanty 2012:15). Fann (1972) opined that Mao’s major contribution to philosophy, *On Practice and On Contradiction*, consist of general methodological guidelines for revolution (114).

¹¹ Cited in Xiaodong 1995:132.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Letter from Dr. Ambedkar to V.B. Kadam, Dated 24 August 1954, in Ambedkar papers now with the Administration General, Maharashtra State. Ambedkar quote John Dewey, “Who was my teacher and to whom I owe so much. Cited in Zelliott 2013:69.

¹⁴ In the twenties, Mao Tse-Tung was influence by G Kircupp’s *History of Socialism*. Mao Tse-Tung got inclination toward anarchism. Kircupp was praising the anarchist asserting the catechism of Bakunin rejected the Marxist scientific socialism and preached his moral socialism. For more detail- G. Kircupp, *History of Socialism*, London, 1920, p.405. Cited in Altaisky 1971:55.

In the two philosophical essays of Mao, “On Contradiction” and “On Practice” written in 1937, he fundamentally advocated that theory has to be derived from practice. His innovative ideas include New Democratic Revolution and a new formulation for socialism. “New Democracy” for the unity of the people and different socialist ideas for ensuring their equality. In his definition of people, he considered 95% population comprised of PLA, peasants, and workers and pitted them against the enemy (Mohanty 2012:15).

“On Contradiction” was a philosophical essay written by Mao in 1937. Liu (1971:86) believes that “On Contradiction” was a historical document, based on Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism. It was to analyze the concrete situation from 1930s and provided new insight into Marxist-Leninist theory. “On Contradiction” has been written in a particular context to guide the orthodox Marxist in the late 1930s. Mao wanted to go into an alliance with the nationalist KMT.

Nationalists were capitalists and during 1927-1937, they killed 90 percent cadre of the Communist Party of China. Joseph Liu (1971:75) argued that “On Contradiction” detailed about the various facet of dialectical materialism and its multiple dimensions. Its main purpose was to explain the dialectics for Chinese communists in Chinese situation. Liu divided this essay into five aspects as Universality of Contradiction, The particularity of the contradiction, The Principal contradiction and principle aspects of the contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a Contradiction and the place of Antagonism in Contradiction (Liu 1971:75-77).

Liu further argued that Mao wanted to convince his comrades that a united front was necessary with the nationalists (1971:77). The contradiction between nationalists and communists was absolute but it was necessary to understand that which was principal and which was secondary in a given situation. Even the contradiction between nationalists and communists could be turned into temporal unity (Ibid.78). For nationalists and communists, it was Japanese imperialism was a primary contradiction. In order to

understand the complex situation in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial China, Mao advanced the theory of dialectics through different stages of contradictions (Ibid.78).

Another philosophical essay is “On Practice” which was basically for those who are hardcore Marxists but lack the practical understanding to apply theory to practice. This essay was highly influenced by the idea of pragmatism. Mao argued that man’s social exercise was the only benchmark of truth of knowledge of the external world. Man’s knowledge is substantiated and verified only when he succeeds in the social practice (Mao 1966:3). The theory of dialectical materialism deliberated practice as a crucial component. Knowledge cannot be detached from practice. He rejected theories that denied the significance of practice. (Mao 1966:4). As Lenin emphasized: “Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality but also of immediate actuality.”¹⁵ Mao’s emphasis on practical research and his demand to “Oppose Book Worship” suggest his commitment to practice. He was convinced that rather than focus on cities, it is important to concentrate on countryside (Womack 1994:162). On the discussion of Mao’s plagiarism, Knight (1990) table the direct and indirect source of Mao’s writing. Mao was crude empiricist and his thought and action should, therefore, be employed as empiricism equally as crude. And that Mao’s epistemology was an undiluted empiricism (Knight: 1990:27-29, in Womack 1994:164).¹⁶

Dialectical Materialism comprises of two fundamental features: first, it serves the purpose of proletariat and second, its practicality. It emphasizes theory’s dependence on practice. Social practice was only criterion of truth. The viewpoint of practice is the

¹⁵ From Lenin’s Notes on “The Idea” in Hegel’s *The Science of Logic* Book III, Section 3. See V.I. Lenin, “*Conspectus of Hegel’s The Science of Logic*”, (September-December 1914), *Collected Works*, Russ. Ed. Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 205. Cited in Mao 1966:4.

¹⁶ *Mao Zedong on Dialectical Materialism: Writings on Philosophy*, 1937. Edited by Nick Knight. [Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990.] Cited in Womack, (1994), “Mao Zedong Thoughts”, *China Quarterly*, A Review Article, No. 137 (Mar. 1994), pp. 159-167, at URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/655691>.

principal and essential position in the dialectical materialist idea of knowledge (Mao 1966:4).¹⁷

Practice is part of the dialectical materialist method not as part of the idealism itself. Dialectical materialism is not only for interpretation of history but also a method to implement theory in practice for a concrete change. Any departure from this is a deviation from the concrete reality of the society. Mao further explained that cognition is significant in the process of the formation of knowledge. He opined that Marxism-Leninism underscored the importance of two stages:

“First is knowledge manifested itself as perceptual at the lower stage and as logical at the higher stage. These two phases are in an integrated process of cognition. The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. The perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can address the problem of the essence. The solving of both these problems is not separable in the slightest degree from practice (Mao 1966:6-7).

Mao explained the inability of the human agency to predict the unfolding of social relations in society. In the feudal society, it was not possible to discern the laws of capitalist society because it had not yet developed. For Mao, Marxism is an only product of capitalism:

Marx, in the era of laissez-faire capitalism, could not concretely know certain laws, which are peculiar to the era of imperialism beforehand. The Imperialism that is the last stage of the capitalism had not yet emerged, and the relevant practice was lacking; only Lenin and Stalin could undertake this task. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin successfully worked out their theories only because they took part in the practice of the class struggle and scientific experimentation of their time (Mao 1966:7).

Mao also enunciated that the practice of Marxism is preceded by the capitalist mode of production. It has to follow the course of historical action against the

¹⁷ See Karl Marx, “*Theses on Feuerbach*” (Spring of 1845), “Karl Marx and Frederick Engels”, *Selected Works*, in two volumes, Eng.ed. FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, P.403, and V.L. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Second half of 1908), Eng . ed. FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp.136-42.

development of capitalism in the world. Knowledge originated from practice, and practice attained theoretical knowledge and then it must come back to the practice. The active function of knowledge is not only a leap from perception to rationality, but it must lead from rational knowledge to a revolutionary one. The problem which matches to objective reality can only be solved by the leap of knowledge from perceptual to rational (Mao 1966:14). He further opined that the failure of the revolutionary movement lies in the theory which is not drawn from the concrete reality of the society. When a theory does not commensurate the practical reality, then revolutionary movement is bound to fail.

Mao further explained that it often happens that thinking lags behind reality; this is because numerous social experiences condition man's cognition. Thus a social experience is crucial to understand the reality of society. Marxists should oppose die-hards in revolutionary activity and those who fail to advance their thinking with changing objective reality and had manifested themselves traditionally as “Right Opportunism”. People, who lack the experience, failed to understand the essence of theory and practice. Those who failed to understand that contradiction has already pushed the objective process ahead while their knowledge had remained same. A fundamental feature of the die-hard is that they are separated from the social practice. They cannot go forward for guiding the caravan of society, rather than dragging back (Mao 1966:17-18). Die-hard revolutionaries have been one of the obstacles which are blocking the practice of revolutionary theory. People devoid of the social experience had been a stumbling block in the implementation of Marxist theory in society.

Mao argued that opportunism and adventurism, idealism and mechanical materialism all are categorized by the gap between the subjective and the objective, and by separation of knowledge from practice (Mao 1966:17). Those who want to change the reality must adopt the concept of practice. If one desires to change the pear, then he must test it. If one aspires to know the theory and method of revolution, then it is necessary to be of the Revolution (Mao 1966:8). The practical knowledge of concrete reality can save from making the mistake of adventurism and opportunism in the revolutionary

movement. The inseparability of social experience and practice from theory would lead the revolutionary movement in the wrong direction.

In highlighting the evolution of Mao's thought, Mohanty opined that the idea of Chinese Revolution was a creation of the revolutionary effort in China. The last fifty years of Chinese history have seen the rise of certain political, philosophical dimensions of the revolutionary movement with far-reaching implications. It can be called the political philosophy of Mao. His thought is indeed the political philosophy of Chinese revolutionary movement during the past half century. Only a study of the historical process can explain the meaning of Mao's political ideas (Mohanty 2012:18).

Mao's thought and philosophy are the result of a systematic study of the reality. He successfully understood the social and economic relations and brought about change through implementing them in China. Mao's thought is a correct reflection of the then existing reality in China. His thought and practice have no gap between reality and theory. The mobilization of peasants in the Chinese revolution for capturing political power was the greatest contribution of Mao in Chinese history. The nature of rebellion and nature of the peasants in the Chinese society made this mobilization more efficient as a tool. In the social hierarchy, peasants above against the trading class. The social mobility of the Chinese peasants made Mao's task easier in their mobilization. The role of social movement prior to Mao has been liberating the peasants from the superstitious foundations and readied them for their liberation.¹⁸

The method of historical materialism which explains the capitalist mode of production and overlooks the social and cultural foundations of the society. Marx considers capitalism as a necessary condition for the development of social consciousness in the masses. The realization of economic exploitation in the society facilitates class

¹⁸ C. M Chang discussed the advantages of the peasant mobilization for land reform. Mao's program is primarily designed as a measure to win support for the new regime. Land in China, the theory runs, has been concentrated in the hands of predatory landlords who exacted exorbitant rents from their oppressed tenants. Agrarian discontent was thus gnawing at the vitals of the old order. C.M. Change (1951) "Mao's Stratagem of Land Reform" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Jul., 1951), pp. 550-563, online: Web, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20030861>.

formation. It is been economic determinism which is at the heart of the classical Marxist understanding. Mao has been path breaking regarding departure from the classical understanding of Marxism. The leap from semi-feudal society to socialist society made feasible by the new democratic revolution. The bourgeois democratic phase played an important role in bringing about social reform. Mao's leap of surpassing capitalist stage of the historical materialism from semi-feudal to the socialist mode of production led Mao's failure of the great leap forward programme. The use of violence as a method in the semi-feudal society by Mao for political power was a strategy of the whole movement. Schwartz (1977:11) opined that Mao's thought could not be seen in isolation from his role as a political leader in the practical Chinese socio-political situation. At the same time, his role as a revolutionary leader made his thought significant.

Lucian Pye (1976) used the psycho-historic approach to delineate Mao's thought. Those who were preoccupied with Maoist ideas were concerned about the effects rather than the cause. Pye tried to explain Mao's personality as well as his thought. Mao's personal capacity to understand the nature of the masses made him a successful leader because he had an extraordinary capacity to understand the psychology of the masses (Pye 1976).

For Mao, a person's knowledge depends on experience of material production and facilitates a better understanding of the phenomena. It includes the properties of law of nature and the connection between people and nature. It also leads to understanding the relationship between man and man (MSW:1:1965: 295). Man developed his knowledge through engagement with production for process. In a class-based society, everyone is a member of the class and thinking is stamped with the kind of the class (MSW: 1:1965: 295). Mao enunciated that if a person wants knowledge, he must take part in the changing reality. All genuine knowledge generated from real experience; in fact, our knowledge originates from indirect experience as well as our direct knowledge is indirect for others. However, it cannot be separated from the experience (MSW: 1: 1965:300).

Rationalist school believes in reason not experience; it is reliable because it has its foundation in the sensory perception. It is like water coming from a source (MSW:1:1965:302). The perceptual experience comes first in cognition. It stresses on the social practice for cognition exactly because the social practice can only produce knowledge. It can be acquirement of perceptual experience from the objective reality. According to materialistic theory, knowledge begins with the experience. More important it has to be so deep and required to develop up to the stage of rationality; this is called the dialectical theory of knowledge. "Rational knowledge depends on perceptual knowledge, and perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge this is dialectical materialist theory of knowledge" (MSW:1: 1965: 303). Mao further argued that:

"Neither rationalism nor materialism understands the historical or dialectical nature of the knowledge. However, they contained on an aspect of the truth (referring to materialist not an idealist, rationalist, and empiricist) both are wrong in the theory of knowledge as a whole. The dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge from the perception to rational hold true for a minor cognition (knowing a single thing or task) as well as for a major process of cognition (knowing whole society or a revolution). However, the movement of knowledge does not end here. Knowledge through the dialectical process is half of the story. Marxist philosophy holds that most important problem does not lie in the understanding the objective law or being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world" (MSW: 2: 1965: 304).

For him, theories are incomplete if they fail the test at a practical level. Theory becomes aimless if it is not linked with the revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in dark if the revolutionary theory does not illuminate its path.¹⁹ Mao suggested that revolutionaries need to change according to the progress of the society and social change. Moreover, they need to work according to the changing conditions (MSW: 2:1965: 306-7). He went on to conclude that the historical unity of theory and practice and subjective and objective, and knowing and doing were central. He further opposed all inaccurate ideologies which are no longer grounded in history (MSW:2:1965: 308). Practice and

¹⁹ J. V. Stalin, *The Foundation of Leninism*" Problems of Leninism, Eng. Ed. FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p.31.

knowledge is like an endless cycle. But in each cycle, there is a qualitative change in the knowledge. This is the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge (MSW: 2: 1965: 308).

Chan (2003) also examined the nature and development of Mao Zedong Thought (MZT), and its implication when it was put into practice by the CCP. Mao, like Marx, denied that there can be revolutionary praxis or handbook that all societies must follow if they had to reach their Marxian socialist goals. Mao's formulation of a coherent statement of Chinese Marxism based on the theoretical and practical foundations is laid down by Chen and Qu. Chan (2003) drew three vital aspects in the MZT: the implication of materialistic interpretation of history, how to understand Chinese society, as well as how to change it. These three aspects are fundamentally different from Chinese historical and traditional philosophy. In the first principle, it has to accept that Marxist Materialist conception of history demands acceptance that history develops in a linear fashion. History developed towards a goal as from slave to feudal and capitalist, then finally to a socialist society. The interesting thing is that progress and change in the society have not been part of the philosophical tradition. There was the conception of the personal development in the Confucius philosophy. Marx and Mao shared the conviction that human nature is malleable and human society will progress to socialism (Chan 2003:109).

Accepting the Marxist conception of history constrains one to work toward achieving socialism; that is, to change the world. Deciding how to do that is the task of the Marxist theory of knowledge and practice. Moreover, one should not go with those who view Marx as an economic determinist. (Mao 1937a/1965:308).²⁰ In 1937, Mao enunciated the dialectical relations and contradiction between practice and theory. Deng Xiaoping (1986) asked:

How should we hold high the banner of Mao Zedong Thought? There are two whatever as doctrines. First is whatever Mao Zedong read and endorsed and whatever he did and said must always determine our action, without the slightest deviation. Certainly, this cannot be a way to take Mao Zedong's thought forward.

²⁰ Cited in Adrian Chan: *Chinese Marxism*, Continuum, 2003, p.111.

The fundamental point of Mao Zedong thought is seeking truth from facts and integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the correct practice of the Chinese Revolution. Mao Zedong wrote a four-word motto for Central Party's School in Yanan: "Seek truth from facts" these four words are the quintessence of Mao Zedong thought. Comrade Mao's greatness and his success in guiding the Chinese revolution can be seen in this approach (Deng Xiaoping 1986:85-86).

He went on to argue that "we made our revolution in areas where the enemy was weak. In principle, two courses were the same. Instead of taking the cities first, we began with rural areas, then gradually encircled the cities. If we had not applied the fundamental principle of seeking truth from fact, how could we have raised and solved this problem of strategy? How could Chinese revolution have been victorious?" (Deng 1986:86). He also reiterated that after founding the PRC, Mao took us forward by following the same principle. We must continue to deal with the present reality if we want to hold the high Red Flag of Mao's thought. Now, it is time to achieve China's "Four modernization program" to resolve many conditions which were not there at the time of Mao. Four modernizations are required for the economic development of the people. Moreover, this is the way of taking Mao's thought to highest levels (Deng 1986:86).

Maoists argued as Mao said in 1963; "where do correct ideas come from?" He further explained that "matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter". They emphasised on the being with an equal emphasis on the matter as consciousness, in turn, reflects on the base (Mohanty 2012:124). After Mao's 1963 essay, China had started a debate on the question of the identity of thinking and being, Yang Hsien-Chen criticised Mao's formulation on idealist deviation from the dialectical materialism that gives primacy to material force.²¹

Mao's materialist dialectical is both a theory of knowledge and a theory of practice. It was Mao who developed the notion further in terms of the inseparability of knowledge and practice, cognition from the action and knowing from doing (Mohanty: 2012:166). Mohanty identifies four laws to understand Maoist dialectical materialism. The four laws include: Law of the unity of knowing and doing; Law of analysis; Law of

²¹ Question of Identity of thinking and being, PR. No.15, 19 April 1971, cited in Mohanty 2012:124.

synthesis, and Law of particularity. All these four laws can guide our understanding of reality and the practice of handling a contradiction to achieve a desired end (Mohanty 2012:167).

The first law of unity of knowing and doing shows that knowledge is product of continuous practice through struggle and knowledge where in turn, can be transformed into a material force. In the social practice of the class society, a struggle takes the form of the class struggle. Second is the Law of analysis; a thing is a contradiction that is in constant movement. So every phenomenon has to be analyzed. To analyse the phenomenon, one must divide it into two and try to understand the internal and external relationships of the aspect of the contradiction. Third is Law of synthesis; development of a process takes place through continuous negation and confrontation that cause the change of the positions between the contending aspects of a contradiction. Fourth, the law of particularity, a contradiction defined in terms of (1), the particular essence of its two aspects (2), its relative position vis-à-vis other contradictions to determine the principal contradiction at the particular stage of the contradiction. (3), whether its opposites are antagonistic or not at that stage (Mohanty 2012:167).

Mao's theory of cognition starts with the assertion that matter is the basis of the idea. People's perception of material force gathers what is called perceptual knowledge. When men apply earlier knowledge with perceptual knowledge, they create logical and rational knowledge. The rational knowledge so formed (theories, principles, law, etc.) is again testing, verification, refinement, and correction. The process of knowing and testing goes on. Interaction with material force is a key aspect of the theory of cognition. It is practice. Knowledge arises from practice and develops through practice. Mao emphasized the philosophical aspect to the theory of knowledge. Practice means carrying out the class struggle in a class-based society (Mohanty 2012:171).

According to Mohanty, Mao emphasized upon the role of the human initiative in history which makes him differ from a mechanical understanding of materialism. One is the dependence of rational knowledge upon perceptual knowledge, and the other is that perceptual knowledge needs to be developed into rational knowledge. The absence of the first point leads to idealism. Moreover, the error on the second point brings empiricism. It is how social practices are interconnected with practice in the primary position (Mohanty 2012:172).

Yang compared Mao's notion of identity between thinking and being which Lenin, before Mao, had so strongly criticized in his *Materialism and Empiric-Criticism*. The Maoists refuted this by saying that by Identity Mao meant the capacity of man's ideas to reflect the true reality and act upon it. A Chinese official criticised Yang by repudiating the identity between thinking and being and totally rejected any role of revolutionary theory, refuted dynamic role agency of the masses.²²

Mao was of the opinion that there is a contradictory interdependent aspect in everything. The struggle between two interdependent contradictions pushes forward the qualitative change. The notion of unity here is the same as identity or complementarity of the opposites. Mao refers identity to the existence of one aspect presupposes the existence of other. Secondly, that in a given situation, the contradictory aspects transform into their opposites.²³ For Starr:

“While it is impossible to speak of the evolution of Mao's ideas during the course of his career without alluding from time to time to certain events in that career. He further articulated that Mao attempted to relate major shifts in his ideas to the events that I influenced those shifts, theory divorced from practice is, as Mao made it clear on numerous occasions, both illegitimate and useless. Owing to this fundamental principle, there is a certain illegitimacy in treating his theoretical conclusions in isolation from their practical context. A historical presentation of his political ideas might approximate more closely his sense of the necessary relationship between theory and practice. The disadvantage of the attendant loss is clarity” (Starr 1979: xi).

²² An official publication this controversy is dated 1955-64. The three major struggle in China's philosophical front, Peking Foreign Language Press, 1973, p.35. Cited in Mohanty: 2012:174.

²³ Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Writing of Mao Tse-Tung*, “On Contradiction”, Vol.1, 1967:343.

When one contrast this methodological technique with Starr's appreciation for the cultural revolution, one finds that the essence of Mao's development with destabilisation of the political order is closely related to the reassurance of the creative disorder. An enduring battle with embourgeoisement is demonstrating a semi-anarchic aspect of Cultural Revolution (Starr:1979:.303-307). Starr concludes that:

“Mao's position was characterized by the fusion of pragmatism and revolutionary romanticism. Mao's theory of knowledge, he argues, bears a striking resemblance to that of the American pragmatist, John Dewey, whose thought exerted considerable influence during the May Fourth Movement time. Like Dewey, Mao sees ideas growing out of practical experience and in turn, shaping that experience indeed the resemblance was clear to Mao since he on more than one occasion described himself as a pragmatist” (Starr 1979:17).

Herbert Marcuse commented about “On Practice” that there was more Dewey than Marx.²⁴ Steven Chin argued that the name of Dewey is entirely absent from his book, as it is from Francis Soo.²⁵ Chin regards Mao's formulation as “practice-theory-practice” decisively embedded in the Marxist tradition. However, he made an enormous improvement as upon the writings of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. Starr and Chin established that Mao's refutation of Engels's three basic laws of dialectics (the transformation of quantity into quality, and the negation of the negation) was noteworthy. Starr and Chin's conclusions about the meaning of this progress were totally contrasting. Starr marks that Mao's idea of the process was totally opposed. Starr wrote that Mao's “conception of the process” reach to a synthesis (or of the “negation of the negation”) was more mechanical than organic, perhaps because he found Hegel only by way of Engels (Starr 1979:27).

Mao's conception of “Aufhebung” as from his Hangzhou address of December 1965. Starr called it as noticeable and a self-conscious arrival to his own natural source and enhances that Mao's “misconstrual” of them was a symbolic departure from Marx's as well as Hegel's idea of synthesis (Starr 1979:28). Chin regards this advancement one step further in Mao's efforts to resolve theoretical and methodological problems of

²⁴ Quoted from Stuart R. Schram, “Mao Studies: Retrospect and Prospect”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 97 (March 1984), pp. 105-06.

²⁵ Francis Soo, *Mao Tse-Tung's Theory of Dialectics*, Springer, 1977.

dialectical and historical materialism. To address the problem of metaphysics and idealism, therefore, making them accurate as they have never been that correct in the hand of Marx (Starr 1979:202). Mao's refutation of the other two laws in his philosophical talk of 1964, which marked as a significant advancement in the theory and methodology of dialectical materialism. It solidifies materialistic dialectics as extra constant and carries it closer conformity with reality (Starr 1979:64).

Ross Terrill (1980) blamed Schram looking for Mao's consistency throughout his whole life. Schram argued that Mao's thought maintained continuity from the 1920s to 1970s. The methodology which appears suitable is exactly the one supported by Brantly Womack, who has indicated the case subsequently that Terrill favors to repeat his arguments;

“The purpose of the study is to draw upon the practical nature of Mao's writings and their political context to produce an interpretation of his early political thought in *vivo*. I attempt to present emerging political concepts with their original reference and to discuss the subjects which Mao depicts as urgent and significant in terms of the practical decision points he was facing as a political actor. This approach is particularly well studied for Mao because his theoretical concepts tend to emerge from a course of practical experience rather than an abstract program. Mao's theoretical development has never been simply an explication of earlier conviction; developing experience and shifting political contexts have led to continual re-castings of his thinking. It is important to study the phases of development chronologically from the beginning because only with this approach are all of the relevant policies and experience available to the researcher. Such an approach does not preclude generalizations about Mao's political thought, but I think it can make the difference between naïve and responsible generalizations” (Terrill pp.xi,xii,192, cited in Schram 1984:109).

Thus Mao's political thought writing highlighted five important themes: class struggle, socialist education, organizing the class rank of the poor and lower middle peasants, four clean-ups, and cadre participation in collective labour. Among these five things, class struggle was fundamental.²⁶ Together, these themes and issues played a key role in shaping the political dynamics in Mao' China.

²⁶ Document 1956-1969, pp. 754-55. Cited in Mohanty 2012:97.

2. *B. R. Ambedkar on Theory and Practice*

Like Mao, Ambedkar believed in the inseparability of theory and practice which has been part of pragmatism. Ambedkar was a student of the prominent pragmatist of the 20th century John Dewey (Keer: 2009). He had been under the influence of John Dewey for his ideas of democracy and education (Kadam:1997:4-6). Dewey's pragmatic ideas have been a major source of Ambedkar's political ideas and method (Mukherjee 2009:345).²⁷ The then existing political situation in India made Ambedkar more prone to accept the method of pragmatism. Mere idealism without practice would have made him the only theoretician devoid of the practice. Ambedkar articulated that not to act is to be dead. Life consists of activity. It is better to act as violently as in war than not at all for only when we act that we may hope to act well. It is called 'quieticism' as not resistance (BAWS: 1: 1979: 487).²⁸

Meera Nanda argued that the influence of Dewey on Ambedkar with particular reference to the latter's emphasis on scientific temper. She shows how Ambedkar's methodology of adopting scientific rationality was informed by Dewey's approach to science. It can be a strong means of emancipation for Dalits rather than being a constraint as argued by some feminists and post-colonial critics of science.²⁹ There is no doubt that Dewey's thought on "*Democracy and Education*" shaped Ambedkar's ideas during his years of study at Columbia (Skof 2011:123).

Pradeep Gokhale posited that in Dewey's pragmatist framework one finds a synthesis of facts and values and they practically imply each other. In pragmatist framework, values being determined by factual considerations, become the culture in

²⁷ Gopal Guru (2011) divided the Indian political thinkers into three category, Derivative, Desi and Beyond, he placed Ambedkar in the category of beyond as he has transcended the Desi and Derivative. Desi is local and Derivative is about drove out from the West.

²⁸ Ambedkar, "Mr. Russell and The Reconstruction of the Society" *Journal of Indian Economic Society*, Vol.1, 1918, BAWS: 1: 1979:481-492.

²⁹ Meera Nanda, *Breaking the Spell of Dharma and Other Essays*, Three Essays Press, New Delhi, 2002. Cited in Gokhale 2008:15.

which they arise. Therefore, no universal values in it. He further argued that Ambedkar deviated from it. Despite being a materialist, he denied the spiritual and otherworldly values that can exist beyond the human world. He did regard values as conceptually distinct from facts. Second he asserts in “Buddha and his Dhamma” that Damma as morality is sacred in the sense of being universal and inviolable (Gokhale 2008:16).

Ambedkar’s political thought comprises methods that aimed at radical change in the society. His political thought deals with the problems of the Indian polity. The democratic method of political mobilization does not come from the pre-occupied mind and theory, rather his experiment in the people’s movement and their opposition from the ruling castes. The major point in adopting the democratic means in Ambedkar’s methodology is a reflection of the Indian society marked by its graded inequality. Any revolt from below in the Indian society is crushed by “upper” castes. The key point here is that when violent revolt from below is considered as a threat by less oppressed sections of the society. Less oppressed sections, rather than joining the struggle tend to be hostile to the rebellion in the society. Graded inequality has played an important role in the Indian caste-based society. The methodology of Ambedkar for political purposes forced him to adopt non-violent means. Ambedkar’s methodology of organising people’s movement was democratic.

Ambedkar rejected the possibility of applying Marxist theory for proletarian revolution in India. He argued that was impracticable because of the traditional social system. A Marxist revolution required the feelings of equality, fraternity, and above all a sense of justice in the minds and actions of all revolutionaries. Indian caste system does not allow to cultivate these values in the minds of masses. That becomes stumbling block in the revolution (Jatava:1997:41). The very nature of the caste system has been a major obstacle in the formation of the class consciousness among the masses. Ambedkar called caste as enclosed class (BAWS: 1. 1979: 1:15).

Ambedkar further argued that untouchables will not join a Marxist revolution for the distribution of property unless they realise that after revolution they will be equal

citizen and face no discrimination on the basis of caste and creed. Is it that poor in India recognize only poverty and no caste and creed or high and low? How can there be a revolution if the proletariat cannot present a united front? He said that it is the caste that is a monster which cross the path of democracy and revolution in India (Jatava 1997:41-42).

Ambedkar, while highlighting on how to organize the proletariat in India against the enemy of social revolution i.e. the caste system, felt that it is a difficult one to organise. Indian Marxists are unable to grapple with this problem because the leadership of the communist movement in India is in the hands of those who have not been able to cast off their caste affiliations. The Marxist movement also contributed to the nourishment of caste politics in India. The caste system is the biggest hurdle to proletarian revolution in India (Jatava 1997:42).

To excite the proletariat to bring about the economic revolution, Karl Marx told them, you have nothing to lose except your chains. But, heartfelt way in which the social and religious rights are distributed among the different castes whereby some have more, and some have less, make the slogan of Karl Marx quite useless to excite Hindus against the caste system. The castes from a graded system and a graded system of sovereignties, high and low, which are jealous of their status and which know that if a general dissolution came, some of them stand to lose more prestige and power than others do. You cannot, therefore, have a general mobilization of Hindus, to use a military expression, for an attack on the caste system.³⁰

Ambedkar's fight is not only limited to the materialist gains. He expanded his fight for freedom of speech and dignity of life. Moreover, he was fighting for social and political rights for all the citizens. The status of untouchables was that "dominant castes" were not ready to acknowledge them as equal human beings in their fight for equal rights. Untouchables were treated as sub-human beings without basic dignity and rights in contrast to an industrial society where workers had basic dignity. The fight for equality is easier than the fight for transformation of society from subhuman status to the status of

³⁰ *Dr. Ambedkar: A Symbol of Social Revolt* (Quoted in), Published by Maharashtra information centre, New Delhi, April 1967, p.11. Cited in Jatava 1997:42.

human being. Marx fought for the rights of the human beings, but Ambedkar's fight was for attaining the stage of Marx's working class. Marx argued for class consciousness among workers for successful political mobilization. The consciousness about their exploitation is significant for political revolution. In this case, untouchables were nowhere near the consciousness about their subhuman life.

The freedom of mind was prohibited for untouchables by *Sanatan Dharma*. The unfree mind would not generate ideas for the freedom of mind. *Sanatana Dharma* did not allow "untouchables" even the basic level of dignity. Ambedkar questioned *Sanatan Dharma* to raise their consciousness up to the level of making them feel human beings. Ambedkar's first goal was to work for the realization of their dignity and for their social awareness. The realization of the need for dignity was expected to unite untouchable under one umbrella of the movement led by Ambedkar. However, "touchables" were mostly ignorant about the basic dignity of "untouchables", the consciousness about their exploitation must come before change can occur. Marx also considered the consciousness of classes necessary to be for the formation of class. For Marx, only a realization of economic exploitation can bring them together to be a class.

Gopal Guru argued that Brahmanical society not only has the problem of social and economic exploitation but also deprives of recognition. Ambedkar's intellectual capacity was not recognised in the Brahmanical society. It was a clear rejection of the organic intellectual. Even organic intellectual has limitation in a caste society (2013). In this contrast, caste becomes a framework which runs through cultural hegemony and humiliation (Guru: 2009). Realization of humiliation in the society by the "untouchables" resulted from Ambedkar's struggle. Humiliation is the fundamental feature of Brahmanical society, and realization of that humiliation on the part of the untouchables is necessary. Social reform starts with the realization of humiliation in one's being. Unfortunately, the "untouchables" were yet to wake up to this realization. Sensitivity in the Indian society was generated through the modern colonial rationality and secular institutions, despite the exploitative and oppressive nature.

Ambedkar developed his ideas about man, society and their interrelationship. He possessed all the qualities of a thinker and a philosopher. However, the social milieu in which he lived was a crucial consideration and basic to the development of his personality. The constraints by the unjust social order led him to the realm of action as he was not only a thinker but a determined social engineer and reformer (Rajeshkhiya and Jayaraj 1991:359). They considered his philosophy was, in fact, pragmatic and programmatic. Ambedkar strikes a balance in thought and action. He attempted to bring his thought and the realities of his life experience. Therefore, he did not indulge in the building up of a metaphysical body of thought (Rajeshkhiya and Jayaraj 1991: 359).

Ambedkar's political philosophy was not purely speculative and idealistic. Though he was not a philosopher in the conventional sense like Plato and Aristotle, nevertheless, developed his own social and political ideals juxtaposing idealism and realism, empiricism and rationalism, naturalism and humanism individualism and socialism, nationalism and internationalism.³¹ According to him, it has to be essentially related to the real human problem and issues because the social environment and political philosophy are complementary. His political philosophy in a sense is an expression of vital human affairs and is a sincere attempt to bridge the gulf between theory and practice, materialism and spiritualism.³²

On the basis of above discussion, it can be argued that the pragmatist thinkers are more practical than idealist. Mao and Ambedkar had been in the same galaxy of thinkers. Mao departed from the classical Marxist orthodoxy and *Sinified* Marxism in Chinese context. Similarly, Ambedkar evolved his political philosophy focusing on theory and practice based on the then existing political and social conditions in India.

³¹ Jatava D. R. *The Political Philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*, Phoenix Publishing Agency, Agra, 1965, p.2. Cited in Rajasekhariah 1991:360.

³² Ibid.

III. Mao and Ambedkar on Democracy

Democracy has been the most celebrated term from its inception. From left to right, everyone claims to be democratic. The form democracy has many forms but it is basically divided into two parts, first; democracy based on consent and second; democracy based on coercion. Former is liberal while the latter is communist.³³ Ambedkar believed in the first while Mao advocated the second which is often called people's democracy. In the first one head of the state is elected by all while in the second head of the state is elected by working class only. Given that there are many criticisms of the two, the section below contrast the views of Mao and Ambedkar on democracy.

Mao and Ambedkar had their own different conception of democracy. Mao believed in authoritarianism with one party rule while Ambedkar believed in socialist electoral democracy. After the 1949 revolution, Mao established the People's Democratic Dictatorship and Ambedkar being the chairman of the Drafting Committee of Constituent Assembly promoted the constitutional democracy with the periodical general elections. Mao believed in a democracy that emphasized the equality while Ambedkar focused on balance between liberty and equality. Ambedkar's democracy rests on the three major principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. Equality is the most fundamental feature even in the Maoist version of the democracy. Ambedkar gave equal importance to brotherhood and liberty. Mao's democracy is based on coercion and violence while Ambedkar's democracy is rooted in consent and normative values.

The normative foundation of democracy, stated Axel Honneth, has been increasing on a worldwide scale at present. The acceptance of the normative values by the masses raises the question of the legitimacy of a political system. The key concepts like Republicanism and Proceduralism seem confrontational in the traditional sense. These two terms are normative models of democracy as their aim is to focus on democratization than only political liberalism. They are followed in different ways to

³³ V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, August - September, 1917 , Source: Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381-492, for online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch03.htm#s3>.

justify the process of democratization. The procedure of democracy insists upon the citizens' virtues. (Honneth 2008:218).

John Dewey's theory of democracy appears surprising since both sides claim him as a theoretical predecessor. Dewey's theory of democracy as a self-organizing community is linked to the concept of political republicanism. The Procedural theory of democracy has no problems with the arguments of Dewey relating to the rational procedure of problem-solving as it was more extensive than the other models of the public sphere (Honneth 2008:220). Dewey, in contrast to republicanism and democratic proceduralism, emphasised on the model of social cooperation. Dewey desires democracy as a reflective form of community cooperation and he brought the opposing positions of different theories of democracy (Honneth 2008:220).

In *Ethics of Democracy*, Dewey explaining the theory of democracy as the internal connection among cooperation, freedom, and democracy.³⁴ He observed that social division of labor was evidence for that people owe their personal freedom in terms of the communication of members of society. For Dewey, Freedom is predominantly an affirmative experience of unrestricted self-realization that communicates persons to ascertain themselves those abilities and capabilities through which they can back the maintenance of the social whole.³⁵ Unger defined democracy in two ways: the first involves institutional and economic changes, underpinned by an alternative political program and renovation. The second largely consists of an ethical attempt to outline the basic ethical criteria for democratic changes needed in our time (institutional changes notwithstanding) (Skof 2011:133).

Ambedkar wanted to resolve the caste and class contradiction through democracy while Mao wanted to address the class conflict by people's democracy under a

³⁴ John Dewey, "Ethics of Democracy", In the *Early Works of John Dewey*, 1882-1898, Vol. 1, Jo Ann Boydston (ed.) Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p.227-49. Cited in Honneth 2008:222.

³⁵ John Dewey, "Outline of A Critical Ethics" (1991), in *Early Work*, Vol. 3, pp.239-388. Cited in Honneth 2008:225.

dictatorship. Mao used excessive violence for desired aims while Ambedkar promoted democratic means to achieve his goal. Socialism is the ultimate goal for them, but Ambedkar wanted it based on consent while Mao on coercion by using violence. Ambedkar wanted socialism with consent and without using violence and force while People's democratic dictatorship is based on coercion and violence.

1. Mao's Idea of Democracy : Maoism

Mao's idea of democracy is discussed in two parts. One is the concept of New Democracy, and another is people's democratic dictatorship. New democratic phase is crucial to discuss the development of revolutionary movement and its culmination in People's Democratic Dictatorship in 1949. In the second part, the fundamental features are discussed to understand the practice of communist democracy.

Mao wrote an essay "On New Democracy" in 1940.³⁶ The Marxist theory and strategy for bringing about the revolution in the colonised countries has been applied by Mao enriching and leading the Chinese people. The winning liberation and advancing socialism in a nation like China on his line of "New-Democratic Revolution" was remarkable (Avakian 2008:11). It was during the anti-Japanese war in particular that Mao further developed the theory and strategy of New Democracy and its application to the Chinese context. The theory of the New Democratic Revolution is an application of the Marxist theory of the bourgeoisie democratic revolution to the colonial situation. The transition of societies from feudalism to capitalism through the bourgeoisie democratic revolution is the consequence of the capitalist system. Capitalism was replaced by the proletarian revolution and paved the way for socialism (Mohanty 2012:37). Mao suggested that in a semi-colonial and a semi-feudal conditions like those which prevailed in China, the bourgeois democratic revolution has to take the form of new or people's democratic revolution. It has to be an anti-colonial and an anti-feudal revolution. It was

³⁶ Mao's essay "On New Democracy", for details online:
https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm.

more advanced form than the bourgeois democratic revolution because the workers led it in alliance with the peasants (Mohanty 2012:37).

The theory of new democratic revolution which guided the movement till liberation was closely linked with the theory of class struggle in the socialist construction in China. The theory of new democratic revolution sought to grapple with the problem of the anti-colonial and anti-feudal struggle. How a society fights against the formidable power of imperialism and feudalism was the problem taken up by the CPC in the 1920s (Mohanty 2012:18). New democratic revolution is at the middle stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and socialist revolution has to be done in the semi-colonial and semifeudal situations. The national bourgeois was part of the united front. The contradiction between the national bourgeois and the proletariat was non-antagonistic because both classes had a common interest in fighting against common enemies of imperialism and feudalism. The national bourgeois was skeptical about the revolutionary socialist agenda of the proletariat. So it had dual character (Mohanty 2012:41). Trotsky and M.N. Roy held the view that the national bourgeois was not interested in suppressing proletarian movements.³⁷ In 1926, Mao had pointed out the inconsistent views and attitudes of middle bourgeois toward the Chinese revolution (MSW: 1: 1965: 14).

On the eve of liberation in 1949, Mao in his essay “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship”, wrote how important it is for China to continue industrial production with the help of the national bourgeois:

To counter imperialist oppression and to raise her backward economy to a higher level, China must utilize all the factors of urban and rural capitalism that are beneficial and not harmful to the national economy and people’s livelihood; and we must unite with the national bourgeois in a common struggle. Our policy is to regulate capitalism, not to destroy it.³⁸

³⁷ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1974, p. 150. Cited in “A Critique of the Contemporary Adherents of the Views of M.N. Roy”, Evgeny Varga and Leon Trotsky on the Current Stage of the Revolution in India, Online Source: <http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv3n2/india.htm>.

³⁸ Mao Tse-tung, *On The People’s Democratic Dictatorship*, in Commemorating of the Twentieth-eighth Anniversary of the Communist Part of China, June 30, 1949, MSW: 4: 1965:421.

Mao proclaimed People's Republic with people's Democratic Front in 1949 and defined people constituting the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeois and the national bourgeois (MSW: 4:1965:417). The contradictions among these four classes were non-antagonistic. Moreover, their joint seizure of political power was called People's Democratic Dictatorship. The system maintains democracy in these four classes and it constituted the majority of the population. Anti-imperialist mobilization was with democratic reform (Mohanty 2012:42).

The political, organizational, ideological and military principles of the united front made it a comprehensive revolutionary programme. Politically, the CPC invited non-communists and national bourgeoisie to share power with it. Organizationally, the CPC built itself on the principle of mass line based on close reliance upon masses. Militarily, the communists gave shape to a politicized army capable of waging guerrilla war and operating from revolutionary bases. Ideologically, the communists propagated new democratic ideas among the Chinese people and Marxism and Leninism among the members of CPC. The New Democratic Culture was described as popular, national and scientific, and this did have a widespread appeal. It was a tactic of the united front. The theory of new democratic revolution about having a background of the united front which became the most important instrument for the Chinese revolution (Mohanty 2012:43).

Mao firmly believed that revolution was impossible without the support of the peasants that constituted almost 70 % of the population. Lenin, in his mobilization of the peasants, argued that capitalism has already been in the mode of an exploiting force of the peasants and therefore they are conscious about it.³⁹

While practicing the 'Mass-line', the party was expected both to reflect the desire of the masses and at the same time lead them to raising consciousness. On this point, Mao said: "If we tried to go on the offensive when the masses are not awakened, that would be adventurism" (MSW: 4: 1965: 243). Moreover, the command is wrong in any work in overstepping the level of the political consciousness of the masses and violating the

³⁹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Moscow: Foreign Language Publication House, 1960, Vol.3, p.313.

principle of voluntary mass action in it reflects the disease of impetuosity.⁴⁰ Mao also criticized what he called ‘Tailism’: in falling below the political consciousness of the masses and violating the principle of the leading the masses forward, it reflects the disease of dilatoriness.⁴¹

The Maoist notion of ideology is not merely functional; it is the theoretical basis for strategic action. However, mechanical understanding of Marxist ideology was always deplored by Mao. He expressed it when he laid “We should regard it not as a dogma but as a guide to action” (MSW: 2: 1965: 208). This was known as Sinification of Marxism. The application of the Marxist theory to Chinese context is called Sinification. It was not an easy task but nonetheless not impossible. On the strategy part, Mao said that power flows from the barrel of the gun, but the gun should be commanded by the party, not the party by the gun.⁴²

Mohanty believes that there were two advantages of the New Democratic State: first, Chinese Communists avoided the intense antagonism that is usually created between workers and national bourgeoisie and made possible a peaceful and gradual transformation of the capitalist industry without causing disruption to the production process. Second, under the new democratic scheme, the Chinese government could go slow in both agricultural reforms as well as industrial construction and actually in agriculture they carried out only democratic measures (Mohanty 2012:59). Mao said that our goal is to construct a new state based on a new society. The new society and new state need to have a new politics, new culture and a new economy (MSW:2: 1965: 340). He emphasised on a new national culture and argued that old culture is a replication of the economy and politics. New politics and economy would have a new culture.

With the inflow of foreign capital and gradual growth of capitalism, China was transformed into a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. It is colonial in Japanese-occupied areas, semi-colonial in Kuomintang influenced areas, and feudal and semi-

⁴⁰ Mao Tse-tung, “On Coalition Government”, April 24, 1945, MSW: Vol.3:1961:316.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Mao Tse-tung, “Problems of War and Strategy”, (November 6, 1938), MSW, Vol. 2: 1965: 224.

feudal in both areas. Therefore, the society, economy, and politics are controlled by the Semi-feudal, and semi-colonial and colonial forces and revolution is focused against it (MSW: 2:1965: 341).

Mao opined that Chinese revolution has to follow two stages: “first, is a democratic revolution and second, a socialist revolution.” First one is a new democratic revolution. Therefore, Chinese politics, economy, and culture are part of the New Democracy. The process of the New Democratic revolution began from the 1840s and Chinese society slowly progressed from feudal to semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. 1911 revolution was part of New democracy revolution; it was bourgeois democratic in nature not proletariat-socialist (MSW: 2: 1965: 342-343).

In the politics of the New Democracy, New Democratic Revolution was part of the international revolutionary movement. Moreover, the anti-imperial struggle across the world was part of this revolution. There are two kinds of the world revolutions: first was a bourgeois and capitalist category. The era of this kind of revolution came to an end with the breakup of the WW-I in 1914. Moreover, the second type of world revolution was proletarian-socialist started with the 1917 October Revolution. So no matter what classes, parties, and individuals in the oppressed nations join the revolution, irrespective of their consciousness, as long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution, and they are allies (MSW: 2: 1965: 346-347).

The state system can be divided into three types according to the class character of their political power: “First, Republic under bourgeois dictatorship; Second, Republic under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and third, Republic under the joint dictatorship of the several revolutionary classes” (MSW: 2: 1965: 350). The economy of New Democracy has to be a “New Democratic” in term of politics and economy. In this type, the state would own the big industries and enterprises, banks, railways, and the state shall run airlines, Chinese-owned or foreign-owned, which are monopolistic in nature and enormous for private management. Therefore, private capital cannot dominate the

people's livelihood. In the new democratic republic, the economy will be socialist under the leadership of the proletariat. Although, the state neither would confiscate the private property nor stop further development of the capitalist production as it does not dominate the livelihood of the people (MSW: 2: 1965 :353).

Although the rich peasants would be allowed at the local level and equalization of the land ownership and land to the tiller are correct policies adopted by the state. Nevertheless, this socialist kind of agriculture would not be achieved, but some element of this character would be found (MSW:2: 1965 :353). The present task of the revolution is to fight out feudalism and imperialism, and socialism would not be established until this task is completed. The Chinese Revolution cannot leap these two stages of the revolution; first is a New Democracy and then Socialism. The first step is quite a long process. We should not be utopian to ignore the actual conditions that we are facing (MSW: 2: 1965: 358).

On the issue of three people's principles: Nationalism, Democracy, and People's Livelihood, Mao viewed that they are found compatible with the socialist goals in China. Moreover, an alliance between Kuomintang and Communists was based on these Three People's Principles. We built a united front against imperialism. The "three people's principles" were part of the democratic revolution and the agreement. Sun Yat-sen argued that communists shared the goal of the three peoples' principles (MSW: 2: 1965 :361). Sun Yat-Sen reiterated in 1924 that three people's principles are shared goal with communist to attain democratic revolution in China. Mao further argued that Three People's Principles in form consist of three great policies; alliance with Russia, cooperation with Communist Party and assistance to the peasants and workers.

The Culture of New Democracy assumed that culture is the replication of politics and economics. China bears a semi-feudal system with culture that reflected from semi-feudal politics and economy. The old ethical costumes and thoughts are opposed to the new concepts. Mao explained that semi-feudal with the alliance of Imperialist culture is

in opposition to the new culture. As long as old culture exists new culture cannot be established. There would be no construction without destruction (MSW: 2: 1965 : 369).

The new political, economic and cultural forces are revolutionary and are opposed to the old politics, economics and culture. Old consists of two parts: one is China's semi-feudal politics, economy and culture, and politics, economy and culture of imperialism, which are bad and need to be destroyed completely. The Struggle between old and new is like revolution and counter-revolution. This struggle has lasted a full hundred years from the Opium War (MSW: 2: 1965:370).

At the beginning of the May 4th movement, there was a joint front of three parties; first, communist intellectuals; second, revolutionary petty-bourgeois intellectuals and; third, bourgeois intellectuals (last was the right wing). It was later joined by the masses of the proletariat, petty-bourgeois and bourgeois and became a nation-wide movement. The nation-wide starting point of the Cultural Revolution was May 4th movement, adamant in its resistance to feudal culture. They raised the slogans of “down with old ethics” and “up with new one”, and “down with the old literature and up with the new one”. The May 4th movement paved the way for the formation of the communist party (MSW: 2: 1965:374).

Mao felt that the political, economic and cultural conditions of China are “New Democratic” and not socialist yet. The Chinese revolution is not socialist yet in the present situation. It is a bourgeois revolution to defeat capitalism. Its main aim is fighting two enemies one imperialism and second is internal feudalism. Thus, the culture of the present phase is not socialistic although it is disseminating the communist ideology (MSW:2:1965: 379).

He continued stating that there is a socialist element in our politics and economy and it reflects on the national culture, but yet whole society is not socialist and so we cannot have wholly socialist national culture. As long as the Chinese revolution is part of the world proletarian socialist revolution, it also develops world proletarian new culture. Its nature is anti-imperialist and anti-feudal represented by broad masses across the world. In the current phase of China represents anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture (MSW:2: 1965: 379-380).

For him, New Democratic Culture is national in its scope and it fights imperialism and maintains the dignity of the Chinese nation. It belongs to us and represents Chinese national features. It bonds with new democratic culture across the world. They absorb from each other and develop a new world culture. It is a new revolutionary culture and cannot be a linked to any reactionary culture of any nation. New Democratic Culture is scientific and it is part of broad masses. It must work for workers and peasants who comprise majority of the population of the world. Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses. Revolutionary cultural front prepares the ground for the revolutionary activity. Combining the politics, economy and the culture of the new democracy, we have a new democratic republic (MSW: 2 :1965: 381-82).

i. People's Democratic Dictatorship and Permanent Revolution

Mao's idea of democracy was drawn from Lenin's political structure. The people's democracy is the democracy where head of the state control absolute power. It is arbitrary in terms of representing the interests of the masses. The masses elect their leaders while opposition has no right to disagree. This system does not allow bourgeois classes to exercise their political power. Sole interests of the masses are represented by the communist party. Class enemies have no political right. Mao followed Lenin's party state. Lenin's structure of the communist party is democratic centralism where higher body is elected by lower body at each level but decisions flow from the top. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is fundamental component of people's democracy.⁴³ The basic concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat did not originate with either Lenin or Mao, but Marx himself. He made a profound statement on this matter;

As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historian described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois

⁴³ V. Lenin on "The Dictatorship of The Proletariat", Online" URL:

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/sep/x02.htm>

Joseph, On Foundation of Leninism, "The Dictatorship of Proletariat"

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1924/foundations-leninism/ch04.htm>.

economist the economic autonomy of the classes. What I did that was new to prove; 1) the existence of the classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of proletariat; 3) and that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.⁴⁴

Marx and Engels emphasized that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a means, not an end in itself, a means of transition to communism, to a classless society. It is necessary for the realization of the real goal of proletarian revolution;

This socialism is declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinction generally to the abolition of the all relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations.⁴⁵

The uprooting of the capitalist and bourgeois system through the violent working-class revolution is fundamental for the communist revolution. Mao added the peasants to the working class struggle in China. Mao further argued that it was not necessary to go through the capitalist stage of classical Marxist formulations. Mao changed the course of revolution with the peasant mobilization for the revolution in China. The workers and peasants dominated Mao's state as part of the dictatorship of the working class and peasants in China. Establishment of Leninist state in China under the leadership of Mao was an outstanding development in the history of the communist movement. The Communist government carried out one of the most successful and smooth redistributions of land and other means of production in China.

Mao's allegiance to permanent revolution to be understood as a ceaseless struggle in order to complete the task of the revolution. Chinese revolution did have no end. It was an ongoing phenomenon (Fetzer 1985:297). Mao viewed class struggle to continue even after the abolition of the bourgeois ownership of means of production. His theory of continuous revolution led to a new controversy with Chinese and Soviets. It was new in

⁴⁴ Karl Marx, *Marx to J. Weydemeyer in New York*, MESW, Vol.1, p. 528. Cited in Avakian 2008:256.

⁴⁵ Marx, "The Class Struggle in France 1848-1850", MESW, vol-1, p.282. Cited in Avakian 2008:257.

the theorization of Marxism. The theory of the continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat was first used on 7 November 1967;

The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times even become acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism and capitalism, is still not really settled.⁴⁶

The GPCR was a part and parcel of the continuous revolution. The main concern of Mao during the GPCR was an anti-revisionist struggle at the superstructure level of the ideology and politics. This struggle was different from the Socialist Education Movement. This time, the ideological struggle was also a power struggle, with the objective of seizing political power from the revisionists. The Ninth Congress Political Report quotes Mao, as having said that the main target of the movement was those Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road.⁴⁷

Mohanty argued that the GPCR added two dimensions to the theory of permanent revolution. One was a cultural dimension, and another was a revolutionary dimension. One refers to class struggle at superstructure level and another to revolutionary power (Mohanty 2012:102). The GPCR focused on the ideological struggle against revisionism. The perspective of continuing the revolution in the class struggle has been gradually operationalized in the course of the development of the theory. The three dominant forms that this struggle has taken are; first, the struggle in the realm of politics and ideology; second the struggle within the party; and third, the struggle for social construction. The first one emphasized on education and ideology second focused on the party and third focused on the economic policies and their implementation (Mohanty 2012:116).

⁴⁶ Mao Tse-tung, "On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions Among People" reprinted in *Peking Review*, no. 26, June 1967, p.21 cited in Mohanty 2012:80.

⁴⁷ Jerome Ch'en (ed), *Mao Papers*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp.48-50. Cited in Mohanty 2012:99.

The Maoist approach, which manifested in the GLF and the GPCR, has been the main point of criticism by the Soviet writers as ‘subjectivist approach’ and voluntarism typical of Mao’s petty-bourgeois outlook. The subjective idealism has been a major departure of Mao Zedong from the objective materialist point of view of Marxism and Leninism (Altaisky M. 1971:66). They criticized Mao of believing in the subjective factor of Human Will performing miracle independently rather than relying on the objective development of productive forces. They point out the failure of 1958 policies for this. Maoists posit that just as a conscious mass organization is needed to bring about a socialist revolution, conscious political struggle at the level of the superstructure is needed to develop the productive forces (Mohanty 2012:123).

The resistance to the capitalist industrialization by the Maoist movement is seen as one that is aimed at protecting the feudal mode production. The inability to understand historical materialism and to take a leap from feudalism to socialism, through the human agency and to neglect the role of culture in the society made revolution ineffective in the Chinese society. Why do Maoists want to stop the historical progress of the mode of production? Does this not amount to retaining of feudal social structure? Socialism has to be retained through the socialist values. Socialist values are paramount and are required to retain socialist system. The failure of the Great Leap Forward (GLF) in China is one of the most important factors behind it. That socialist state was established without the socialist values.⁴⁸ The socialist state can be retained in the face of capitalist values but certainly not in the system of feudal values. The consciousness of masses has to play a significant role in the retaining of a particular system. Maoists wanted to overthrow the semi-feudal system and replace it with socialist one through the proactive wars considering the role of the human agency through creating class consciousness in the

⁴⁸ Charles Hoffmann (1971:13) argued that two major goals of GLF were; advancement of industry and socialization. “The socialization of the means of production is both a means and an end: a means for unleashing the revolutionary forces necessary for the rapid achievement of technical successes and the fundamental change in man's consciousness, and an end in ultimately becoming the mode of production sustaining a new man. The notion of socialization of labor is an important concomitant of material socialization in the Maoist view.”

masses. Economically class conscious people have clashed with the feudal values that are very predominant in their mobilization.

Lenin's socialist state did not endure Bolshevik seizure of power, and he never rejected the standpoints which motivated *State and Revolution*. Lenin had not argued that a state should not be subordinated to self-government of the people?⁴⁹ After all, that happened to the Congress of the Soviet, it was reduced to the formal level after 1917. In the post-Bolshevik period, it brought the institutions like proletariat and Soviet of the workers under the leaders (Miliband 1970).⁵⁰ Lenin, in his later writings, conveyed the necessity to create the foundation for popular self-governance as a genuine revolution (Thomson 1970:125).⁵¹

The distinctive feature of Maoism is Mass-line was a method of connecting the common masses. Whatever is to be done must be done with the participation of the masses. It was the method to understand the opinion of the people about the required policies so that masses would support them. Mao called it as from masses to masses, hence participation of masses. He further said that land to the tiller, land investigation, and ideological struggle was also part of this campaign so that the party cadre would understand the local class structure and it would break the old social and economic status quo (Garley 1976:71-72).⁵²

Benjamin Schwartz (1977:26) explained the importance of moral qualities in Maoism for proletariat like self-abnegation, unlimited sacrifice for collectivity, self-reliance, persistent energy, strong discipline, etc. are standards of the correct communist conduct. Working class leadership is constituted by a set of intellectual, workers and

⁴⁹ Miliband, Ralph (2000:525): "State and Revolution", in Tom Bottomore (ed), pp 524-25. D'Mello 2010:31.

⁵⁰ Miliband, Ralph (1970): "The State and Revolution", in Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff (ed): *Lenin Today: Eight Essays on the Hundredth Anniversary of Lenin's Birth* (New York: Monthly Review Press), pp 77-90. D'Mello 2010:31.

⁵¹ Thomson, George (1970): "From Lenin to Mao Tse-tung", in Paul M. Sweezy and Harry Magdoff (ed): *Lenin Today: Eight Essays on the Hundredth Anniversary of Lenin's Birth* (New York: Monthly Review Press), pp 115-25. Cited in D'Mello 2010:32.

⁵² Gurley, John G. (1976): *China's Economy and the Maoist Strategy* (New York: Monthly Review Press). Cited in D'Mello 2010:35

peasants with morality. Understating it through the mass-line has been possible. The nature and attitude of the masses can only be read through the mass line.

Mao negated Stalin's mechanical reading of Marx's 1859 Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" as a deterministic theory of history. Mao blamed Stalin for stressing only on the forces of production and neglecting the relations of production. Mao asserts in a relative sense that Stalin did not try to understand the growth of human capacity which constituted the core of production forces. Stalin fundamentally observed the course of action as a one-way method as a change in the forces of production leading to change in the relations of production and destroy the superstructure (Mao:1977).⁵³

D'Mello established that Mao failed in giving an effective working model for socialism and it was shocking when Mao and China joined the coalition with the US to counter USSR. Mao's "On Contradiction" justified the rapprochement of Mao (D'Mello 2010:46). The "On Contradiction" as a philosophical essay had adjusted the pragmatic strategy of Mao in terms of going in alliance with US against USSR.

2. Ambedkar's Idea of Democracy : Ambedkarism

Ambedkar was an ardent believer in democracy with a deep conviction of its role in transforming the Indian society. He aimed to accomplish social and economic goals with the democratic means. He argued that change is possible in authority by peaceful and constitutional means. He was against revolution and bloodshed, and change in the government. In his speech before the members of the Poona Law Library, on 22nd December 1952, defined the concept of democracy as a dynamic one as it has gone through tremendous changes in its form and purpose. The purpose of the English Democracy was to curb the autocratic rule. However, the aim of democracy is to bring about the welfare of the people. The modern democracy that Ambedkar contemplates is

⁵³ Mao Tse-tung, "Critique of Stalin's Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR", Online, URL: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_66.htm.

founded on the consensus of the people and is intended toward the welfare of the people. In this sense; he delineates democracy as “a form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed”.⁵⁴

Ambedkar has been categorized as a liberal democrat in his political and philosophical persuasion. His exposure to various ideas helped to build a philosophy based on a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, idealism and realism, naturalism and humanism, and materialism and spiritualism, individualism and socialism, and nationalism and internationalism. His philosophy was social dynamism. It was one of solving the problems caused by the social and political ills of humanity. His politics was not for personal gains or for climbing the ladder to a high position. It was a politics of emancipation of downtrodden millions of Indians. Ambedkar’s ideas mainly focused on the welfare of society through social and political movements. The respect for the dignity of man, respect for human rights, secularism, his belief in non-violence and constitutional morality, social justice are some of the most valuable and enduring elements of his political and social philosophy (Rajashekhariah 1991:374). Ambedkar defined democracy in terms of the associated living with full of endosmosis in the society. He said that democracy is not a form of the government but the form of the society. As Bagehot explained that parliamentary government means government by discussion and not by fisticuffs.⁵⁵

Ambedkar found the roots of democracy in ancient Indian history. He, in his speech⁵⁶ in 1951, argued that parliamentary democracy is not known at present in India. But India once had an advanced parliamentary institution in India. *Suktas* of *Mahaparinibbana* had sufficient evidence. It mentioned that when Bhagwan Buddha was dying at Kusinara (Kusinagara), a message was sent to the *Mallas* while they were sitting

⁵⁴ Ambedkar B.R., *Conditions Precedent for the Successful Working of Democracy*, Published by Smt. Panchbai, Buddha Nagar, Nagpur, P.3, cited in Kshirsagar: 1992:54.

⁵⁵ Walter Bagehot on British Constitution, Cited by Ambedkar (BAWS:17-III: 423).

⁵⁶ Ambedkar “*Failure of Parliamentary Democracy will Result in Rebellion, Anarchy and Communism*” at Parliament of the D.A.V. College, Jullunder City (Pubjab) on October 28, 1951.

in session as they were devoted to the parliamentary institutions. After receiving the message, they unequivocally decided not to adjourn the session and continued their work of the parliament. Another example is that Buddhist *Sanghas* had the ballot paper system, called '*Salapatraka Grahakas*'. There was such intellectual freedom in ancient India as was nowhere in the world (BAWS:17-III:2003:424, Jadhav 2014:547).

Ambedkar's idea of democracy rests on three core principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. He, in his comparison of "Buddha and Marx", rejected dictatorship and violent means proposed by Marx. He wanted democracy and socialism without dictatorship and violence. The Marxist political theory is based on the dictatorship of proletariat and one party system. The totalitarian structure of state and government, the entire political system is governed by one ideology alone Marxism-Leninism (Jatava 1997:41). The Marxist political theory was unacceptable to Ambedkar because he had a profound respect for parliamentary democracy. Ambedkar was the champion of individual liberty and which had no space in the Marxist political theory. Undoubtedly, Marxism promised to eradicate poverty, but why at the cost of liberty and human freedom (Keer 2012:487).

Ambedkar identified three fundamental features of democracy, first; the negation of hereditary rule. Whoever wants to rule must be elected for a fixed period. Second; any law and policy can only be made by the representatives of the people in the parliament. No single authority should assume that he knows everything and make the policy like a communist regime. Third; the representatives of the people, need to have the confidence of the people renewed themselves timely. Ambedkar laid two conditions for democracy first; parliamentary democracy must have an opposition and second; free and fair elections (BAWS: 17-III: 2003: 425-26, Jadhav: 2014:548).

For the success of democracy, Ambedkar suggested some outlines. First, there must be no stark disparities, and no oppressing class and suppressed class. No class that should have all the privileges while another carry the entire burden. Such a division or organization has the root of the bloody revolution. It would be difficult for democracy to

remedy them (Jadhav 2014:551). The second condition that is required for democracy is the existence of the opposition. From the functional point of the view, democracy means a 'veto' of power. Third, democracy is equality in law and administration. The fourth condition for successful democracy is the observance of the constitutional morality. The constitution that contains legal provisions is only like a skeleton. The flesh of the skeletons is to be found in what we call the constitutional morality. The last thing that is required for democracy is public conscience. Public conscience means conscience which becomes agitated at every wrong, no matter who is the sufferer and it means that everybody whether he suffers that particular wrong or not, is prepared to join him in order to get him relieved (Jadhav 2014:551-556).

Ambedkar made three main propositions about democracy: first, democracy is changing in its form; it has never been the same. Greeks spoke of Athenian democracy. However, as everyone knows, Athenian democracy was different from our modern democracy. The Athenian democracy comprised fifty percent slaves but they had no place in that democracy. Second; but democracy has never been the same in the same country. Take the example of England and it was not the same democracy before the 1688 revolution and after it. Democracy keeps changing its form. Third, democracy not only undergoes changes in form but also undergoes changes in purposes. Today what is the aim of democracy? The purpose of modern democracy is not so much to put a curb on an autocratic king but to bring about the welfare of the people. That is a distinct change in the purpose of democracy (Jadhav 2014:550).⁵⁷

He underscored that revolutionary changes could be brought about political democracy. The people also responded to those changes positively without resorting to bloodshed. He argued that democracy rests on four premises: First, the individual are an end in themselves. Second, the individual has the certain inalienable rights that must be guaranteed to him by the constitution. Third, individual shall not require relinquishing

⁵⁷ Dr. Ambedkar was invited by the Members of the Poona District Law Library on 22nd December 1952, He reflected on the Conditions Precedent for The Successful Democracy, BAWS:17-III: 2003:472-486.

any of his constitutional rights as a price for any privilege. Four, the state shall not delegate power to private persons to govern others (BAWS: 1: 1979: 43-46).⁵⁸

Ambedkar considered certain pre-conditions for political democracy which include social and political democracy. The society should be free from the social and economically conflicting groups, and it should be a casteless and classless society. He further argued that in the election people give prior preference to the candidate of their respective community. Therefore, Ambedkar concluded that we have a communal majority in our country (Kshirsagar 1992:55). He viewed equality as a necessary condition for it. There must not be glaring inequalities in the society. He believed that the society should be based on equality, liberty, and fraternity and only then it is fit for democracy. His equality refers to social and political equality. He categorically said that political democracy cannot be successful without social democracy. He favoured two party system, for the proper functioning of democracy. He believed that there should be a political majority and political minority. He had rightly observed in India;

“That the majority is not a political majority. In the India majority is born, it is not made. That is the difference between communal majority and political majority. A political majority is not fixed or a permanent majority. It is a majority that is always made, unmade and remade. A communal majority is a permanent majority fixed in its attitude. One can destroy it but cannot transform it” (BAWS: 1:1979:377).⁵⁹

The problem that Ambedkar highlighted continue in several countries even today as Bakshi highlighted (Bakshi 2009:176). The opposition to parliamentary democracy has not only from dictatorship supporting countries like Italy and Germany⁶⁰ but also in the countries that were supporting democracy. There is discontent because of insight that it has unsuccessful to guarantee the masses of their liberty, prosperity or pursuit of

⁵⁸ *States and Minorities* was a memorandum for constituent assembly prepared by Ambedkar. It has detailed programme about the political, economic and social policies to be adopted in the future Constitution.

⁵⁹ B. R. Ambedkar “*A Communal Deadlock and a way to solve it*” It was an addressed delivered at the session of the ‘All India Scheduled Castes Federation’ held in Bombay on May 6, 1945, He proposed to solve the Communal problem in India, where he argued that partition of India can be avoided by giving proper representation and security to minorities. BAWS: 1:1979:337-379.

⁶⁰ B. R. Ambedkar writing in the time of the WW-II, when rise of the Hitler and Mussolini happened. Ibid.

happiness. The failures are found either in wrong ideologies and evil organizations, or in erroneous ideologies. It upheld the liberty but neglected the economic inequalities. It did not pay much attention to inspecting the consequence of freedom of agreement on the parties to the convention, as by reason they were unequal partners at bargaining. The outcome of parliamentary democracy is that it is the protagonist of liberty while added economic wrongs for the poor and weaker sections of the society. The second; the wrong ideology that has vitiated parliamentary democracy to realize that it cannot prosper wherever there is no social and economic democracy. Why parliamentary democracy collapsed so easily in Italy, Germany, and Russia and did not collapse easily in England and the USA? Answer appears clear that there was a greater degree of economic and social democracy in the latter countries while prevailing inequalities in the former set of nations (Bakshi 2009:177-78).

Ambedkar's concept of democracy has been very much influenced by Dewey's concept of democracy. Dewey distinguished between democracy as a political form and democracy as a genuinely human way of living (Ratner 1939:400-401)⁶¹ and regarded the former as only a means to the latter. Democracy in this sense was a basic value for Dewey, and so it was for Ambedkar. An essential aspect of the democratic way of life for Dewey was free communicative relations (Geiger 1958: 185).⁶² Ambedkar's early conception of Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity in *the Annihilation of Caste* is similar to Dewey's conception of democracy. In his later writings, Ambedkar associated three values of democracy. However, Ambedkar placed greater emphasis on fraternity as the only force to sustain equality and liberty. Equality and liberty can destroy each other in the absence of the Brotherhood. Ambedkar's fraternity lies in Buddhism as a necessary principle of religion, which Dewey did not propose (Gokhale 2008:17).

⁶¹ Ratner, Joseph (ed.), *Intelligence in the Modern World, John Dewey's Philosophy*, the Modern Library, New York, 1939, Cited in Gokhale 2008:16.

⁶² Geiger, George R., *John Dewey in Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1958. Cited in Gokhale:2008:17.

Ambedkar warned of the consequences of the failure of parliamentary democracy.⁶³ He said that if it fails in this country and it is bound to fail for the reason mentioned, then the result will be rebellion, anarchy, and communism (BAWS:17-III:2003:428). If democracy enables those who are running it to bring about vital changes in the social and economic life of the people, one should receive those alterations without resorting to bloodshed; then I say that there is a democracy (Jadhav 2014:551).

Ambedkar did not believe in the arbitrary and absolute state. He considered it as the means of emancipation of society. He argued that state consists of society, and the ultimate goal of the state should be the well-being of the community. In this sense, the state was a means and not an end in itself, and it owed to its members a duty to build and sustain a social system within which man might live happily. Ambedkar did not agree with Hobbes, Hegel, Bosanquet, and in support of the absolute theory of state. He accepted the idea of state as a human organization. He conceived state as an organization to fulfil their goals; first, to maintain right of every subject to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; second, to eradicate the social, political and economic inequalities by giving better prospects for the weaker sections, and third, let everyone enjoy the freedom from neediness and freedom from terror (Kuber 1991:292-293). Rajasekhariah argued that Ambedkar makes a distinction between state and society. He considered society as fundamental as and more important than the state. The state must be democratic and one which takes care of the people and their interests. He argued that state and constitution are important for the betterment of the people. Anarchy cannot solve the problems of the people (Rajasekhariah 1992:370).

Ambedkar's liberalism was combined with a radical rationalism. His ethics was utilitarian, his scale of values was determined by the usefulness of an action toward the establishment of equality in the social order (Kuber 1991:297). Ambedkar's idea of socialist democracy and critique of the authoritarianism emphasises on human rights and

⁶³ B. R. Ambedkar, "*Failure of Parliamentary Democracy will Result in Rebellion, Anarchy and Communism*", Speech at Students' Parliament of the D.A.V. College, Jullundur City (Punjab) on October 28, 1951, BAWS:17-III:2003:422-428.

freedom of expression in comparison to the communist model. Ambedkar considered “social and economic democracies as the tissues and the fibre of political democracy, which give greater strength to the body.”⁶⁴ Democracy is another name for equality. Parliament democracy developed a desire for liberty. It did not make a tired acquaintance with equality. It is unsuccessful to realize the importance of equality, and never made an effort to strike an equilibrium between equality and liberty and liberty swallowed and left an offspring of inequalities (Jatava 1998:68).

Ambedkar’s advocacy for the basic rights through the Constitution is made possible by the political democracy model of governance. He considered fundamental rights inalienable for the individual irrespective of caste, race, gender, and religion. Ambedkar defined fundamental rights as the gifts of law. They are essential for human beings and are both enforceable and inalienable.⁶⁵ For Ambedkar, fundamental rights are of vital importance in state democracy. He considered the individual as a necessary unit for the state. The development of personality of an individual’s responsibility lies upon the state. Neither religion nor tradition should restrain the individual. All the institutions, social and political are instrumental for the development of the individual. Individual is not for the state but as an ideal citizen must serve the common interest embodied in the state. He did not find any contradiction in the individual interests and collective interests. They are mutually interdependent and co-existent. Equality, liberty, and fraternity are fundamental principles for Ambedkar’s democratic form of the government (Kshirsagar 1992:64-65).

Ambedkar believed in the rule of the law and equality before the law. He stressed that law is instrumental in the state’s organization. It is the law that creates and promotes peace and justice among different sections of the society. It is the guardian of liberty and equality. Ambedkar affirmed that law and state must depend on the wishes of the people. The laws of the state should influence and mould the ideas of right and wrong in society

⁶⁴ Shyam Chandra, “Dr. Ambedkar on Democracy”, *Mainstream*, XLV (51) 11 December 2007 by Shyam Chandra, Online Source: <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article467.html>.

⁶⁵ *State and Minorities*, Buddha Vihar, Lucknow, 1978, p.43. Cited in Kshirsagar (1992:63).

and thus they affect the morality of the people. So law is also an obligation that depends on the social and moral conscience of the people. He said that:

“Social conscience it is such that is prepared to recognize the rights which law chooses to enact, rights will be safe and secure. However, if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no parliament, no judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the world”.⁶⁶

Rajashekhariah (1992) argued that Ambedkar did not have a body of the political thought and a system of philosophy. His concern for society all along led him to develop up a body of philosophical thought indirectly. It was not an idle, arm-chair philosophy developed for its sake, without any concern for human beings. He fully realized that no philosophy would be worth existing if it does not have its roots in humanism. Philosophy should serve ultimately human interest not other-worldly or supernatural beings. However, most enduring influence on him was that of Buddha, the enlightened. The principles of Buddhism constitute a major component of his political philosophy. In fact, he drew the idea of equality, liberty, and fraternity more from Buddhism than from the French Revolution. Of course, the influence of Western liberalism has been evident in his thinking.

Pradeep Gokhale, referring to Ambedkar’s acknowledgment of the influence of Dewey, argued that Ambedkar moved one step further by invoking the idea of fraternity with scientific temper. The important thing about Ambedkar, which he emphasized much is *Maitri* (friendship), which means love for fellow human beings. This does not deviate from the scientific temper but emphasized on fraternity for social and political democracy (Gokhale 2008:16). According to Gokhale, Dewey’s moral thought tends to become relativistic, while Ambedkar’s moral thought does not become relativistic because of his vivid acceptance of certain values as universal and inviolable. However, Gokhale does not wish to suggest Ambedkar was a moral absolutist. While the intrinsic and universal

⁶⁶ B. R. Ambedkar, *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, Bombay: Thacker and co. Ltd, 1943, pp. 34-35. Cited in Rajashekhraih 1992:369

values he championed were integrated, they did not merge into a single absolute value because, after all, they were human values (Gokhale 2008:23).

Ambedkar drew inspiration from revolutions, whether they were bloody or peaceful, democratic or otherwise, revolution or otherwise because it is through a revolution that the traditional values and forms of life were put to trial. At the same time, he was deeply committed to the democratic way of life. Ambedkar sought a synthesis of key ideas in his life and thought, individualism and socialism. They are another set of such dualities he was handling throughout his life. In his political life, they assume a multipolar form with the concerns of individual, community, nation and humanity as its four poles. We see Ambedkar as constantly striving for an appropriate balancing of these concerns (Gokhale 2009:24).

For Dewey, democracy is a mode of associated living and conjoint communicated experience. The most important feature of his thought was his insistence on the process of selecting the best example of communication in order to enable individual to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born.⁶⁷ Dewey and Ambedkar's idea of freedom was positive; freedom for the dignified development of self. Ambedkar's idea of freedom is quite similar to T.H. Green's positive freedom (Skof 2011:127). Ambedkar's elaboration of the caste system in India needs to be discussed here. His pragmatic vision of democracy rests on his view of dharma, religion and social ethics with the related reconstruction of the social and political habits. The most interesting part of the analysis is the importance of his thought for contemporary political philosophy and its intercultural applications (Skof 2011:128).

The views of the Western writers on politics, i.e., constitutional morality, democracy and self-government are erroneous for many reasons. At first, they fail to take into account the incontrovertible fact that in every country there is governing class grown up by force of historical circumstances, which is destined to rule, which does rule and to

⁶⁷ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (ed.) Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale;Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. P.25.

whom adult suffrage and constitutional morality are no bar against acquiring to the power and authority to whom the servile class, by reason of the fact that they regard the members of the governing classes as their natural leaders, volunteers to elect as rulers (Rodrigues 2004:134-135).

This formulation also shows the importance of education in Ambedkar's socio-political agenda. Moreover, same emphasis is intended in Dewey's *Democracy and Education*. Ambedkar was aware of the importance of education and in his reference to Dewey one can see his commitment to this ideal. For example, Ambedkar argued that there is no dialogue between the governing class and rest of the people in India (Skof 2011:129). For Ambedkar parliamentary democracy has continuously added to the economic wrongs of the poor. Moreover, his perspective on use of force is drawn from Dewey and Buddha. Use of force is allowed, while the use of violence is now permitted. He further argued that Buddha was against violence, but he was also in favor of justice and where justice required he permits the use of force (Rodrigues 2004:184). Ambedkar here agrees with Dewey on the policy that the ends can indeed justify the means. For Dewey and Ambedkar, the achievement of purpose involves the destruction of many other ends that are integral to the one that is sought to be destroyed. Use of force must be so regulated that it should save as many as possible in destroying the evil one. Buddha's Ahimsa was not as absolute as the Ahimsa preached by Mahavira, the founder of Jainism (Rodrigues 2004:184).

On the theme of liberty, Skof (2011:134) argued that Ambedkar's liberty is positive liberty as related to the ideas of unobstructed self-realization and personal development of the individual. It is an ethical stand, an attitude comprising many traits as found in the many segments of Ambedkar's writing. His defense of secularism (a secular religion), his explicit efforts for the liberation of the untouchables, and his plans to shape the new democratic culture in India, that would indeed surpass even traditional liberal democracies of the West. Skof (2011) emphasized on the possibility of an ethical criterion of democracy in India based on the pragmatist reading of Ambedkar's idea of democracy. One of the characteristics of the Indian democracy is its special relation to its

religious and cultural traditions. Ambedkar's contention about democracy to usher in equality, liberty and fraternity comes from teaching of Buddha.

i. Theory of Democratic Revolution in India

Ambedkarism is a living force in India. It is an ideology of alternative democratic movement and broader anti-caste and class movement (Omvedt 1994:223). It has been developed throughout the 1920s to 1950s. Ambedkar's participation in political activism and his thought and philosophy sets the discourse of Ambedkarism as the theory of Dalit liberation in India.⁶⁸ Gail Omvedt summarised Ambedkarism as:

First, an uncompromising dedication to the needs of his people, the Dalits (as he said once in response to a legislative council claim that he should think as 'part of whole; I am a part apart') which required total annihilation of the caste system and the Brahmanical superiority it embodied;

Second, an almost equally strong dedication to the reality of India-but an India whose historical-cultural interpretation he sought to wrest from the imposition of a Hindu identity to understand it in its massive, popular reality;

Third, a conviction that the eradication of caste required a repudiation of Hinduism as a religion, and adoption of an alternative religion, which he found in Buddhism, a choice which he saw as not only necessary for the masses of Dalits who followed him but for the masses in India generally;

Fourth, a broad economic radicalism interpreted as socialism (state socialism);

Fifth, a fierce rationalism which burned through his attack on Hindu superstition;

And finally, a political orientation which linked a firmly autonomous Dalit movement with a constantly attempted alliance of socially and economically exploited (Omvedt 1994:224).

Ambedkar first appeared as a public spokesman for the Untouchables in 1919. His testimony to Franchise Committee illustrated not only his abilities but also his

⁶⁸ Omvedt sheds light on Ambedkarism as The Theory of Dalit Liberation. She argued that it is anti-caste and class movement and an alternative ideological framework for liberation of the depressed classes of India, (Omvedt:1994:223)

prominence at the scene (Zelliot 2013:65). Ambedkar joined Democratic Revolution from the 1920s by appearing before the Southborough Commission⁶⁹ and demanded popular democracy in India. He demanded of adult franchise for all citizens including special safeguards for the weaker section of the society. It was the first political memorandum where it appears that the vision of Ambedkar was truly universal. It also proved that he would be a dominant pillar of the process of democratization of India. He argued that the popular government is not only government for the people but by the people. He articulated that representation of opinion by itself is not sufficient to constitute the popular government. Therefore, the popular government needs both i.e. representation of opinions and representation of persons, if it fails then it cannot be called popular and democratic government (BAWS:1:1979:247). Ambedkar testimony was not only focused on the presentation of Untouchables' grievance and pleaded for Untouchables representation to discuss the basis of democratic government and franchise arrangements, but also his testimony was founded on the belief that representative government would rectify social injustice (Zelliot: 2013:66).

Ambedkar further explained need for the popular representative government in India. He conceptualised the community and considered Untouchables as a distinct community from Caste Hindus. He argued that men live in a community by virtue of things they shared in common, it includes aims, beliefs, aspiration, knowledge and a common understanding of formation of the community. He considered like-mindedness necessary for the formation of community, and it never comes only through proximity. Only participation makes them like-minded and part of the community. He opined that endosmosis makes the community. It is the isolation of the groups that is the chief evil, wherever endosmosis happens they cease to be evil (BAWS: 1:1979:249).

Ambedkar argued that Caste divided Hindus into two groups “touchables” and “untouchables”. Untouchability is the strongest ban on the endosmosis between

⁶⁹ B. R. Ambedkar “*Evidence before the Southborough Committee on Franchise*”, examined on: 27th January 1919. From the Report of the Reform Committee (Franchise), Vol. II, 1919. BAWS: 1:1979:243-278.

“touchables” and Untouchables, therefore; representative government should reflect the interests of the community hence need to be their genuine representative in opinion and experience (BAWS: 1:1979:250). He further articulated that “government for the people” had got more consideration than “government by the people” and there are examples to demonstrate that “government for the people” was best in every sense than “government by the people”. Although, all political doctrinaire denounce all such types of the governments (BAWS: 1:1979:251). Ambedkar opined further:

“A government for the people but not by the people, is sure to reduce some into masters and others into subjects: because it is by the reflex effects of association that one can feel and measure the growth of personality. He further explained that growth of the personal is the highest goal of the society. Social arrangement must secure freedom of initiations and opportunity and any role he is capable of in assuming provided (BAWS: 1:1979:251).

The people should not only be electors but also to be lawmakers. He articulated that if electors are not allowed to be lawmakers, then lawmakers will be master of those who can only be electors (BAWS: 1: 1979:250). Ambedkar considered the process of the electoral democracy for the development of citizen’s political personality. Further, argued that any form of the government which does not allow its members to be rulers restricts the personality development of the individual as the ultimate goal of the society. Ambedkar advocated that the crux of the popular government is the representation of interests and opinions and other is personal representation. He further explained that territorial constituencies fail to create popular government because they fail to secure personal representation to members of minorities (BAWS: 1:1979:252).

Untouchables are not considered as citizens in the Hindu society. Even some basic civil rights are not secured for the Untouchables. Citizens are given a set of rights such as “(1) personal liberty (2) personal security, (3) right to hold private property, (4) equality before law, (5) liberty of conscience, (6) freedom of opinion and speech, (7) right of assembly (8) right of representation in the government and (9) right to hold office under the state.” These rights are basic rights and not available for untouchables. British India secured some rights in principle, but they are not in practice. Moreover, the practice

of the untouchability makes it worst (BAWS: 1:1979:256). The idea and practice of the gradation is crucial to the Indian social order. It has produced a definite dogmatic foundation which affects untouchables in two ways.

“First, in the minds of the lower order it created a preference for the higher order; and second, it creates a contempt for the lower order in the minds of the higher order. Thus the ascending scale of preference and the descending scale of hatred and contempt put into them a most disadvantaged group of the society.”

The system had pushed them in to the periphery of the society (BAWS: 1:1979:257). Ambedkar further explained the exclusive development of one section of the society would lead to the worthless progress. It would produce perpetuation of the inequality in society. The growth of education, if it is confined to one class, will not necessarily lead to liberalism. It may lead to the justification and conservation of class interest; and instead of creating the liberator of the downtrodden, it may create a champion of the past and supporter of the status quo (BAWS: 1:1979:268). Therefore, leaving untouchables to the mercy of the higher castes would be worst, and it would be better to provide them representational rights so that they can assert their right in the society (BAWS: 1:1979:268).

Ambedkar compared the untouchables with slaves and argued that if one accepts Plato's definition of slave; “one accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct” (BAWS: 1:1979:255), then untouchables were actually slaves. He formed untouchables as mental slaves and they are socialised in such a way so that they never protest their worst situation. Untouchables never dream and give a thought to improve their condition, by compelling suppressing sections to give them the common respect which is part of the normal society. Hierarchy is ingrained in their mind so much that they think their condition was irrevocable. Nothing will ever encourage them to think that all men are made of the same clay or that they have the same rights to insist on better than that meted out to them (Ibid: 56).

Ambedkar was representing such a class which was not only a physical slave but mental as well. The realisation of their suffering and striking to remove them through

education. He advocated universal education for all the citizens. Ambedkar coined the famous slogan: Educate, Agitate, and Organize. He said that this is the only means for the salvation for weaker sections of the society. His democratic means for the mobilization of central to a vibrant democracy in the true sense. The democratic methods of Ambedkar have been valid in the fight for justice. He discussed the violent and non-violent methods at great length in his philosophy and political activism. He has been engaged in the democratization of the Indian politics in the anti-colonial struggle. He was the one who demanded adult franchise before independence of India.⁷⁰

The Simon Commission (Indian Statutory Commission), touring India in the interest of the parliamentary reform ten years after the Montagu-Chelmsford visit, in 1928. The Commission was opposed by the INA as its effectiveness was doomed from beginning. The minorities, however, including depressed classes led by Ambedkar found the opportunity to force their right in any future government structure Zelliott: 2013:125). Ambedkar's testimony to the Indian Statutory Commission was more forward-looking in terms of the Indian scenario at that time (Zelliott: 2013:127).⁷¹

Ambedkar's dual role as a statesman as well as a champion of the Untouchables emerge. His testimony reveals that he was within the stream of the modernizing Indian elite even though he was outside the nationalist movement. While he stood for radical social legislation and special political recognition for the depressed classes, he saw these as necessary for the development of India as a whole (Ibid).

Ambedkar was invited to represent the Depressed Classes at the Roundtable conference held in London during 1931-32. It was the conference where Ambedkar emerged as the undisputed leader of the Depressed Classes in India. His sharp conflict with Congress and Gandhi made him more popular in Britain as well at home. Before leaving for London in 1930, Ambedkar addressed the Depressed Classes Conference at

⁷⁰ Ambedkar submitted his demand of Adult franchise before Southborough Committee in 1919.

⁷¹ Indian Statutory Commission, Selection from Memoranda and Oral evidence by non-officials, in report, vol. 16 (London: H.M.S.O., 1930), 37-47. Ambedkar gave a report which appears in Indian Statutory Commission, The Report of the Committee appointed by the provincial Legislative Council to co-operate with the Indian Statutory Commission, vol.3 (London H.M.S.O 1930), 87-156. As a Member of Bombay Provincial Committee to act as consultant to the Simon Commission). Ambedkar was teaching at government Law College and his students walked out of his class in protest against his cooperation.

Nagpur.⁷² He criticised the Nehru Committee, which had denied special representation to both the Depressed Classes and Muslims in 1928. He also attacked the Simon Commission, which directed for the nomination of representatives of Depressed Classes rather than through an election. He argued that the Congress and British have same attitude toward the depressed classes (Zelliot 2013:129). He discussed the necessity of India's independence and argued that multiple castes, race, religion and language do not make it unfit for independence. It had done nothing for untouchables, peasants, and workers (Omvedt 1994:167).

The First Roundtable Conference was called off because of the non-cooperation of the Congress. The Second Roundtable happened after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact-1931 and led to Gandhi's participation in it. At the Second Roundtable Conference held in 1932, Ramsey MacDonald Award gave separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, which led confrontation between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Gandhi started "fast unto death" in opposition to Separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. Gandhi's fast culminated in the Poona Pact (1932) where common electorate with reserved seats was made in the agreement. It was crucial juncture where Ambedkar had to compromise with interests of the depressed classes to save the life of Gandhi.

Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party in 1936 with a strong manifesto of the socialist democracy. The name of Independent Labour Party reveals both Ambedkar's attachment to the British Parliamentary democracy and his hope that the party would be more than a Scheduled Caste Group. The program of the party was socialist in nature and the goal was to advance the interests of the labouring classes. It advocated the state management and ownership of industry wherever it is necessary for the interest of the people. The Party also announced to establish land mortgage bank, agriculture producers, cooperatives and marketing societies to avoid the fragmentation of land (Zelliot 2013:178). Party also focused on the free compulsory primary education,

⁷² The Presidential Address of Dr. Ambedkar at Nagpur is the first of his activities to be reported in the Indian Annual Register, vol.2, (1930):367-74. Cited in Zelliot 2013:129.

adult education, technical education would be brought forward and university education would be organised on a regional basis (Ibid. 179).

Ambedkar also formed the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) in 1942. In July 1942, All India Depressed Classes Conference was held at Nagpur. The conference came to the conclusion that a radical change must be brought about in the village system. It made a demand for separate settlement of the Scheduled Caste population of the village away from Hindu village. It was the final resolution which was the formation of the Scheduled Caste Federation to take up the political movement of the Scheduled Castes in India (Zelliot 2013:186)⁷³

Ambedkar used various methods to press the demand for recognition of the scheduled castes as separate elements in Indian political life. Scheduled Caste Federation organised large scale *satyagraha* for separate electorates before state legislature at Poona, Nagpur, Lucknow, and Kanpur from July to October 1946.⁷⁴

In August 1947, Ambedkar became the Law minister in the Independent Government of India. Before that in March 1947, he prepared a detailed draft of the constitution “States and Minorities” and prior to his appointment of the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India. Zelliot argued that “The Constitution, of course, is more a reflection of the thinking of the Congress leaders of the time than a product of Ambedkar's mind. But his impression was clear on centralised government and fundamental rights and directive principles (Zelliot 2013:1992). Ambedkar made a speech in the Constituent Assembly where he did not rule out the use of the extra-constitutional means for better change. If we wish to maintain democracy not

⁷³ The Three Conference were held at Nagpur from July 18 to 20th July 1942, namely, 1-All India Depressed Classes Conference, presided over by Rao Bahadur N. Shivara Raj B.A., B.L. M.L.A (Central); 2- The Depressed Classes Women Conference, presided over by Mrs. Dongre of Amroati; and 3- The Samata Sainik Dal Conference, presided over by Mr. Gopal Singh, M.B.E., M.L.A (Punjab). Cited in BAWs:17-III, 2003:243.

⁷⁴ Owen M. Lynch, in his study of Chamars of Agra, “The Politics of Untouchability: Social Structure and Social Change in a City of India” (Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1966). Cited in Zelliot 2013:191.

merely in form, but also in fact, then we must uphold the constitutional methods. He further explained;

“The first thing, in my judgment, we must do to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody method of revolution. Where conditional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the grammar of the Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned the better for us...

When there was no way left for a constitutional method for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods.⁷⁵

Ambedkar argued that unconstitutional methods can only be used as last option but not as a choice. He said that bloody methods would lead nowhere except anarchy and violence. Therefore, he did not ask the Dalits for waging war. As far as possible, the downtrodden, as Ambedkar’s methodology, must adopt the constitutional method for achieving the social and economic objectives. Only in the exceptional cases, there can be justification for unconstitutional method (Jatava 1997:117).

Before Ambedkar’s death, he announced in October 1956 to form the Republican Party of India out of the Scheduled Caste Federation. He envisioned the support for the new political party were Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes, that form the majority of the population of India (Zelliot 2013:198-199). It was the political journey of the most exploited section of the world. Ambedkar said that “he was fighting the world’s most difficult struggle.”

⁷⁵ Ambedkar concluding speech on Constitution making in the Constituent Assembly of India, 25 November 1949, Cited in Jatava (1997:116).

IV. Summary

The political thought of Mao and Ambedkar, besides certain commonalities, had some major issues of difference. Their approach vis-à-vis the nature of the state and political mobilization is different. Mao's political methods are more successful and immediate while Ambedkar's political methods are moderate and time taking but enduring in terms of the inputs. Both leaders believed in mass mobilization and were successful in shaping the imagination of the common masses.

Mao focused on equality while Ambedkar focused on liberty. Mao's politics is primarily centered on economic equality, but Ambedkar's primary focus was on liberty. Liberty has no place in Mao's political thought while equality had an appropriate space in Ambedkar's thought. Mao's political thought is opposed to liberty while Ambedkar made liberty and equality paramount in the Indian democratic system.

The three principles of egalitarian society i.e. equality, liberty and fraternity were integral to Mao's and Ambedkar's political thought. Mao's emphasis on equality with the violent means led to political transformation in China. Ambedkar's emphasis on equality, liberty, and fraternity did indeed shape the political dynamics in India, particularly in laying the foundations of democracy through the Indian constitution. Fraternity is a prerequisite for an egalitarian society that is devoid of Mao's conception of over-emphasis on equality by radical means. The idea of permanent revolution could not resolve the contradictions within the Chinese society and continues to retain hostility among different classes, whereas Ambedkar considered fraternity as the most important principle of an egalitarian society, which is yet to become reality in India.

Chapter 5

The Economic Thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar

If not ends, what else justify the means? - John Dewey¹

I. Introduction

The great pragmatist philosopher of the 20th century, John Dewey questions that “*If not ends, what else justify the means?*” Mao and Ambedkar grappled with a similar question in addressing some of the economic crises that their respective countries confronted in the first half of the twentieth century. In China, Mao asked, if not communism, what else will justify the violent Revolution? Similarly, Ambedkar asked; if no state socialism, what else will justify the democratic means? Economic equality was essential for Mao while Ambedkar considered basic economic equality as a precondition for successful democracy and society. This chapter sheds light on the economic thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar.

Mao and Ambedkar were two socialists but of different kinds. Their economic thoughts were different, not in terms of aim but in their practice. Mao’s economic thought was not very different from that of Marx, as it rests on the premise of complete economic equality. Ambedkar is a socialist democrat having a balance of economic equality and liberty with fraternity. Equality of opportunity and choice of the job are very significant for Ambedkar, who was a learned economist, earned his degrees from Columbia

¹ John Dewey was a pragmatist philosopher, educationist from the US. He toured China in 1920s when Communist Party was formed. He was an influential philosophers before Marxist-Leninist theory became popular in China. ZHIXIN SU, (1995), “A Critical Evaluation of John Dewey's Influence on Chinese Education”, *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (May, 1995), pp. 302-325. (Online: web): URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1085533>.

University and London School of Economics. Mao's economic thought was based on the economic thought of Marx and Lenin. However, they were paramount when seen from the vantage point of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Whereas, Ambedkar as a constitutionalist had left an imprint of his vision on the directive principles of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar in his economic programme in the "*States and Minorities*" which was prepared to be introduced in the Indian Constituent Assembly. The interesting thing is that Ambedkar and Mao had a common position regarding the cooperatives in the agriculture sector and nationalization of land. Industrialization was another point of convergence. Both of them were very critical of the imperialist economic exploitation. Mao believed in complete nationalization of industries while Ambedkar advocated for nationalization of key sectors.

Mao and Ambedkar's economic thought is discussed in two sections. The first section examines the economic thought in terms of ideas and policy. The second focuses on their success and feasibility in the society. Ambedkar's economic thought at the theoretical level and its implementation at the practical level is also part of the study. At the theoretical level, Ambedkar and Mao had similar views on the collectivization of land, cooperatives in agriculture, and provision of social and economic security for all. However, they differed on the implementation of their economic policies.

It would also discuss the contradictions between advanced means of production and backward society. How China walked on the path of socialism is part of this chapter. The theory of socialism and its practice is scrutinized from the critical point of view. The major discussion is that how Mao's socialism is successful in implementing the economic policies but could not manage the failure and consequences in late 1950s. In contrast, Ambedkar had theorised state socialism but was not able to implement it. Ambedkar emphasised socialist values for retaining egalitarian order. He argued that socialism with democracy, not a socialism with dictatorship, would be long lasting. He underscored that socialism could not be brought about by force. Mao emphasised the materialist socialist model while Ambedkar advocated democracy with socialism.

II. Socialism and State Socialism

The modern state is a powerful entity. Among all the modern states, socialist states tend to control the economic affairs irrespective of the specific nature of the political system. Chinese state is no exception. The State as supreme political authority is an important tool for bringing change in the social and economic life of the people. Mao and Ambedkar wanted the state to take the lead in the reorganization of the economic sphere of people. Mao essentialized violence and dictatorship to achieve socialism while Ambedkar believed in socialism without violence and dictatorship. Mao considered dictatorship of the proletariat as a necessary condition for achieving socialism. Ambedkar believed that there would be no liberty in a dictatorship. Therefore, it does not allow any choice. Man does not want only food but also freedom of thought and mind. The freedom of choosing profession is imperative for Ambedkar. The difference between socialism and state socialism lays in the method of implementation of their programmes. The nature of government is crucial in the implementation of the programme. Mao believed in government for the people not by the people, while Ambedkar believed in government by the people and for the people (BAWS: 1: 1979:247).²

Mao's conception of socialism is a part of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state socialism. It gave absolute power in the hand of the head of state so that it can rapidly reorganise and redistribute the resources in favour of the working classes and weaker sections. Distribution and reorganization of the resources remained the only goal of Mao's socialism. Ambedkar, has a different point of view of the absolute state, as he argued that in the process of giving absolute power to state to control the life of the people made them only economic creature. It is not only the economic distribution is required but also the freedom of thought for the development of human personality. His conception of the state socialism is to manage the balance between economic security

² This definition is taken from Ambedkar's argument in favour of popular government. He emphasised that only government for the people is not enough and it should also be a government by the people. He defined that government for the people seems attractive but it is not best option to build a democratic society. B. R. Ambedkar, "Evidence before the Southborough Committee on Franchise" examined on 26 January 1919. BAWS: 1: 1979: 243-278.

with the freedom, required for the development of individual. Mao's economic thought is an end in itself while Ambedkar considered them only means to achieve the ultimate purpose of the life of the people.

1. Mao's State Socialism

Since CPC wrested power in 1949, China introduced a new model of socialism with the introduction of Five-Year Plan, Great Leap Forward, and Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and others (Hoffmann 1971:12). Hoffman (1971) opined that Mao focused on rapid attainment of modern industrialization and socialisation of the people. The first dealt with the mechanical aspect of socialism while the second with the social and qualitative aspect of socialism. For Mao, the dual objectives of the party, industrialization and socialisation, are not contradictory (Ibid. 14).

There are many versions of socialism. Mao's version of socialism is Marxist-Leninist socialism. Leninist political structure is authoritarian in nature and retained by force and violence. Mao's approach to socialism is robust. Mao could successfully implement his policies. Radical economic reform and land distribution were carried out under his socialist agenda. The newly established People's Republic of China began to transform itself into a socialist state under Mao's leadership. Mao's socialist state had limited space for the freedom of the individual.

Mao affirmed that Marxist-Leninist theory was still valid; however, its contingent application depends on variables which changed in every specific situation (Mao Zedong:1956:265).³ He explained that the prowess of a socialist state is tested in the correct handling of the contradictions.

Mao was passionately committed to socialism and the means to attain it are economic evolution and revolution. The transition from a semi-colonial and feudal economy to socialism is to be accomplished in two stages. The first stage is "New

³ Mao Zedong (1956) "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." *Renmin Ribao*, editorial, December 29, In *Communist China: 1955-1959. Policy Documents with Analysis* (1962). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Democracy”, a period of “restricted capitalism” for an originally unstated numbers of year. It was the stage when the nation’s industrial strength had been built up to larger and more concentrated and more manageable proportions. The second phase is about the state socialism along Marxist lines, including collectivization of agriculture, was then to be introduced; and apparently was introduced in 1955 (Klein 1958:29).

Mao described the nationalized sector as the commanding heights of economy. He said that the enterprises whether national or foreign, which hold a dominated position or due to their size which is beyond the individual’s power to create i.e. banks, railways, aviation companies, etc. has to be controlled by the state, so that private capital cannot influence the life of the people. The private sector, the plains of the economy, consists of small industrial and commercial firms, which have relatively few employees. The cooperative sector, the small hills of economy, which are largely but not exclusively associated with agriculture (i.e. agricultural producers, credit and marketing cooperatives labor “mutual aid” teams) (Klein 1958:30-31).

Mao being a socialist in nature nationalized major sectors and cooperative sectors were fostered through preferential treatment. The production theory in the “New Democracy” is simple. To achieve the goal, optimum allocation of resources of the economy is being stressed for more production. The state will continue to purchase all industrial and agricultural surpluses, and place an order with private firms experiencing sales related difficulties. To ensure adequate knowledge for intelligent decisions by state officials, as well as to increase tax yields, all firms are required to submit an inventory list of all assets and liabilities, keep a journal and ledger, and provide vouchers for all transactions (Klein 1958:31).

Mao, unlike Stalin, believed that socialist economy continued to be characterised by contradictions. He argued that existence of contradiction was a positive factor. It was contradictions as their ceaseless emergence development happens that push society forward. Without contradiction, no change is possible and without change no development, therefore, socialism and communism would be impossible to achieve (Nick Night 2007:224).

Mao in “On Coalition Government” expanded his conception of the New Democratic stage of the Chinese revolution. He observed that this is a stage and may last for several decades, and he had made a detailed proposal for agrarian reform and for the establishment of an economic system that would safeguard the interests of both the working class and of private capital. This speech is particularly interesting because it shows that Mao saw China’s economic future in terms of large-scale industry and big cities:

In the future, tens of millions of peasants will go to the cities, to factories. In order to build up powerful industries of her own and a large number of big modernized cities, China will have to undergo a continuous process of transforming the rural inhabitants into urban inhabitants.⁴

China must utilize all urban and rural factors of capitalism which are beneficial and not detrimental to the national economy and the people’s livelihood and unite with the national bourgeois in a common struggle. Our present policy is to restrict capitalism and not to eliminate it.⁵

Mao showed his pragmatism in his acceptance of a “Mixed” economy in which private and various types of public ownership co-exist. Mao perceived that premature socialization of the economy would be harmful and, therefore, allowed private enterprise to exist and grow and even spoke of the need to encourage capitalists to migrate to the communist areas from another part of China. Flexibility on these matters is reminiscent of Lenin’s willingness to employ foreign capital and skill and to allow the private sector to flourish during the New Economic Policy of the 1920s. In Mao’s case, this policy became embodied in his plans for the new democratic period, the state through which China has to pass on the way to socialism (Howe & Walker 1977:178). The Economic component of this strategy involved first and foremost a land reform that would satisfy the demands of peasantry. The New Democratic politics, he wrote, is virtually the granting of power to the peasants.⁶

⁴ Mao Tse-tung, “On Coalition Government”, MSW: 4:1965: 294-5. Cited in Howe & Walker 1977: 179.

⁵ Mao Tse-tung, “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” MSW: 4: 1965:421.

⁶ Mao Tse-tung, “On New Democracy” MSW: 3: 1961:138.

The development of capitalism is not only an advanced but also an unavoidable process, said Mao in 1949.⁷ Industrialization was considered not only an economic but also a political prerequisite to socialism. China was primarily agricultural; “the peasants from eighty percent of the population bear the primary burden of the national economy of China today” (1945).⁸ Of the 20 percent of those who do not depend on the soil for their livelihood, only “two and a half to three million” are modern industrial workers, twelve million are craftsmen and hired laborers.⁹ This numerically small, politically weak, industrial proletariat” was considered incapable of enforcing confiscation and collectivization of the land in the relatively large numbers who owned all or part of the land they tilled. This proletariat had to be made much stronger, and the peasantry made much weaker politically before this was possible (Klein 1958:29).

Hoffmann (1971) concluded that economic policy of China was not wrong as depicted by the West. It is clear that it was consistent with the China’s backward situation. And empirical data is far from adequate to judge the economic performance of socialist China. Mao’s policy hinged principally on the transformation of Chinese economy into an egalitarian one. Mao was an experimentalist and visionary. He departed from Stalinist model of socialism in the interest of the people.

2. *Ambedkar’s State Socialism*

According to Valerian Rodrigues, Ambedkar’s agenda of the state socialism is akin to the concept of socialism advanced by Lenin followed by the Soviet Revolution. Ambedkar’s perspective on socialism as an ideology remained ambivalent, particularly in its Marxist formulations. He accepted the concept of class struggle, although he felt that, in Indian context, it had to be substantially redefined (Rodrigues:2007:148-49).

⁷ Mao Tse-tung, *Fight for a New China* (New York, 1945), p.38. Cited in Klein 1958:29.

⁸ Mao Tse-tung, “The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China”, Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy (New York, N.D. mimeo.), p.14. Klein 1958:29.

⁹ *Ibid.* p.15, cited in Klein 1958:29.

Ambedkar was influenced by the Fabian socialism as he was also swayed by the thought of Sydney Webb.¹⁰

Ambedkar's version of socialism is very close to democratic socialism. The parliamentary democracy had greatly influenced him. He wanted to have socialism with democracy. Ambedkar coined the term as state socialism in his memorandum prepared to present before the constituent assembly of India and had a detailed framework for the state socialism in India. Ambedkar was a champion of democracy and critical of those who were against it. He criticized Marxists for economic determinism. He argued that Marxists have misunderstood democracy, their inability to comprehend the realm of ideologies and moral values. He considered the social and moral values to be important for people than mere government to control each and every aspect of the society (BAWS: 17-III:2003).¹¹ He argued that socialism was turning out to be authoritarian in its praxis. Ray and Ray asserted that Ambedkar's Socialism is egalitarian liberalism whereas a social and political order of equal liberties is upheld with a positive consideration toward the disadvantaged. His predisposition to state socialism within the orbit of bourgeois liberal-democratic political framework and his antipathy toward Marxism manifests itself in the best tradition of Fabianism (Ray & Ray 2012:250).

While addressing Ambedkar's standpoint of democratic socialism, and his immense contribution to Indian poor masses Ray and Ray (2012) highlighted his political activism in contributing to the "lower" castes and "untouchables". Ambedkar strived for achieving equality, liberty and fraternity and social justice. Ray and Ray tried to understand Ambedkar's comparative analysis of *Buddha and Marx* and opined that Ambedkar looked at Buddha for his moral and non-violent means while rejecting Marx for supporting dictatorship and violence.¹²

¹⁰ Prof. Seligman introduced Ambedkar to Sydney Webb as Ambedkar moved from Columbia University to London School of Economics. There is no evidence that Dr. Ambedkar directly met Sydney Webb in Britain. He was also influenced by the British Labour party as well. Dananjay Keer 1990:28.

¹¹ An Address by Dr. Ambedkar on 20th Nov. 1956, at World Buddhist Council Conference at Kathmandu. Where he compared Buddha and Karl Marx, advocated Buddhism as a substitute for Marxism.

¹² Ibid. Ambedkar argued that why dictatorship is necessary to continue after communist revolution. He said that when revolution is over freedom for individual must be given.

Ambedkar wanted to establish state socialism not through dictatorship but political democracy. He explained that state socialism is essential for the rapid development in India, and warned that if private enterprises dominate industrialization, then it would produce those inequalities of wealth which private capitalism has produced in Europe (BAWS:1:1979:408). Ambedkar's advocacy of state socialism without dictatorship or to have state socialism with parliamentary democracy, and for its solution, he suggested Constitutional state socialism with parliamentary democracy. He explained that socialist nature of the state should be laid down in the constitution itself so that it would not be easy for the future legislature to change the constitutional prohibitions enshrined in the constitution (BAWS: 1:1979:411).

Lokhande posited that Ambedkar's advocacy for state socialism, in the field of agriculture, with a collectivized method of cultivation, was robust so that 60 million "untouchables" who were landless laborers could be ameliorated through consolidation of land or by tenancy legislation. However, only collective farms can solve the problem of landless labourers. Therefore, Ambedkar pointed out two fundamental features in favor of state socialism. First is that state socialism is an important field of economic life and the second is, it does not leave the establishment of state socialism to the will of the legislature (Lokhande 1982:33-34, Jatava 2001:41)). Ambedkar explained the problem of having state socialism without dictatorship. The way out seems to retain parliamentary democracy and have state socialism with constitutional law. It would be beyond the abrogation, and it would fulfill triple objectives, to establish socialism, to retain parliamentary democracy and avoid dictatorship. Ambedkar wanted to retain these three things for state socialism (Lokhande 1982:34).

Ambedkar has planned to ensure state socialism, was enshrined in the constitution without leaving its responsibility to the wish of a legislation. One indispensable condition for the attainment of planned economy is that it must not be allowed to be postponed. Ambedkar explained that in the structure of parliamentary democracy, once majority may be in favor of state socialism but next election, majority may turn out to be against it. Hence, it may lead to the derailment of the socialist agenda in the democracy as socialism

will be in danger when an anti-socialist majority comes into power. Then next time pro-socialist majority turn the legislation again. Socialist state will be in jeopardy if it depends on the wish of the legislation. Therefore, he suggested the solution for this practical problem of democracy (BAWS: 1:1979:411).

Ambedkar argued that the solution to practical problem of democracy for the implementation of socialism under democracy does not lay in dictatorship. He further argued that those who demand individual freedom they must reject dictatorship. However, people wanted state socialism but at the cost of exchanging parliamentary democracy with dictatorship. The fundamental concern is that to have state socialism without dictatorship or to have state socialism with parliamentary democracy. Ambedkar advocated state socialism enshrined in the constitution. It would not be easy for a simple majority to amend or abrogate. This is the only method to attain the triple objectives; have state socialism, hold parliamentary democracy and escape dictatorship (BAWS: 1:1979:411-412). Ambedkar further argued in favour of the economic democracy:

“The soul of the democracy is the doctrine of one man, one value, but it has attempted to give effect to political structure as adopting the rule of one man, one vote that is supposed to translate into the fact the doctrine of one man, one value. It has left the economic structure to take the shape given to it by those who are in opposition to mould it. If democracy is to live up to its principle of one man, one value then it has to define both the economic structure as well as the political structure of society by the law of the constitution”.

Ambedkar strongly supported the economic democracy as masses accepted the political democracy. Economic democracy is a part of larger part of democracy. He said that democracy was not only form of political system but also economy (BAWS:1:1979:412). Ambedkar emphasised on the state intervention to protect the liberty of people. He was of the opinion that it is not enough to enumerate fundamental rights in the constitution, but also creating a necessary conditions so that people will be able to enjoy those rights given by the constitution (Kshirsagar 1992:122).

Ambedkar expanded the ambit of democracy and advocated state ownership of agriculture and it should be protected by putting it under fundamental right to protect the

liberty of people from economic insecurity and invasion by people. He clarified that the connection between individual freedom and economic security for citizen is a necessary condition of state socialism. He wanted the state to take the responsibility to organize the economic life of people. It would not be finishing every possibility to private innovativeness and also deliver justifiable distribution of capital (Kshirsagar 1992:121).

Ambedkar advocated for the advanced means of production and industrialization as he argued that socialism cannot be maintained without high productivity. Socialism presupposed abundant production, otherwise, there will be no redistribution. He further explained that only national and key industries should be nationalized and other should be left under the private ownership. It means, in his socialism, private property can exist but not so much so that one can exploit others (Kshirsagar 1992:122). Ambedkar further argued that equality of opportunity is part of the state socialism, therefore, no person should be disqualified by any distinctions. He argued that there should not be any kind of racial, social and gender distinction in the state socialism. And there would be sufficient scope to the enterprises, intelligence and industrious persons to undertake any private business (Kshirsagar 1992:123).

Ray and Ray concluded that Ambedkar's model for the economic structure of Indian society was a democratic socialism. Moreover, cooperatives in agriculture were one of the foremost features of his ideal of democratic socialism. Ambedkar recognized the idea of class struggle, but he thought that, in the Indian set up, it needed to be redefined. Moreover, he asserted the same programme has been accepted as main paradoxes of capitalism. It was the social basis of its production with private appropriation which is responsible for exploitation in India (Ray & Ray 2012: 250). He was keen to establish state socialism with the help of constitution and, thus, he made it unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive. Ambedkar enshrined state socialism in the constitution to protect the liberty and freedom of the citizen. These link between individual liberty and economic security may not be obvious for everyone but it is necessary to protect the liberty of citizen. The linking them is necessary (BAWS:

1:1979:409). Ambedkar explained that economic insecurity and unemployment would compel people to relinquish their fundamental rights:

Constitutional Lawyers assume that the enactment of Fundamental Rights is enough to safeguard their liberty and that nothing more is called for. They argue that where the State refrains from intervention in private affairs—economic and social—the residue is liberty. What is necessary is to make the residue as large as possible and State intervention as small as possible. It is true that where the State refrains from intervention what remains is liberty. But this does not dispose of the matter. One more question remains to be answered. To whom and for whom is this liberty? Obviously, this liberty is liberty to the landlords to increase rents, for capitalists to increase hours of work and reduce the rate of wages. (BAWS: 1:1979:410).

How to protect less economically powerful people from more powerful and how to protect the fundamental right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Ambedkar considered it a useful remedy to control the power of government to enforce arbitrary restriction in political domain and curtail the influence of powerful on the economically weaker sections (BAWS: 1:1979:410).

Bakshi (2000) argued that Ambedkar's advocacy for state socialism and inclusion of principle of socialism in directive principles of the Indian Constitution and adoption of the parliamentary system as a means to achieve state socialism needs careful attention. His conception of state socialism aimed at the welfare of poor and marginal, eliminating inequality based on birth, discrimination in social practices (132-33). Thorat (2007) articulated that Ambedkar made a significant contribution to the economic analysis of the caste system. Ambedkar examined the economic principles of the caste system and role of the religion in it. *Hindu* religious principle and unequal distribution of the economic resources is mutually enforcing each other (Thorat 2007:39). The relevant economic attributes of the caste system involved in itself a producer's organization and scheme of distribution are:

(a) Assignment of economic, civil and cultural rights, particularly the property rights for each caste by birth and continuance of thereof by hereditary; (b) unequal distribution of the economic rights and property rights among castes groups; (c) hierarchical arrangement of occupations in terms of status and dignity, some occupations being treated superior and the others as inferior with a stigma of purity and impurity; (d) provision of a comprehensive system of social and

economic ostracism and penalties to enforce the caste based economic and social order; finally, (e) support and justification from Hindu religious philosophy.¹³

To put it briefly it was a full mechanism of three interrelated elements; fixed hereditary occupation and economic rights by birth, unequal and hierarchical (or graded) division of these economic rights. Ambedkar reflected on these economic aspects of the caste system and felt that it was the more difficult to find job in India than any other society in the world. Ambedkar's economic ideas gave us an insight into his thought on economic development, planning, and alternative economic system of state socialism and political economy of the caste system. State socialism is about the active role of the state in economic and social development of through insurance planning. His safeguard like affirmative action was also part of the state socialism to protect the weaker sections of the society.

III. Economic Model: Nationalization, Cooperatives, Industrialization and Agriculture

Mao and Ambedkar had been socialist and state socialist respectively. Both considered the role of state to be crucial in the economic development. Both agreed on nationalization, cooperatives in agriculture, industrialization and improving condition of workers and peasants. They viewed conducive social and economic conditions to be necessary for development. The egalitarian agenda cannot be fulfilled without state intervention. Ambedkar felt that how long people will wait for the economic democracy to be a reality in the parliamentary democracy while Mao had been a major figure of the communist movement as administrator of economic policies in China. He introduced radical land reform and started industrialization in China, collectivization in agriculture for improvement in the production. Mao began the great leap forward and People's commune as major programme for economic development of Chinese society, but they

¹³ Thorat (2007) elaborated Ambedkar thought on relationship of caste and economy or may be called political economy of the caste system (39-40).

miserably failed. Failure of the people's commune system resulted in millions of deaths in the famine in the late 1950s.

1. Mao on Land, Agriculture, Industrialization and Communes

Nationalisation of land was a primary goal of the CPC from the 1930s. It was not working class but peasantry which became the vanguard of the Communist revolution. Mao paid considerable attention to peasants than workers from the Yen-an days. Mao became popular for mobilisation of peasants in the communist revolution. Chinese revolution was, in fact, a peasant-based communist revolution. The credit goes to Mao's skill to make it a success when the numbers of workers in China was few. Land reform was not the only agenda of the Communist party but also part of its strategy for communist revolution. Gurley (2010) tried to understand Mao's ideas on the economic strategy in the formative years, 1927-1949. In an attempt to explain the development of economic theories and problems and, thus, to serve as a vehicle for a better understanding of the economic policies of China after 1949. Until 1927, the Communists primarily tried to organize the urban workers around their immediate demands by shaping these groups into a revolutionary force. The repeated failure of this policy led Mao and others to shift the focus of the movement to the countryside, where they established rural base areas (Gurley 2010:116).

In 1927, Mao took his famous investigation into the peasant movement in Hunan province, in which he concluded that "every comrade should know that national revolution requires a profound change in the countryside."¹⁴ In that report, Mao stressed not only a stifling effect of the class system but also the liberating effect of smashing the "superstructure" of its religious and cultural systems (Howe & Walker 1977:177). Mao in his peasant investigation report on Hunan in 1929 outlined the sequence that should be followed in conducting the coming struggle in the rural areas. First, win the fight so that you can wipe out the landlords. Second, engage in the economic struggle to redistribute land to poor peasants and to solve their other economic problems. Finally, eliminate

¹⁴ "Report on Investigation into Peasant Movement in Hunan", MSW: 1: 1965:21-59.

another system of authority (clan, supernatural, etc.) and their supporting ideologies of natural inequalities, superstition, and religion (MSW:1:1965: 21-59).

Mao and the Communist Party of China promised distribution of agricultural land to the peasants. After the establishment of the PRC, the first and foremost work for the CPC was to implement land distribution and collectivization in agriculture. The CPC sought to develop the rural economy and provide for the economic security and social welfare for the rural population through the social reorganization of the countryside along with communes. In the countryside, the CCP's first move after land reform in the early 1950s was to organize individual farmers into mutual aid groups and later into agriculture cooperatives (Han 2008:39). The commune was a basic unit of social, economic, cultural, educational, political and military unit of the socialist society to resolve the contradictions between city and countryside, workers and peasants, and intellectual and workers (Fann 1972:112).

In the pre-1949 period, Mao's policies appear to have included first, only a limited amount of land confiscation; second, redistribution of land on the basis of township and equal amount per person; third, private ownership of land and its cultivation by individual families (not collective); and fourth, the enlistment of support of rich peasants, small merchants and other immediate classes (Gurley 2010:126). Mao's attitude toward the rich peasants and bourgeois was not so hostile. As Edgar Snow identified in 1937;

In the Soviet (Ch'a-ling), and subsequently, we promoted a democratic program with a moderate policy based on slow but regular development. This earned Chingkangshan the recriminations of putschists in the Party, who were demanding a radical policy of raiding and burning and killing landlords, in order to destroy their morale. We refused to adopt such tactics, were therefore branded by hotheads as reformist. I was bitterly attacked by them for not carrying out more radical policy (Snow 1937:151-152).

Mao believed that the Chinese society is semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Therefore, the primary task is to fight against imperialism and feudalism, not against the capitalists. Mao saw his forces engaged in protracted bourgeois democratic revolution, which needed to enlist the support of the population to the extent possible. Mao opposed

ultra-left policies, where he was opposed to his basic concept of “New-Democracy” (Gurley 2010:126). For Mao, socialism and communism lay in the distant future, after the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with this helpful capitalist element, had been won and consolidated. Mao enlisted many rich peasants and intermediate classes into the revolutionary fold (Gurley 2010:127). As Edgar Snow reported:

Both landlords and rich peasants were allowed as much land as they could till with their own labour. In districts where there was no land scarcity and there were many such districts in the Northwest the lands of resident landlords and rich peasants were in practice not confiscated at all, but the wasteland and land of the absentee owners were distributed, and sometimes there was a revision of the best quality land, poor peasants being given better soil, and landlord being allotted the same amount of poorer land (Snow 1972:216).

Mark Selden has argued from a different perspective and contradicted Snow’s formulation (Selden: 1971:80). He articulated that the previous political and social dominance of the landlord and rich peasants had been broken. They no longer constitute a dominant socio-economic elite controlling the destiny of the poor and monopolizing military and political power (Selden 1971:86). The Central Committee came up with with a new land policy in 1942:

The capitalist mode of production is the more progressive method in present-day China and that the bourgeoisie, particularly the petty-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie, represent the comparatively more progressive social elements and the political force today. The mode of production of the rich peasants bears capitalist characteristics; they are the capitalists in the rural areas and are an indispensable force in the Anti-Japanese War and the battle of production. Therefore the policy of the Party is not to weaken capitalism and the bourgeois, nor to weaken the rich peasant class and their productive force, but to encourage capitalist production.¹⁵

Mao’s main question was not whether land should belong to the landlord or peasant but whether it would belong to Japanese or Chinese (Gurley 2010:132). Gurley summarized:

Mao’s agrarian reforms, which were, on the whole, moderate ones, did not set out to annihilate large segment of the population but rather to win over the great majority. Such policy was consonant with his theory that the Chinese revolution

¹⁵ Brandt ed. p. 278. The Document is the Decision of the Central Committee on Land Policy in the Anti-Japanese base areas, January 28, 1942. Cited in Gurley 2010:132.

was in bourgeois-democratic stage and not in the proletarian stage. Consequently, an agrarian policy has to be consistent with capitalism as a progressive force and not jump over a stage to socialism. Accordingly Mao promoted private ownership of land, individual family cultivation and the buying and selling of land (Gurley 2010:136).

There was a major paradigm shift in Mao's land policies after the Revolution. After the establishment of PRC, a moderate policy of Maoism was adopted. Mao depicted his policy as being consistent with capitalism. The policy including the confiscation of land of landlords and the enforcement of the eight-hour working day, never went beyond the bounds of capitalist private ownership; the policy was not to put socialism in practice then but to nurture the situation.¹⁶ The moderate policies were constantly being attacked by other revolutionaries by some of Mao's comrades both from the right and from the left. Rightist tendencies were those promoting leadership by the bourgeois of the revolution, those that stressed unity with bourgeois but not struggle against them. On the other hand, leftist tendencies were policies that jumped over the bourgeois democratic stage of revolution to the socialist phase. They were policies of struggle but no alliances and demanded the immediate establishment of socialism and the immediate demise of the non-proletarian classes. Both rightist and leftist tendencies were dangerous (Gurley 2010:172). There have been more radical claims in the 1930s and 1940s about the implementation of socialist policies. Mao, in his ultra-left policies of 1930-40s, observed that;

It is absolutely impermissible to repeat such wrong ultra-left policies toward the upper petty bourgeois and middle bourgeois sector in the economy as our party adopted during 1931-1934 (unduly advanced labour conditions, excessive income tax rates, encroachment of the interest of the industrialist and merchants during the land reform, and adoption as a goal of the workers welfare, which was a short-sighted and one-sided concept, instead of the goal of developing production, promoting economic prosperity, giving consideration to both public and private interests and benefiting both labour and capital). To repeat such mistakes would certainly damage the interest both of the working masses and the new-democratic state.¹⁷

¹⁶ See the orientation of the youth movement MSW: 2:1965: 242.

¹⁷ Mao Tse-tung, "Problem of Strategy in Chinese Revolutionary War", MSW: 1: 1965:249-250.

Mao focused on the compromised socialist policies in the years following 1949. In 1948, Mao continued the left deviation:

At present left deviation consists chiefly in encroaching on the interests of the middle peasants and the national bourgeoisie; laying one-sided stress on the labour movement on the immediate interests of the workers; making no distinctions in the treatment of landlord and middle peasants; making no distinction in the treatment of big, middle and small landlords, or of landlords who are local tyrants and those who are not; not leaving the landlords the necessary means of livelihood as required by principle of equal distribution; overstepping the certain demarcation lines of policy in the struggle to suppress the counter-revolution, not wanting the political parties which want to represent national bourgeois; not wanting the enlightened gentry, neglecting the tactical importance of narrowing the scope of attack in the newly liberated areas (that is neglecting to neutralize the rich peasants and small landlords); and lacking the patience to work step by step.¹⁸

Mao was a great strategist in the implementation of his socialist economic policies. He was soft on some of the class enemies. He wanted to unite with some traitors and pro-Japanese elements for the bigger front (Gurley 2010:174).¹⁹ Thus, an economic policy of simultaneously lowering and guaranteeing landlords' rents would have to be accompanied by educational efforts among peasants to explain the exploitative nature of all rents, high or low. Policies such as these, Mao believed, were not conciliatory ones but rather dual policies. He adopted dual policy of suitably improving the workers livelihood without hampering the development of the capitalist economy. In agrarian policy, it is the dual policy of requiring the landlord to reduce rent and interest and of stipulating that the peasants should pay the reduced rents and interests.²⁰

Mao's agrarian policies were moderate in nature particularly during 1949-55. Partial land redistribution and subsequent maintenance of the principle of private property characterized the "take-over" of this important segment of China's economy until 1955.²¹ Measures were taken to increase agricultural output included:

¹⁸ Mao Tse-tung, "Circular on Situation", MSW: 4: 1965: 219. Cited in Gurley 2010:173.

¹⁹ For more detail: Mao Tse-tung, "On Policy", MSW: 2: 1965:443.

²⁰ Mao Tse-tung, Postscript to Rural Survey, MSW: 3:1961: 14-15. Cited in Gurley 2010:174.

²¹ Sidney Klein "The Pattern of Land Tenure Reform in East Asia after World War-II, pp.255-369, Passim, typewritten doctoral dissertation, Economics Department, Columbia University, 1957, cited in Klein 1958: 34.

A: Exemption of the land of the “rich peasants”- the “Kulaks” of China from confiscation and redistribution. Their holdings, larger, more efficiently sized and managed and therefore more productive than those of poor and middle peasants, were not touched so long as the land rented out did not exceed the areas of the land they and their hired workers tilled.

b. In each reformed area confiscation and redistribution were scheduled for the post-harvest time after the crops were safely in.

c. “Mutual aid team” and agricultural producers Co-operatives” were used to mobilize on the use of labour power in larger undertakings, such as land reclamation and irrigation projects. This also served as an introduction to the idea of collectivization.

d. Heavily increased emphasis was placed on research projects in connection with agricultural mechanization, water conservation, crop insect control, agricultural implement manufacturing, land reclamation and crop rotation (Klein 1958:35).

In sharp contrast to the moderate policies initially pursued in the agricultural sector of the economy, trade unions in the “New Democracy” become primarily organs of the state, and secondarily organs of the workers in individual firms as early as 1950.²² Since 1950, all firms trade unions have been subordinate to trade unions at higher levels roughly comparable to state administrative units.

After the Five-Year Plan, it was considered that situation was ripe for starting Great Leap Forward movement. Industrialization began soon after the completion of the Communist Revolution in China. Mao launched a colossal industrialization for the advancement of China. The GLF facilitated rapid growth of industries and iron production. Backyard furnaces sprang up all over China to produce iron at home, which turned out to be major disaster. China produced so much of iron during the GLF programme. It had two objectives steel production and people’s commune.²³ It was considered necessary for socialism and communism. Industrialisation and collective farming was to be the core of the communism. Thus the Soviet model of development was rejected, which was heavily depended on industry. Thereafter, China decided to “walk on two legs.”

²² The Trade Union Law of People’s Republic of China, Supplement to People’s China, July 1950, *Passim*. Cited in Klein 1958:36.

²³ It was the programme for leap from socialism to Communism. (Online: web) URL: <http://chinese posters.net/themes/great-leap-forward.php>.

“Peasants and workers were mobilized to transform both agriculture and industry to convert a backward economy into a modern communist society of plenty for all. In the pursuit of Utopian paradise, everything was collectivized, as villagers were herded together in giant communes that heralded the advent of communism. People in the countryside were robbed of their work, their homes, their land, their belongings and their livelihood. Food distributed by the spoonful in collective canteens according to merit, becomes a weapon to force people to follow party as it dictates” (Dikotter 2010:XI).

Mao advocated for the fusion of smaller agriculture cooperatives into a giant collective which he termed commune.

“China was on mobilization footing, as local cadre throughout the country scrambled over the summer to fuse collective farms into people’s communes, bringing together up to 20,000 households into basic administrative units. By the end of 1958 the whole of the countryside was collectivized into some 26,000 Communes” (Dikotter 2010:48).

Dick Wilson argued that Mao conceived a new system of life of China in terms of economy and government (Wilson 1979:13). This system was correct, so that coming generations would have nothing to blame Mao for not implementing the radical policies at the perfect time. Mao was able to combine the GLF and the GPCR together both of which had exciting, optimistic features, with an improved understanding of his contemporaries and enthusiasm to work with them (Wilson 1979:452).

Howe and Walker dealt with two major questions; firstly how did Mao perceive the process of economic change and the role of political leadership in it; secondly, when and with what effect did he actively involve himself in the economic policy? The economy of Mao’s youth was predominantly rural. Technically the characteristics of this rural economy were that it was small in scale, required the intensive and skillful use of manpower, and involved negligible application of modern agronomic techniques or mechanical power. China’s industrial growth made significant advance during the First World War and development continued down to the mid-1940s. Despite this evolution, industrial weaknesses remained and the number of people employed in industries never exceeded three million. The geographical concentration of industry limited its economic and social impact on traders. The weakness of agriculture and the lack of effective

national governmental policies impeded improvement in this situation (Howe & Walker 1977:175).

One may argue that many of China's pre-war economic problems were due to the unfavorable international economic climate and the direct effects of the civil and anti-Japanese wars. China's fundamental problem was how to transform a vast economic, geographic and cultural entity for more than a century, had failed to accommodate the interests of its growing population (Howe & Walker 1977:175). The industrialization, with its attendant transfer of population of land to the cities, was the answer to this problem (Klein 1958:30).

A major point was the implementation of limited land reform. It was officially accepted that there could be no substantial progress toward collective farming before industry was developed, and agriculture mechanized (Howe & Walker 1977:181). By 1958, Mao had added two new elements to this theory. The mechanism underlying wave-like progress was, in his view, the fluctuating imbalance between (a), the development of production and the social relationships of production, and (b) the social relations of production and their superstructure of ideology and culture. These imbalances, he later argued, should serve as the key to the study of the economic problems of socialism.²⁴ Mao's new emphasis on the superstructure was particularly important. In the first round of socialization, he had believed that changes in ownership and organization were all that was necessary to liberate economic forces:

In the past (before the Great Leap Forward) we did not know how to make a socialist revolution. We thought that after cooperatives (1955) and after the introduction of public-private management (1956), everything would be resolved.²⁵

Throughout the crisis years, Mao was attacked from high and low for his handling of economic affairs. Some of the indirect criticism borrowed Mao's metaphor of the horse with high effectiveness. Liu Chien-Hsun was accused of having described Mao's

²⁴ An Important discussion of this is included in Richard Levy, "New Light on Mao," CQ (March 1975), no.61, pp. 95-117. Cited in Howe & Walker 1977:196.

²⁵ Reading Notes, Wan-Sui (1967), p.244. Cited in Howe & Walker 1977:197).

leadership in the Great Leap Forward as that of a “blind man riding blind horse”.²⁶ The main achievements of the economy under Mao’s leadership were a dramatic rise in the rate of investment and the development of a modern industrial base. In comparison to pre-1949, the investment rate in the 1970s had at least quadrupled and, in spite of the depression caused by errors in the Leap and the withdrawal of Soviet support, the long run rate of industrial growth averaged 11 per cent annum (Howe & Walker 1977:217).

2. Ambedkar: Land, Agriculture, Industrialization and Cooperatives

Ambedkar’s economic thought is a combination of nationalism, socialism, and Dalit emancipation. According to Ambedkar, the abolition of untouchability is linked with the basic socio-economic reconstruction of the Indian society (Bakshi 2000:97). Ambedkar considered land tenure and landlordism untenable. So, he advocated for the abolition of landlordism. He said that state has to own the land. The natural result of the abolition of landlordism must be cooperative farming. The collective farming is useful and improve production, but not was accepted by peasants and considered aggression on the system, because of individualism of our farmers. We can abolish landlordism but would not be able to shape our economy on a comprehensive basis. The whole position of our farmers needs to be changed, only then it would be able to reap the fruits of our revolutionary attempt to throw the yoke of landlords (Bakshi 2000:110). Indian Labour Party suggested to take some measures like starting land mortgage, bank, and agricultural producer’s cooperative societies. As the population on land has aggravated the fragmentation of landholding, therefore, it was a direct cause of poverty (Bakshi 2000:110).

Ambedkar’s thought on agriculture has been published in his article on a Small Holding.²⁷ He prepared detailed programme to improve production in agriculture. Ambedkar argued that it is necessary to have a certain amount of land. There should not be small holding than fixed by the state. Ambedkar argued that:

²⁶ Fact about Liu Chien-hsun’s crime cited in Howe & Walker 1977:210.

²⁷ B. R. Ambedkar, “Small Holding in India and Their Remedies”, *Journal of Indian Economic Society*, vol.1, 1918. BAWS:1:1979: 453-479.

“This diminutive size of holdings is said to be greatly harmful to Indian Agriculture. The evils of small holdings no doubt, are many. But it would have been no slight mitigation of them if the small holdings were compact holdings. Unfortunately, they are not. A holding of a farmer though compact for purposes of revenue is for purposes of tillage composed of various small strips of land scattered all over the village and interspersed by those belonging to others. How the fields are scattered can only be shown graphically by a map. Herein we shall have to remain content, since we cannot give a map, with knowing how many separate plots are contained in a holding. The number of separate plots in each holding will show how greatly fragmented it is. We have no figures at all for the whole of India bearing on this aspect of the question.” (BAWS: 1:1979:457).

Ambedkar further explained that

“Consolidation of holdings is a practical problem while the enlargement of them is a theoretical one, demanding a discussion of the principle which can be said to govern their size. Postponing the consideration of the theoretical question of enlargement, we find that the problem of consolidation raises the following two issues:—(1) how to unite such small and scattered holdings as the existing ones, and (2) once consolidated how to perpetuate them at that size. Let us consider them each in turn. Sub-division of land need not involve what is called the fragmentation of land. But unfortunately it does, for, every heir desires to secure a share from each of the survey numbers composing the entire lands of the deceased instead of so arranging the distribution that each may get as many whole numbers as possible, i.e. the heirs instead of sharing the lands *by* survey numbers, claim to share *in* each survey number, thus causing fragmentation” (BAWS: 1:1979:459).

Ambedkar suggested that the value of each piece of land needs to be determined then the original borders are removed, roads are made out, land essential for public purposes are kept apart, and rest of the land is packaged out into new designs. The New plots maintain a size as appropriate to local condition of soil, tillage, etc. a piece of land essential to retain prosperity of one family. Plots be sold out among the old tenants, the constraint being placed on acquisition so as to stop a large number of farmers from being ousted (BAWS:1:1979:460).

Ambedkar proposed that there must not be further sub-division of land for the sake of good agriculture. There is no opposition to subdividing of land, but to ensure that it is not less than fixed limit of division. If it reaches to the sub-division among the family members then it must not be allowed to divide further, but they should cultivate it collectively or individually paying the cost to other family members

(BAWS:1:1979:462). Indian agriculture affected badly by scattered holdings. It is the only way to make them in a standard size. The merging may remove the harms of scattered land, but will not be able to avoid the harms of small holding unless the merged holding is an economical i.e. enlarged holding (Ibid. 464). Ambedkar extended the argument on agricultural landholding to the larger holding of economic resources to facilitate understanding of an economic holding from the standpoint of production.

“An economic holding consists of a combination of land, capital, and labour in a proportion such that the *pro rata* contribution of each in conjunction with the rest is highest. In other words, to create an economic holding, it will not do for a farmer solely to manipulate his piece of land. He must also have the other instruments of production required for efficient cultivation of his holding and must maintain a due proportion of all the factors for, without it, there can be no efficient production. The point is that his equipment and his holding must not be out of proportion to each other. They must be in proportion and must vary, if need be, in proportion” (BAWS: 1:1979:468).

Ambedkar proposed that industrialization will foster the growth of large. It may be perceived that only industrialization would not be an adequate for consolidation. However, it is correct that industrialization may not produce consolidation but definitely, enable consolidation. If it is necessary to cure the problem of the small holding, then we must need industrialization (BAWS: 1: 1979:478-579).

Ambedkar argued that the problem of agriculture would not be solved even after the improvement in the agricultural sector but industrialization would only be a remedy for effective improvement in their condition. He further explained that where there is surplus labour only industrialization would not be able to solve the problem. Therefore, separation of agriculture from industry is dangerous for economy. It must be taken into notice that industrialization and particularly rural industrialization would secure redeployment of labour force to relieve unemployment (Bakshi 2000:128).

The state's obligation is to design the economic affairs of people so that it would lead to maximum production without turning every chance to private enterprise, and also facilitate the reasonable sharing of wealth. Neither agriculture, nor industry can yield better result without support of the capital from the state. Therefore, the state must ensure adequate capital for the growth of agriculture and industry.

Ambedkar further proposed that nationalized insurance is necessary and fulfill a double objective. First, it would give more safety to individuals and provide weighty resources required for financing. There would be no need of depending on the money borrowing from market on highest rate. State socialism stands for speedy industrialization of India. If industrialization happens under private agency then it would definitely produce huge equality in society like Europeans did (BAWS: 1:1979:408).

Ambedkar supported industrialization in India. He said that India needed rapid industrialization immediately after the Independence. He further argued that it should be done by the state not by the private enterprises. He maintained that “industrialization facilitates consolidation. It lessens the premium of land. It must precede consolidation. It is a barrier against future subdivision and consolidation” (Jatava 2001:139). He was of the opinion that industrialization was an absolute necessity for India and capital formation through the surplus labour of countryside for productive purposes (Ibid).

Ambedkar further explained how the problem of unemployment is resolved through industrialization by employing surplus labour in the industries. He emphasised on the capital incentive agriculture and industry. Ambedkar argued that production and employment both can be maximized in industry and agriculture through the application of practical purposes, capital, and machinery (Jatava 2001:139). He advocated a mixed economy for India where the state will manage and own the industry wherever it is necessary. He supported the nationalization of the insurance and transportation (Jatava 2001:140). Given the hierarchical and authoritarian values prevailing in India, economic reform like land and industry must be followed by the democratic state, not by the authoritarian state. Authoritarianism might strengthen the existing graded inequality in the society. Therefore, he wanted a democratic state in a regime of rights (Rodrigues 2007:153).

Restructuring of an economic system based on caste and hereditarily fixed relationship would destroy the old structure of caste and untouchability. Ambedkar did not want to take any chance of adopting authoritarianism for implementation of the

radical economic programme because he knew that it would be like coming out from the tyranny of caste and entering into another form of political tyranny of dictatorship.

IV. Evaluating the Means and Ends

Dewey said that those who contend that the “end justifies the means” morally perverted. Dewey has rightly asked –What can justify the means if not the end? Only means can justify the ends (Dewey 1916:124). Ambedkar argued that Communists preach violence as an absolute means. Buddha was opposed to this phenomenon.²⁸

The social aspect is paramount to understand the implication of socialism. It has experimented that in a perfect condition why communes failed. In 1962, Liu Shaoqi concluded that it was the contradiction between the advanced political system and backward society or mode of production led to the failure of the commune system. It was not a perfect condition for China to establish socialism in reality. Socialism is not only an advanced political system but also advanced social system. As Ambedkar argued that if the majority of people believed in *sociality*²⁹ then it becomes the reality.

1. Failure of People's Communes

The People's Communes were started by Mao to bring about communism. Almost twenty-three thousand of communes were established with each commune having twenty thousand households. It was a programme to move from socialist revolution to communism. He believed that the socialist revolution is over and now the time has come to establish communism. This section deals with why commune system failed. Mao successfully completed his project of taking hold of political power in 1949.

²⁸ Valerian Rodrigues, eds. *Essential Writing of Ambedkar*, 2002, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Paper Back. 2004 p.124.

²⁹ Ambedkar wanted to argue that if majority of the people believe in any idea then it becomes the reality. If they are opposed to certain things then they cannot become the reality.

Theory of “permanent revolution³⁰” emerged as at the beginning of 1958, as China was about to embark on the GLF, which represented another revolution that was part of the permanent revolution. Mao hoped that China would move underdevelopment to state of modernization (Knight 2007:227). Failure of the GLF confirmed that China was not ready for such bold experiment and suggested that Mao overestimated China’s previous economic success readied the Chinese economy for politically driven rapid expansion (Knight 2007:231). It was the conventional Marxist argument that it was development of the forces of production that initiates radical systemic change in the class relations and superstructure.

The GLF is called the utopian project of Mao by the Western and Non-Western scholars. As John Bryan Starr (1977) suggested that utopianism was prominent in Mao’s thought in the late 1950s, particularly a euphoric period in Mao’s career.³¹ Maurice Meisner opined that it was ‘utopian vision of communism.’³² Stuart Schram held that Mao was imbued with ‘Revolutionary Romanticism.’³³ Mao at Beidaihe Conference of August 1958, suggested that transition to communism could be achieved within three to five years. He also highlighted five preconditions for achieving communism:

(1) extreme abundance of products ; (2) an elevation of communist ideology, consciousness, and morality; (3) elevation of culture and education; (4) disappearance of the three differences and the remainders of bourgeois right; and (5) gradual disappearance of the function of the state other than in relation to the external world.³⁴

The failure of the communes led to famine and wreaked havoc to the economy and people. The reason behind the failure of the people’s commune was negligence of social aspect of the materialist communes imposed by force. The failure of the communes

³⁰ Permanent Revolution is already discussed in previous chapter. Here will be discussion on how People’s Commune failed which was part of the Permanent Revolution.

³¹ John Bryan Starr, “Maoism and Marxist Utopianism,” *Problem of Communism* (July-August 1977),p.58, Cited in Knight 2007:258.

³² Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 231,235, cited in Knight 2007:258.

³³ Stuart R. Schram, “Mao Tse-tung as Charismatic Leader,” *Asian Survey* VII, no.6, 1967:386, Cited in Knight 2007:258.

³⁴ Macfarquhar, Cheek, and Wu, eds., *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao*, 434,484, cited in Knight 2007:259.

is a reflection in the economic policies and social order besides the arbitrary political decision making.

Frank Dikotter (2010) argued that the failure of the GLF led to catastrophe. He emphasised on the social aspects of the imposition of any economic policy. Dikotter opined that communist regime neglected the 'nature' aspect of the human being. The major focus was on the materialist forces which led to the valueless development and resulted in huge catastrophe in the China. The negligence of values and morality resulted in obstacles in the materialist development. Ross Terrill has been skeptical of Mao and concludes that he damaged China in a quarter of a century. He said that China would have been better if Mao had died after the revolution (Terrill 1980:429-431).

Maurice Meisner assessed that Marxism has inspired the social objectives announced by Mao but the means to attain them in the Great Leap Forward were not. There was no Marxist or Leninist influence on Mao's idea creatively using them for revolutionary social change drawn from the experience of countryside. The idea that human agency is deterministic in building a new society, and the idea that conversion from socialism to communism is possible in the situation of economic inadequacy (Meisner 1982:190-193).³⁵

Meisner summed up by saying that Marxists inspired Mao for Chinese communist utopia. Maoists consistently pronounced their commitment to accomplish the orthodox Marxist objectives of eliminating the differences between mental and manual labor, town and countryside, and worker and peasants and finally crushing away of the state. Furthermore, these Maoists programs were followed enthusiastically in socioeconomic policies and were not without substantial historical consequences (Meisner 1982:197-98). He also delineates the objective of Maoism: "rational mastery over the world" by inspiring a spirit of experimentation and invention favourable to current economic development (Meisner 1982:207-208). He considered morality as a prerequisite for the

³⁵ Greger & Chang (1978) argued that Marx and Engels suffered from the creative development while in the Hand of Mao Zedong seems evident. That the process began early in the formative years of Mao's intellectual development seems equally important. p.327.

communist economic order. It was a gross mistake to underestimate the role of social aspects in the economic order and policies. As Meisner further explains:

The moral transformation of the people was not only the prerequisite for communism but part of a vision of the future that was as much a spiritual utopia as a social and material one. A collectivistic society based on common spiritual bonds and maintained through a ceaseless process of “ideological struggle” against the ever-present danger of the intrusion of incorrect thoughts was a central element in Mao’s vision of the future. Maoist conception of a leap from “the realm of necessity to “the realm of freedom” suggests not the potentialities but rather a society whose members are engaged in a constant struggle to internalize and practice prescribed collectivistic moral values and social norms (Meisner 1982:201-202).

It was not a failure of the commune system only but also the classical Marxist belief in economic determinism. The negligence of the role of social values of egalitarianism has been disastrous in terms of the failure of the economic programme. It was a major setback for the Maoist economic agenda.

The GLF, which was hoped to take China to greater height actually led to famine. The intensity of the famine was so extreme as it spread, the very survival of the ordinary person resorted to lying, charm, hide, steal, cheat, pilfer, forage, smuggle, trick, manipulation or then outwit the state (Dikotter 2010: XVI). When the farmers hid the grain, the workers outside the village died of hunger as they depended on them.

When a factory employee added salt to the flour, somebody down the line was chewing grit. If minutely observed what were utterly desperate ways of surviving was to see the world in black and white, when in reality collectivization forces everybody, at one point in time to make grim moral compromises. Routine degradation thus went hand in hand with mass destruction (Dikotter 2010: xvii).

Dongping Han is not critical of Mao while as a defender cited one of the incidents at the time of the GLF. It was a critical time for the peasant of the countryside in China. In Jimo, in the early 1960s the state bought grain from the farmers at a price of eight cents a Jin of corn, 10 cents for a Jin of wheat, while farmers had to pay 80 cents a Jin for fertilizers and three Yuan for a shovel. Farmers in Jimo produced wheat, but they could not afford to eat wheat bread except on some special occasions, and they ate sweet potatoes most of the time. In contrast, urban residents of Shandong province enjoyed a

much better diet than their neighbors in rural Jimo seventy percent of their grain supply was composed of rice, millets, beans and corn flour. Farmers raised pigs and poultry, but they could not afford to have meat on rare occasions such as the Chinese New Year (Han 2008:11).

Dikotter tried to decode the loss of human life in the GLF catastrophe. It was a famine that emanated out of the dictatorial political order without hearing the complaints made by the peasants. What comes out of this enormously meticulous record changes our understanding of the GLF. According to population figures, counting the survey statistics of 1953, 1964 and 1982. The assessments range from 15 to 32 million deaths during in the period of GLF. However, public security report collected at that time and huge confidential party report in the last year of GLF claimed that how insufficient these calculations were indicating that it was more than the expected figure. Dikotter assessed 45 million people death during 1958-1962 (Dikotter 2010:12). The great goal of the communist China resulted in most deadly killings in human history and caused unparalleled destruction to agriculture, trade, industry and transformation (Dikotter 2010: XIII).

What it chronicles, often in harrowing detail, is near collapse of a social and economic system on which Mao had staked his prestige. As the catastrophe unfolded, the Chairman lashed out at his critics to maintain his position as the indispensable leader of the party. After the famine new factional alignments appeared that were opposed to Mao; to stay in power he had to turn the country upside down with the cultural revolution (Dikotter 2010: XIV).

The attempt to make a transition from socialism to communism was considered an egalitarian move to eliminate the differences between classes and manual and mental labour. It was often regarded as egalitarianism in Mao's ideas, but their implication in the policies remarked egalitarianism with abhorrence. Chinese society, under Mao, tried to eliminate three types of difference; the distinction between workers and peasants, city and country; and mental and manual labour. Ideas about absolute egalitarianism repeatedly have been attacked, indicating that the drive to equalize has some limits (Kraus1976:1081). The social and economic inequality has been challenged although they remain as having inherent limitations, but political inequalities were not challenged.

However, the popular participation through mass line continued, but the issue had been one of altering the holders of power, not equalizing the distribution of power (Kraus 1976:1086).

Kraus argued that the major argument is that Maoist policies have attacked social inequality quite differently, but political inequalities are legitimate in Maoist thought, and one should not anticipate an attempt to equalize political resources. One can argue that this inequality is maintained to diminish other forms of inequality. Symbolic and collective material inequalities were attacked with considerable gusto; this did not leave rural individual material inequality untouched. In this scenario of egalitarian reform, the apparent sanctity of workers and cadre is a curious anomaly. One of the explanations that can be observed from considerable economic rationality is that Maoists had been forced to admit that such distinctions are the basis for increased labor productivity and efficiency in economic activity (Kraus 1976:1087).

This reluctance to attack the issue of wages directly suggests an important characteristic of Maoist egalitarianism; it has typically involved measures that do not directly threaten the economic well-being of workers and cadres. The egalitarian reforms that have been instituted have not required extensive redistribution of material benefits from these groups of the peasantry. Mao could not implement reform in rural health, and education policies until he focused on the formula of self-reliance, which demands a minimum of redistribution of resources from wealthier to poorer areas (Kraus 1976:1090).

Kraus argued that Maoist egalitarianism seems to be limited by several factors. It sometimes gives precedence to other, more pressing revolutionary values. It eschews a total levelling that might impede economic growth. However, the limits of egalitarianism are perhaps more immediately governed by the existing configuration of power and distribution of benefits within Chinese society (Kraus 1976:1096).

2. *Buddhist Sangha: An Alternative*

Ambedkar held Buddhism to be a social philosophy based on morality and science and did not consider it a religion at all (Beltz 2004:7).³⁶ Ambedkar has been critical of communism for two primary reasons violence and dictatorship. He further explained that society needs moral order to maintain economic equality. Therefore, egalitarian values cannot be injected through force. Force cannot make people moral until they accept it voluntarily. He considered a democratic method for the bringing about socialism, not through violence. Ambedkar chose Buddha over Marx. Ambedkar in “Buddha and Karl Marx” emphasised on the moral order of the society for building an egalitarian society. Ambedkar considered social values equally important as an economic order for building an egalitarian society. He emphasised on Buddhist philosophy as an alternative values system to the communist political philosophy. He argued that the system based on force cannot retain political and economic order for long. He explained the Buddhist method of socialism as voluntary while communist method are based on coercion;

The Buddha’s method was different. His method was to change the mind of man: to alter his disposition: so that whatever man does, he does it voluntarily without the use of force or compulsion. His main means to alter the disposition of men was his Dhamma and the constant preaching of his Dhamma. The Buddha’s way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do although it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would do voluntarily what they would not otherwise to do (BAWS: 3:2014:441).

Ambedkar explained that Buddhism is better than communism. Communism brings equality with bloody revolution like Russia. It is also the fact that Buddhist *Sangha* is also a communist organization which is brought about not by blood but mental revolution. There is no right to property in the Buddhist *Sangha* which is possible

³⁶ Johannes Beltz (2004), “Introduction”, in Surendra Jondhale & Johannes Beltz (2004), *Reconstructing the World: B. R. Ambedkar and Buddha in India*, Oxford University Press.

through change in the mind (BAWS: 17-III: 2003:515).³⁷ Ambedkar expounded how Buddhist *Sangha* was a communist organization;

The Russians are proud of their Communism. But they forget that the wonder of all wonders is that the Buddha established Communism so far as the Sangh was concerned without dictatorship. It may be that it was a communism on a very small scale but it was communism without dictatorship a miracle which Lenin failed to do (BAWS: 3:2014:461).

Rodrigues (2007) argued that Ambedkar found socialism as far as practiced too authoritarian and its theoretical postulation did not allow it to subscribe to basic values constituting societies (149). He thought that Buddhism can constitute the moral foundation of a socialist society as it did not subscribe to the idea of God and soul and believed in socialism, secularism and way of communitarian life (Ibid). Ambedkar postulated that only materialist gain is not the purpose of the life of people. He considered more than food for the people. He further differentiated between animal and human by arguing at animal need only food while human need food for body and food for the mind. Therefore, both should be pondered over. The mind should be developed. The minds should be cultured. It should be made cultured. The body must be healthy. Therefore, the brain also needs to be healthy. Culture makes mind healthy and fit through practice. Otherwise, it cannot be said that mankind has progressed (BAWS: 17-III: 2003: 537).³⁸

Ambedkar proposed the Buddhism as a substitute for communism.³⁹ He further opined that Communism is very attractive for youth across the world as it has egalitarian agenda with the rapid results. He argued that Buddhist way of life of reaching the goal is lasting one. Because there is no use in pursuing certain path, if path is not going to be a lasting path, if it is going to lead you to jungle, if it is going to lead to anarchy, there is no use of pursuing it. It may be the path of slow, devious, may be with long detour, yet it ultimately makes you reach safe and sound. It is better to follow the slower path and the

³⁷ Speech on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), London, 12th May 1956.

³⁸ Speech on the Occasion of the Conversion delivered on 15th October 1956. BAWS, Vol. 17-III, 2003

³⁹ Speech on Buddha or Karl Marx at World Buddhist Council, held at Kathmandu, Nepal, 20th Nov. 1956. BAWS: 17-III: 2003.

devious path rather than rush up and take what we call it shortcuts. Shortcuts in life turn out to be dangerous may be very dangerous (BAWS: 17-III: 2003:551).

Ambedkar posited that what he find in Buddhism is that it is a democratic system. It has an alternative moral order to retain socialism democratically. The Bhikshu Sangh had the most democratic constitution. Buddha was a prime minister in the cabinet but never be the dictator. Twice before his death he was asked to appoint the head of the Sangh, but he refused to do saying that Dhamma is supreme commander of the Sangh. He declined to be a dictator and refused to appoint a dictator.⁴⁰ Take the dictatorship of Communist as they claim and has been observed:

The end of Dictatorship is to make the Revolution a permanent revolution. This is a valuable end. But can the Communists say that in achieving this end they have not destroyed other valuable ends? Dictatorship is often defined as absence of liberty or absence of Parliamentary Government. Both interpretations are not quite clear. There is no liberty even when there is Parliamentary Government. For law means want of liberty. The difference between Dictatorship and Parliamentary Government. Lays in this, in Parliamentary Government every citizen has a right to criticise the restraint on liberty imposed by the Government (BAWS: 3:2014:452).

Ambedkar's argument is that revolution is possible through democratic means, depending upon the socio-political situation in a given society. Another point is that the role of religion and morality is minimum in a communist society (Gokhale 2008:139). For Marx, moral institutions are important parts but social reality and economic forces play a decisive role. Ambedkar, on the contrary, holds that a communist society, which comes into existence by force, will not be sustainable. Communism can be sustainable when it is accepted by people voluntarily. Therefore, Ambedkar argued that communist should use Buddhism as an ultimate aid to sustain communism when force is withdrawn (Gokhale 2008:140).⁴¹ Gokhale further argued that Ambedkar believed in the religion of

⁴⁰Valerian Rodrigues, *The Essential Writing of B. R. Ambedkar*, New Delhi: Oxford, 2002:185.

⁴¹Gokhale's reflected on the Kabse's Comment on Ambedkar's Buddha and His Dhamma, and His Speech at World Buddhist Council.

principles not of rules (2008:142).⁴² Ambedkar argued that he did not want to sacrifice fraternity and liberty for only equality;

Society has been aiming to lay a new foundation as was summarised by the French Revolution in three words, Fraternity, Liberty and Equality. The French Revolution was welcomed because of this slogan. It failed to produce equality. We welcome the Russian Revolution because it aims to produce equality. But it cannot be too much emphasized that in producing equality society cannot afford to sacrifice fraternity or liberty. Equality will be of no value without fraternity or liberty. It seems that the three can coexist only if one follows the way of the Buddha. Communism can give one but not all (BAWS: 3:2014:462).

Ambedkar's aim was to establish egalitarian society based on Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity without sacrificing anyone of them. Buddhist Dhamma for him is basically more than a religion (Omvedt 2000). He wanted a government which allows the freedom of expression and right to criticize the government. In the final analysis the fundamental problem with Ambedkar model is implementation while the biggest issue with Mao's means resulted in the catastrophe.

V. Summary

The economic thought of Mao and Ambedkar had a significant bearing on their respective societies. The ideas of socialism, cooperatives in agriculture and industrialization are common themes for socialism and state socialism. Mao had overemphasized on political power for the implementation of economic policies at ground level while Ambedkar emphasised more on democracy to be socialist in nature. The differences in their political ideologies were reflected in the methods of implementation of economic policies. The implementation of policies and their requisite need in the society had important structural constraints in the respective societies. The backward moral and social order which proved incompatibility with advanced political system reflects the need for emphasizing the importance of advanced culture and values in the implementation of economic policy.

⁴² Ajay Skaria argued that Ambedkar is first one who differentiated the Religion of principles and Religions of rules (Skaria, 2015:456).

Failure of the commune system is a reflection of the problem brought with communes in China. The catastrophe would have been averted by maintaining symmetry between advanced social values and advanced economic order. Dictatorship can implement the radical economic programme, and it cannot make people moral and socialist. Socialism needs a socialist man. Otherwise, it may lead to anarchy and chaos. Imposition of advanced economic order on the backward society resulted in the failure of Communes.

Ambedkar considered Buddhism as an alternative to communism. Buddhism, which preaches morality of socialism and community without violence and force, is better than communism. Since it has no conception of God and focuses on scientific thinking and universal morality, he said that morality cannot be enforced in the minds of the people. The Buddhist *Sangha* was a model like a communist society with no private property. The difference between Buddhist model of communism and Marxist communism was a difference of means not of ends.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The present research attempted to delineate the socio-political and economic facets of the thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar. In doing so, the study is located within the broad framework of universal values like equality, liberty, fraternity, morality and democracy. Criticism is central to the study while keeping these universal values at the core to analyse the social, political and economic thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar. They followed the Left-Hegelian tradition with two facets of Marxism and Pragmatism. The debate between idealism and materialism had been an overlapping phenomenon in this tradition. Mao leaned toward materialism and Ambedkar toward idealism eventually culminating into pragmatist methods.

Mao and Ambedkar were deep thinkers in their respective societies. The ideas of equality, liberty, and fraternity were common to both Mao and Ambedkar with the differential preference. Mao Zedong preferred equality over liberty and fraternity while Ambedkar preferred equilibrium of the three according special importance to freedom of expression. The methods they adopted had a considerable impact on the material conditions of the respective societies. The thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar is grounded in praxis. Both preferred practice for effecting change. The method of experiment is not devoid of context in their activism and thinking.

The socio-political and economic thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar had been shaped by the context in which they lived. They acknowledged the revolutionary role of industrialization in shaping the social fabric of China and India. The centuries-old social order of the two civilizations met with devastating effect by the assault of industrialization. The inception of the social reform movement was a direct consequence of the interaction with Western modernity. Imperialist exploitation indirectly produced different social and political movements in China and India. The

resistance to imperialism had been a common phenomenon while it gave an interesting insight to understand the nature of different social and political movements. The social and political movements converging with anti-imperialist resistance is an interesting phenomenon for China. The separation of anti-imperialist struggle from social reform movement invoked certain social aspects of India. The convergence of the social and political movements in the anti-imperialist struggle was one of the strong points of China's resistance movement while divergence of political from social movements was a weakest link in the anti-colonial struggle in India. The convergence of social and political movements in China and the divergence of the political movement from the social movement is an interesting finding of the study.

The reason behind the convergence of political and social processes meant to change the political as well as social dynamics in China while in India attempts were made to bring about political change keeping the social structure intact. The progressive character of the anti-imperialist struggle of China with the expectation of the egalitarian society made social and political as one front. While the regressive character of the anti-colonial struggle divided the political from the social was self-defeating in India. The anti-colonial struggle against the British was against building an egalitarian society. The convergence of social and political movements in China had been enabling for Mao while the disconnect between political from social movements in India, was a major constraint for Ambedkar.

The caste system played a crucial role in the separation of the political from the social movement in India. The political movement was against imperialist and capitalist exploitation but not against caste-based exploitation that existed for thousands of years. Indian political movement was anti-imperialist but not anti-caste for building equal society. Anti-imperialist forces were not prepared to be progressive on the ground that they were against the British. It was only against imperialist exploitation while keeping the primordial social system of exploitation intact in India. The anti-colonial movement had not been anti-caste while anti-imperialist struggle was against social oppression in China. One of the reasons behind the success of Mao Zedong in Chinese society was the convergence of social and political movement while Ambedkar's attempt had been less

effective because of the parallel tracks of political and social movements. Untouchability and caste system had a crucial role in keeping social movement separate from political movement in India.

Taiping Rebellion (1850s) in China and the 1857 revolt in India occurred around the same time. These two rebellions manifest certain observations. Taiping Rebellion was a widespread peasant resistance for equality and gender justice in China while the 1857 revolt was for the reestablishment of monarchy in India. Taiping rebellion was subversive while 1857 Revolt was for status quo.

Thereafter, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, leaders like Sun Yat-Sen, students and intellectuals played a key role in ensuring the end of Qing dynasty which eventually culminated in the 'May Fourth Movement' of 1919 and paving the way for the formation of CPC and preparing the social ground for successful political movement. It had the support from all political sections of the society including nationalists and communists. Nationalists and communists had agreement on social reform in China, while nationalists and communists not only neglected social reform movement but rejected its necessity in India.

The social status of Mao Zedong was second in the traditional social hierarchy while Ambedkar was last on the ladder of the Indian society. Mao received acceptance in the Chinese society while Ambedkar had to struggle to claim his equal status. Mao Zedong was fighting for economic equality of all socially equal beings. Ambedkar was fighting for a claim of being human than the material equality of socially equal beings. "Untouchables" had to first assert themselves as human beings and then struggle for material equality. The social privilege of Mao led to the success of his political movement while the underprivileged position of B. R. Ambedkar limited his success. The fight that Mao waged was between equal social human beings, but the fight that Ambedkar carried out was between human and "subhuman" beings, his fight was on two fronts, first to claim equal status and then material equality. Ambedkar's struggle was hard and tough in contrast to Mao Zedong's. Mao did not need the recognition of socially equal human beings while Ambedkar required the recognition and then struggle for material equality.

There were three major forces antagonistic to one to another i.e. imperialist exploitation, feudal oppression, and progressive democratic movements. The anti-Imperialist and Anti-colonial struggle had a considerable bearing on their mind and strategy in the realm of politics. Mao Zedong had benefited from a class-based Chinese society while caste system had a crippling effect on Ambedkar's social and political movement. The nature of the societies of China and India had different bearings on their thought.

The social thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar has an important imprint on the social structure of their respective societies. They are on the same page pertaining to the need to establish equality but differed on the use of means. They believed that culture was oppressive, and it had a dominant influence on the material conditions of the society. Mao moved from materialist determinism to cultural idealism by considering class struggle in the cultural affairs of the society. On the other hand, Ambedkar had a similar view on the oppression and proposed the need for social revolution before political revolution in India. An interesting finding of the study is that Mao Zedong's idea of social revolution was a result of the class struggle in the cultural sphere and did not disappear as soon as the political and economic changes occurred. The profound hypothesis of Ambedkar which underscores that social revolution must precede political revolution fructified in the Chinese context but not in the Indian context.

The annihilation of caste and destroying "four olds" has been part of iconoclast movement of Ambedkar and Mao respectively. The accomplishment of social revolution through democratic and radical means was a major difference between Mao and Ambedkar. Ambedkar hoped that social changes were possible using democratic means while Mao viewed radical means to be effective for social change. The difference between Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar vis-à-vis social change was in the method not in goals. Mao Zedong preferred social revolution after political revolution while Ambedkar preferred it before the political revolution or simultaneously. Mao Zedong believed that social revolution to be necessary for sustaining political revolution while Ambedkar proposed that any political change would be useless without social change.

The necessity of Cultural Revolution after successful political revolution proved that advanced social values are required for an advanced political system like socialism.

The major proposition of the classical Marxist framework was that change in the mode of production would lead to a change in the social relations in the society which did unfold in China to a certain extent. Therefore, Mao used both Communist and Cultural Revolutions for this purpose. While, Ambedkar argued that political changes are followed by social revolution, if not any political or economic change would not be able to serve its purpose. Political change can only be retained for a long time with the compatible cultural and social relations. He opined that democracy could not be retained in an undemocratic society. Mao's emphasis on social change during post-revolution period finds resonance in the argument of Ambedkar who underscored social change as a precondition for successful political revolution. The failure of the political and economic model in the post-revolution period gives an impression that advanced political and economic system also need an advanced society. Symmetry is required in political, economic and social arenas. Mao departed from the classical Marxist binary during the Cultural Revolution.

That social change cannot be brought about by coercive means had given the impression with the failure of the Cultural Revolution. The social and cultural change is meant to change the mind and practice of the people, and Mao used violent and coercive means to bring about these changes. Whereas Ambedkar tried to bring about social change through education and democratic means so that consensus is nurtured in the society. Ambedkar used democratic and constitutional means for social change. Ambedkar also considered class interest in the field of culture but tried to resolve through agitation. It has been proved that radical means for social change had miserably failed in China.

Economic change is possible through revolutionary means while the slow progress of social change limits the success. Radical changes are brought about by immediate and violent means, but these changes need acceptance in the society. The major proposition of Ambedkar was that social reform is pre-requisite for achieving political changes. The success that Ambedkar accomplished in the Indian context is

limited but his ideas are credible regarding the social oppression and its influence on the materialist forces. Mao's theory of new democracy advocated the theory of social change, where it has been instrumental in ushering social revolution in China. The debate of base and superstructure binary is addressed through the theory of New Democracy. The backwardness of the Chinese society was one of the reasons behind the failure of democracy in the early part of the twentieth century. Thus, Mao carried out a simultaneous social and political revolution in China.

In doing so, Mao is considered guilty of voluntarism, idealism, and utopianism by the classical Marxists. Mao recognized the role of the human agency in the social reform and economic change. Ambedkar followed the tradition of Left-Hegelian, Critical Marxists, and pragmatist John Dewey and therefore, considered the role of ideas and consciousness of constructing society and changing the course of history. He argued that historical progress is not only a reflection of materialist change but also the active people's participation. Mao Zedong did not adhere to the theory of dialectical materialism but was more practical and pragmatic in his approach to deal with the problems in the Chinese society, whereas Ambedkar used democratic methods for both social and political change in India.

Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar's political thought had considerable influence on their respective political systems and societies. Mao Zedong was the main architect of the Chinese political system and ruled for two and half decades while Ambedkar was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India. Their ideas had an indelible imprint on the respective political systems of China and India. Marxist and Leninist traditions influenced the political thought of Mao Zedong. Chinese political structure is a reflection of Lenin's party structure. While Ambedkar had his innovative ideas of building the political structure of India seeped into the constitution.

Mao and Ambedkar had divergent opinions on equality, liberty, democracy, and rights. Mao had emphasized on the economic equality while Ambedkar on freedom and democracy. They had been advocates of women's rights. Mao said that women shared half the sky while Ambedkar stated that he measures progress of the society by the progress of women.

Mao Zedong used bullet to achieve political power while Ambedkar preferred ballot. Their ideas of democracy are based on force and consent, and dictatorship and democracy respectively. For Mao, it is force which is vital for achieving democracy while Ambedkar believed that no democracy could be achieved without the consent of the people. The rule of law and constitutional methods are vital for Ambedkar and for Mao dictatorship and coercion are only means to achieve political power and build democracy. For Mao, it is not the rule of law, but the dictatorship of proletariat is ultimate order while Ambedkar considered the rule of law necessary for democracy. Mao advocated class morality while Ambedkar believed in universal morality giving rights to all citizens.

The constitutional and extra constitutional means, violence and non-violence have been major themes in Ambedkar and Mao's political thought. The success of violent means is immediate while the success of democratic means is time-consuming. For Ambedkar, democracy is associated living and fraternity is vital for democracy while elimination of the class enemy has been a major concern for Mao Zedong. Ambedkar argued that democracy based on violent means would never be accepted by the people. Therefore, it would be permanent tyranny. He proposed that democratic means would lay the foundation of fraternity among different classes for building democracy. For Ambedkar, social and economic equality with the fraternity in society would bring democracy. Mao Zedong rejected the idea of fraternity for building democracy.

As a strategy, Mao *sinified* Marxism in the Chinese context and applied it in a relatively backward society while it was meant for advanced capitalist society. Mao mobilized backward peasants for communist revolution. It was a paradox that backward peasants devoid of socialist ethics were fighting for progressive values of socialism. Mao tried to manage the contradiction in the political strategy which eventually led to the failure of the communist programme and the death of millions.

Ambedkar wanted to resolve the contradictions between political system and social and economic systems through democratic means. The process of democratization focusing on the masses had been a greater phenomenon for Ambedkar. Both Mao and Ambedkar wanted to change the society based on egalitarian principles. Mao's shift from working

class to peasant was a pragmatic move in the direction of the revolution. Thus, the language of Mao and Ambedkar was the language of masses.

Mao used political power to eliminate the rival leaders within the communist party. The decade of the Cultural Revolution was a complete anarchy where no law and order was in place, the orders of the senior leader were enough. Ambedkar emphasized on liberty and freedom of expression for avoiding misuse of arbitrary political power against dissent. Ambedkar wanted socialism without dictatorship and arbitrary use of power.

The economic thought of Mao Zedong and B. R. Ambedkar had several common dimensions on many issues like advocating the nationalization of land, collectivization of agriculture, and basic health facilities. Mao Zedong proposed these programmes under the dictatorship of the proletariat while Ambedkar under the democratic constitutional government. The fundamental issue is that they carried out two divergent trajectories. While Mao succeeded in the collectivization of agriculture and nationalization. Ambedkar's policies could not fructify in India given the sociological, and economic dynamics.

Ambedkar's state socialism is a type of socialism where the state maintained a basic socialist characteristic with full political exercise i.e. election, opposition and freedom of expression. Mao's socialism is based on force with complete control on political rights, while Ambedkar's state socialism has people's consent with full political freedom. Mao controlled liberty for attaining economic equality while Ambedkar wanted economic welfare with political democracy. Ambedkar wanted socialism without dictatorship while Mao Zedong considered dictatorship inevitable to bring about socialism. For Ambedkar, both liberty and economic equality are important for the development of the individual. Dictatorship is the complete control over liberty and freedom, which is not acceptable for Ambedkar. Ambedkar wanted the state which not only fulfilled the economic requirements of the individual but also gave opportunities of freedom to develop critical mind and personality. He further argued that, besides bread, man needs food for thought for the mind.

The collective economic programme is common for Ambedkar and Mao. While Ambedkar believed that there is no need for restricting the freedom for the implementation of economic programme. Mao considered it prerequisite. For Ambedkar, economic equality is important for the proper functioning of democracy. Liberals believe in liberty and freedom of the mind, while Marxists in attaining equality of economic resources without freedom of mind. Ambedkar, on the other hand, believed that both are important for the development of human personality.

The failure of Mao's economic plan had occurred despite the full control over political power. People's communes failed miserably not because they were impractical and could not be sustained. The economic and political change does not necessarily lead to a substantial change in the society is central to Ambedkar's theory of social reform where he proposed the necessity of social reform before political change. No society would remain equitable only with economic change devoid of social reform. Socialism is not only meant ownership of means of production but also the advanced means of production with advanced social relationships. Advanced political system with backward social outlook is a contradiction. It was the feudal class which wanted to get rid off the imperialist exploitation without giving much attention to improve their backward social outlook had been the result of the failure of socialist revolution in China.

The Chinese peasantry could fight against the imperialists and landlords but not its backward social outlook. The socialist values are the result of the constant fight between liberalism and feudalism. The immediate changes by radical means are possible in the economic and political realms while the same is not possible in the social and cultural realms. The leap of the economic mode of production could not match the leap of the mind of the people vis-à-vis social practices. Social change cannot be brought about by the same means which are used for bringing changes in political and economic field. Socialism cannot remain robust without people's consent for a long time. Social change is as important as economic and political change. Any contradiction between social and economic spheres would lead to antagonism and failure of the programme introduced in the two.

Mao succeeded in leading the communist revolution but failed to accomplish the task after the revolution. Material conditions enabled Mao in successfully carrying out the communist revolution while disabled him in accomplishing the task after the revolution. Ambedkar, on other hand, did not get to actualize his ideas not because of lack of depth but because of the structure of the Indian society. Chinese material conditions facilitated Mao for successful communist revolution while Indian situation disabled Ambedkar from carrying out his economic programme. Mao could implement his ideas, and some of his policies resulted in grand failure while Ambedkar's ideas continue to be relevant for the Indian masses even today. Mao's ideas are tested and failed therefore lost their relevance while Ambedkar's ideas are tested partially therefore have relevance. Ambedkar's ideas are improving the Indian situation while Mao's ideas are losing their relevance as new dynamics unfold in China.

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