



Mains Practice Question

Q. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made it possible to think of an end to, if not a beginning for, the profound inequities of caste in India. Comment.

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Approach

- Start the answer by briefly discussing BR Ambedkar.
- Discuss the contribution of Ambedkar in awakening Dalit consciousness.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction

In the pre-independence era, the question of the oppression of Dalits as a problem for thought was raised by many leaders like Jyotiba Phule, E.V. Ramasamy. However, it was due to the efforts of B. R Ambedkar, the Dalit issue transformed into nationwide social movement activism. He not only gave a voice to the voiceless people of India but also a political identity.

Body

Contribution of Ambedkar in Awakening Dalit Consciousness:

- **Father of the Dalit Consciousness:** His political and literary contribution to the awakening of the Dalit Consciousness is immense and he is universally accepted as the father of the Dalit Consciousness.
 - Ambedkar launched full-fledged movements for Dalit rights during the 1930s.
 - He demanded public drinking water sources open to all and right for all castes to enter temples.
 - He openly condemned Hindu Scriptures advocating discrimination and arranged symbolic demonstrations to enter the Kalaram Temple in Nashik.
- **Provided Political Rights to Dalits:** He adopted various means to safeguard Dalit rights.
 - He was a delegate at the Round Table Conference in London, where he asked for a separate electorate for Dalits.
 - In 1932, the Poona Pact was signed between Dr. Ambedkar and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya to ensure reservation of seats for the untouchable class in the Provincial legislatures, within the general electorate.
 - Being the chairman of the drafting committee of Indian Constitution, Dr B.R. Ambedkar provided certain constitutional provisions to protect the rights of Dalits in social, economic, educational, employment, and political fields, in the form of positive discriminations or preferential treatments or reservation policy.
- **Provided Dalits With Political Identity:** According to Ambedkar what British imperialism was to India, Hindu imperialism was to the untouchables. He linked nationalism with the social and political aspirations of the untouchables.

- In 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labor Party which later transformed into the All India Scheduled Castes Federation.
- He saw that the Dalit movement lacked philosophical justification. So he wrote about the French revolution ideas of fraternity, liberty and equality.
- He encouraged the Dalits to embrace Buddhism to liberate their own selves from Hindu subjugation.

Conclusion

The Dalit movement in India is a legacy of the multiple streams of Ambedkar's efforts to bring equality and to make systemic changes to the social order.

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