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Q7(c)

Dr. Ambedkar's clarion call, "Educate, Agitate and Organize", strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Indian Nationalism

Indian Nationalism: Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle; Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the socialists.

Core demand of the question

- **Dr. Ambedkar's** clarion call, "**Educate, Agitate and Organize**", strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss. (15 marks)

Revision summary

- **Ambedkar's call is a three-step strategy:** education for capacity, agitation for public claim, organisation for lasting power.
- **The end is civil liberty:** equal law, public access, and a share in the state, stated in **Article 17** and in political reservation.

He rejected dependence on upper-caste moral reform as the engine of that liberty.

Mahad, parties from the Independent Labour Party to the SCF, and the **1956 conversion** are applications of the three terms.

- **The strategy fails if any one term is dropped:** schooling without power, protest without organisation, or office without liberty.

Introduction

B. R. Ambedkar's call to educate, agitate, and organise is a strategy of civil liberty for those excluded by caste. Civil liberty here means equal public standing: movement, occupation, representation, and protection of law, not a favour from a religious majority.

Body

The three terms as strategy

- **Educate:** caste exclusion works through denial of letters, temples, and offices. Schools, colleges, and a public literature of rights create the person who can use liberty. **Ambedkar's** own education was the proof of the first term.
- **Agitate:** public protest, temple-entry satyagraha at Mahad and Nashik, and the burning of the Manusmriti made humiliation a political fact, not a private sorrow.
- **Organise:** the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, and later the Republican Party turned numbers into a bargaining agent, which **Dahl** would recognise as an interest that can prevail on some decisions.
- The order is not a slogan of spontaneity. Without education, agitation is noise; without organisation, agitation is a moment.

Civil liberty as the end

- Civil liberty for **Ambedkar** is **Article 17**, equal protection, access to water and temples, and a share in the state through reservation and adult franchise.
- He did not treat **Gandhi's** harijan moral reform as a sufficient strategy, because liberty that depends on the conscience of the dominant caste is not a right.
- The Poona Pact (1932) showed the conflict between separate electorates as a tool of organisation and **Gandhi's** fast; **Ambedkar** still kept organisation inside the joint electorate plus reserved seats.
- The **1956 conversion** to Buddhism, with Dhamma as equal worth, was education and organisation in a religious key, an emancipation of political action discussed in Q4(a).
- **Constitutional morality, in his Assembly speeches, is the civic form of the same liberty:** procedure against popular prejudice.

Discussion of limits

- Education without agitation can produce a small class that exits without moving the mass, the creamy-layer problem in another language.
- Agitation without organisation is absorbed as riot or as charity.
- Organisation can become only office-seeking unless civil liberty remains the test.
- The strategy still organises Dalit parties, student groups, and legal mobilisation under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
- Compared with **Rawls**, it is a historically situated path to the equal basic liberties that the original position assumes too quickly.

Flow diagram

Educate -> Agitate
Agitate -> Organize
Organize -> Civil liberty
Civil liberty -> Article 17 and political share
Gandhi conscience -> Not sufficient as strategy

Conclusion

- **Educate, Agitate, Organise is Ambedkar's sequence for Dalit civil liberty:** capacity, public claim, and lasting power. It strategises a movement that does not wait on Gandhian conscience. **Article 17** and political organisation are its constitutional and party forms.

Facts & figures

Mahad, 1927

Ambedkar's satyagraha for access to public water, an agitation for civil right, not for charity.

Independent Labour Party, 1936

Ambedkar's party organisation of workers and the depressed classes in Bombay.

Poona Pact, 1932

Reserved seats in a joint electorate after **Gandhi's** fast against separate electorates.

Article 17

Abolition of untouchability; the civil-liberty core of the constitutional settlement.

1956 conversion

Mass Buddhist conversion as organised exit and as Dhamma of equality.

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