



AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON THE COLLECTIVE FARMING SYSTEM

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“Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence.”

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar

Abstract: Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy many problems like land reforms, fragmentation, and subdivision of land were discussed by Dr.Ambedkar threadbare. He made many contributions in agriculture sector. He had emphasised the nationalisation of entire agricultural land with the aim of collective farming as the solution to all problems in the Indian agrarian system. According to him, investment in agriculture is the primary industry of the state. This paper attempts to describe Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's view that the concept of collective farming could enhance agricultural economic growth in a nation and that the state obligation must have the capacity to fulfil all necessary requirements for agricultural development.

Key words: Collective farming, Land Holding, Small Farmers Agrarian Economy, Nationalisation Land.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is a basic source of income and employment for most of the rural people in India. The agriculture sector engages over 50% of the Indian workforce. About two-thirds of the rural population depends on agriculture. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar long ago stressed about the consolidation of land, nationalisation of land, tenancy legislation, and collective farming, which benefits small and marginal farmers and landless households. He thought about small holdings and collective farming, which are more relevant to the development of agriculture. The contribution of agriculture to the Indian economy has been consistently declining since independence. The state has witnessed ups and downs in the agriculture sector, impacting the lives of poor, small, and marginal farmers.¹

Most (80%) of the farmers are small and marginal, and they face common problems of low productivity, the use of primitive tools, a lack of technical knowledge, a lack of market for the produced goods, inefficient bargaining power, a lack of post-harvest services, inadequate credit facilities, and insufficient capital to produce a quality product with the small size of their holdings. Due to this problem, unemployment and illiteracy are more acute in India. The sub-division and fragmentation of landholdings are the main causes of agricultural backwardness in India, as explained by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.² These are major obstacles in the

agriculture sector. The problems are still current and are further aggravated by the density of population and urbanisation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has made a treatable contribution to agriculture and land reform in India. He is well known for conducting extensive research on Indian agriculture, publishing research articles, organising seminars and conferences to address agricultural and farmer issues, and leading the farmer's movements. In his article "*Small Holdings in Indian and Their Remedies*" (1917), as well as in "**Status and Minorities**" (1947), he expresses his views on agriculture.³ Currently, his ideologies are very useful in collective farming and land revenue. He critiqued the traditional definition of collective land holding and redefined it so that economic land holding is not dependent on the size of the holding but on the proportion of factor inputs. The small size of holdings is the cause of low production; therefore, consolidation of land reform must be undertaken. He was always in favour of collective and corporate farming in India.⁴

He suggested that collective farming would reap the advantages of large-scale production, which would increase labour productivity. He was for the growth and development of agro-based industries and the industrialization of rural areas. This, in his view, would enhance the employment of workers and the landless.⁵ He propounded the concept of state socialism. This concept envisions collective farming. With the abolition of intermediaries, the state must be the owner of land. The state should distribute these lands to the farmers. The farmer should cultivate the farm collectively. The state should supply essential capital to the agricultural sector. Obtained income should be distributed among the farmers. It will lead to the solution of the problems of agricultural labourers. It also facilitates the equitable distribution of wealth and income. It also helps in the prevention of sub-division and fragmentation of land. So, his thoughts and ideas on agriculture development throughout the world, especially in India, have great relevance.⁶

II. Objective of the Paper

1. To discuss Ambedkar's view on the concept of collective farming based on state obligation
2. To discuss the measures suggested by Dr. Ambedkar for enhancement of agricultural productivity.

III. Research Methodology

The present research paper is based on secondary sources of data. The various journals, books, and articles have been used for the preparation of the research paper.

IV. Review of the Literature

The research paper basically covered the contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to the Indian agriculture sector. He had written various articles and research papers, and he was the organiser of various seminars and conferences to get a solution for Indian agriculture. His thoughts on Indian agriculture were reflected in his articles '*Smallholdings on Indian Agriculture and Their Remedies* (1917) and *Status and Ministers* (1947). In this concern, other supporting sources are reviewed.

V. Dr. B.R. View on the Collective Farming:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a renowned socio-economic thinker, played a significant role in shaping the economic destiny of India by introducing several doctrines. His economic ideas, which have been extensively documented, have highlighted the problems faced by the backbone of the Indian economy, 'agriculture, such as land reforms, fragmentation, and subdivision of land. He advocated for the equitable allocation of land to villagers for cultivation without any discrimination based on caste or creed. He believed that this would eliminate the existence of landlords, tenants, and landless labourers. Dr. Babasaheba Ambedkar's perspective on Indian agriculture was elucidated in his articles "*Smallholdings in Indian Agriculture and Their Remedies*" (1917) and "Status and Ministers" (1947). He recognised that while land is a crucial factor in agricultural production, its productivity is also influenced by other factors.⁷

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the process of consolidation of holdings could eradicate the ill effects of uneconomic holdings and usher in the progress of the cultivators. Therefore, Ambedkar suggested collective farming for the consolidation of holdings. He also stresses the need for industrialization so as to move surplus labour from agriculture to other productive occupations, accompanied by large capital investments in agriculture to raise yields. He also emphasises the extremely important role for the state in the transformation of agriculture and advocates the nationalisation of land and the leasing out of land to groups of cultivators, who are to be encouraged to form co-operatives in order to promote agriculture.⁸

Dr. Ambedkar, State Socialism is essential for bringing radical change to society. Each person shall have the right to hold any public office or excise without any discrimination based on caste, creed, religion, sex, or social status. The agricultural firm shall be cultivated as a collective farm. The farms shall be cultivated according to the rules and directions given by the state. The collective farms shall be obligated to the state. The water, seeds, draught animals, etc. would be supplied by the collective farms. The state shall be entitled to the levies collected from agricultural farmers. The insurance of the people shall be a monopoly of the state. Agriculture shall be a state industry.⁹

A. Land Holding

Bharat Ratan Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was the first Indian economist to examine the problem of subdivision and fragmentation of agricultural land holdings and formulate a very scientific definition of an economic holding. He opined that small land holdings are one of the causes of production. Therefore, there should be a consolidation of land holdings. The traditional definition of an economic holding was presented as "a chance of producing sufficient to keep himself and his family in reasonable comfort after paying his necessary expenses". It cannot be the language of economics to say that a large holding is economic while a small holding is uneconomic. It is the right or wrong proportion of other factors of production to a unit of land that renders the latter economic or uneconomic. A small term may be economic or uneconomic because economics does not depend upon the size of land but upon the appropriate proportion among all factors, including land.¹⁰

In 1927, the British government presented a bill in the Bombay Legislative Assembly to increase the agricultural land of small farmers and transfer it to zamindars. Dr. Ambedkar protested that whether agriculture is productive or unproductive depends on its size and not on the labour and capital of the farmer.

He had said that the problem will not be solved by increasing the size of agriculture, but it can be solved by intensive farming. That is why he advised that cooperative farming should be adopted in general areas. Babasaheb gave the example of adopting co-operative farming in some parts of Italy, France, and England.¹¹

He suggested cooperative farming for the development of agriculture in India. He wrote an article in 1918 titled 'Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies, in which he presented the problems of landholding farmers in scattered areas of India. He said that scattered smallholder farmers are unable to get the expected returns from agriculture due to a lack of adequate capital and resources. Hence the need for reforms for the development of the agriculture sector in India, the government should provide resources and capital for agricultural activities, his article stated. He explained the nature of collective farming. Here he demanded the nationalisation of land.¹²

B. Small Farmers Agrarian Economy

Dr. Ambedkar devoted his entire life to making dynamic changes in society. His main motive was the improvement of the condition of the downtrodden people of India. He stated that land is not only one-factor affecting agriculture but it is one among many factors. According to him the factors of production should be used in ideal proportions, and its productivity varies with the changes in ideal proportions. He suggested that if agriculture is to be treated as an economic enterprise, then there would be nothing as small and large holding. The problem is not using land as large or smallholdings but the problem rests on the inadequacy of other factors of production. The inefficiency of capital needed for acquiring agricultural stock lessens savings.

He also made an important statement regarding the problem of disguised unemployment in the field of agriculture. To him, a large part of the agricultural population is idle or superfluous as the large agricultural population is engaged in the lowest proportion of land in actual.¹³ He was against this low shareholding and suggested there is an urgent need for reform in the agriculture sector, including corporative farming and the formulation of corporative societies for the development of our agriculture sector with a high productive rate and low factor inputs.¹⁴

C. Nationalisation land

After fighting with the unequal land holdings and persistence of tenancy with unfair rents and uncertain tenure by 1947, Ambedkar gave special emphasis on the radical solution of nationalisation of land and collective farming. Then he felt that neither the tenancy legislation nor the consolidation of land holdings could improve agricultural productivity. These measures alone could not help solve the persistent problems of small farmers and landless labourers. He suggested the nationalisation of entire agricultural land with the aim of collective farming for the solution of all the ills of the Indian agrarian system. For him, the state's main obligation is to supply the capacity necessary for agriculture as well as industry. The organised agricultural land should be divided into farms of standard size and let out for cultivation to the residents of the village. The farm should be cultivated as a collective farm; the farms should be run by the rules and directions issued by the government, and tenants should share the produce of the farm among themselves in a prescribed manner after lifting out the payment of charges livable on the farm.¹⁵

As far as the land ownership was concerned, Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the state should own the land but not the individual. The nationalization of land would be able to resolve most of evils due to small holding and landless labour. He thought that India can achieve impressive growth in agriculture sector through industrialization of agricultural sector which is possible only with nationalization of land. While referring to nationalization of land system; He expressed likeness for land system prevailed in Soviet.

VI. Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a multidimensional personality of India who was a jurist, economist, politician, as well as a social reformer. He was the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and the first law minister of India. He was also the frontrunner of many Dalit movements, a campaigner against social discrimination, and a supporter of women's and labour rights. More than 80% farmers are small and marginal were facing common problems for agriculture sector, lack of knowledge, small size holding, landless labour etc. still problems are present. He suggested that nationalisation of land and collective farming is the only solutions to all agricultural problems in the present scenario. The state's obligation is to provide all requirements for agricultural production. Investment in agriculture is deemed to be a primary industry. His views on the consolidation of land holdings through the organisation of the farming system could increase agricultural production and will be the best solution in the present time. So, the government of India needs to make appropriate changes in its agricultural production system with the help of a new farming system.

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