



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Ambedkar's Ideas on Social Justice as well as an critique of Hindu Society

Prepared by Dr. Kakoli Borah

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science

Marangi Mahavidalya, Golaghat, Assam

Abstract:

Ambedkar has been the biggest critic of the Hindu Social order of all times. The rights of the socially dominant castes i.e.(Brahmin caste) were protected but not of those who belong lower castes. He knew that the Depressed classes' people must have specific rights otherwise they would be exploited and alienated from the society as well as from himself. According to him, the Varna-Vyavastha had developed into a social order of exploitation and oppression. According, to Ambedkar, society must be based on reason, and not on atrocious traditions of the caste system. He found education, inter-caste marriage and inter-dine as methods which may eliminate caste and patriarchy. But with time he realized that the Hindu social order had plagued our society to such an extent where even these methods would fail to annihilate caste from the grass root level. He also talks about social justice which is a means to create an ideal or just society based on the principles of social justice and a combination of three component i.e. liberty, equality and fraternity.

Introduction:

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist and leader of the untouchables(dalits) . He served as Minister of Law and Justice in the first cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru from 1947 to 1951. From the beginning, he was critique of the existing Hindu Social system based on four Varna's in the ground that it promoted inequality. In his early career, he was an economist, professor and lawyer but in his later life was marked by his political activities like involved in campaigning and negotiations for India's independence, publishing journals, advocating political rights and social freedoms for Dalits and contributing significantly to the establishment of the sovereign state of India.

According to Ambedkar, the Hindu society is based on four Varna's that breeds inequality and has been the parent of the caste system and untouchability. For him, Hinduism everything is caste-oriented and caste-based. Ambedkar believed that caste system cannot simply be abolished by forced, inter-caste marriage or inter-dinning. Rather, Hindu maintains caste system not because they are in human but because their religion and religious scriptures have taught them to do so. Therefore, he strongly criticized the Hindu society on the basis of caste and describing it as tyrannical and narrow. For that purpose, he talks about the casteless society where all are equal and absence of discrimination. Thus, Dr. Ambedkar dedicated his whole life to eliminate untouchability from the society and believed that true democracy can be established by removing such types of discrimination that based on caste.

Dr. Ambedkar always severe critique of Hindu Society on the ground that this society divide the people on the basis of four Varna's as Brahmtriyas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. In this context, he firmly viewed that ancient Indian political thinkers like Kautilya, Shukracharya strongly supported it and considered it suitable for the society. It was Ambedkar who for the first time used the word 'Dalits' in 1928 in his newspaper Bahishkritu Bharat. Even during the British regime, the Varna's system was at its peak and the condition of Dalits in the society was pathetic. Their status has often been historically associated with occupation regarded as removal of rubbish, skimmers of hid of dead animals, cleaning streets, latrines and other agricultural activities. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar considered the caste system responsible for the measurable condition of Dalits and thus Dalits were not only being exploited but were also considered untouchables.

As belong to the Mahir caste, he well known bitterly the pathetic condition that facing untouchables in day to day life. He considered untouchability to be a stigma on the Hindu social system. In the evil of untouchability, not only breaks the social unity and integrity but also the hinder the process of democracy. On 25th December 1927, he led the Mahad March at the Chowdar Tank at Colabo, near Bombay to ensure the untouchables right to draw water from the public tank. He then burnt copies of Manuscript openly terming it as a document of discrimination with a number of his supporters. Because Ambedkar believed that Manuscript is a book in which Brahmin got superior position and Shudra got the lowest position in the society. On 2nd March 1930, Ambedkar and his followers launched Satyagraha for entry into Kala Ram Temple at Nasik and also to raise awareness among the Dalits about their rights. As a result, after independence, the constitution declared right to equality through which it is stated that there will be no discrimination among the Indian citizens on the basis of caste, religion, sex, language, race etc and Article 17 declared that untouchability is abolished and any practice of it is forbidden. The Constitution also made provision for reservation of seats for the SCs, STs and OBCs in legislature, educational institutions as well as government jobs.

He also talks about social justice that indicates to create an ideal or a just society. According to him a just society is a casteless society based on the principles of social justice and a combination of three components namely liberty, equality and fraternity. At the same time his ideal society is based upon two fundamental principles- one is that the individual is an end in himself and that the aim and object of society is the growth of the individual and development of his personality. And second one is that the terms of associated life between members of society must be regarded by consideration founded on liberty, equality and fraternity. Again Ambedkar believed that the three essential conditions that make individual liberty real i.e. social equality, economic equality and access to knowledge. Ambedkar believed that it is only fraternity which prevents anarchy and helps to sustain the moral order among men. Individualism produces anarchy. Without fraternity that is a very significant component of social justice, an ideal society is inconceivable. Thus, for him social justice means a complete change in the fundamental notions of individual life and a complete change in our outlook and attitude towards men and things.

Hence, Ambedkar's concept of social justice included-

1. Unity and equality of all human beings.
2. Equal worth of men and women.
3. Respect for the weak and the lowly.
4. Regards for human rights.
5. Benevolence, mutual love, sympathy, tolerance and charity towards fellow beings.
6. Human treatment in all cases.
7. Dignity of all citizens.
8. Abolition of caste distinction.
9. Education and property for all.
10. Good will and gentleness.

Ambedkar indicates the principle of social justice in various contexts as- Legal education, Land ownership, Political agency for depressed classes and Religion. In reference to legal profession and legal education he evokes the importance and need for inclusion and self-representation of marginalized groups in legal profession. Property in land particularly is not a Fundamental Right. Article 43 of the Irish Constitution Clause(2) states that exercise of the right mentioned that is the right on land, should be regulated by the principles of social justice.

Political agency for Depressed Classes emphasized on the need for political awareness of Depressed Classes to remove social injustice which prevailed in Indian society. Today, it has become the creed of the educationists, philosophers, psychologists and social scientists who believe that universal education and the development of printing and press would result in an ideal society in which every individual would be so enlightened that there would be no place for social injustice. Therefore, Ambedkar's premise for social justice on human equality in four grounds as-

* Equality is a value that sets standards for our ways of life; it thereby sustains a regime of rights.

* While inequality ensures the survival of the fittest, equality ensures survival of the best, the fittest who survive might not be the best of the society.

* A social body can bring out the best in men and women only when initial equality is extended to them.

* People should be treated equally to avoid any unfair treatment.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that an egalitarian social order demands equality not only between men and men but also between men and women. As the Law Minister of India, Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill on 5th February 1951. Through this Bill he focused following assumptions as-

- Repeal the Birth Right Law because this law did not allow inter-caste marriage.
- Hindu women should be given full property rights.
- Daughter will have equal right on her father's property.
- Divorce should be made and inter-caste marriage should be given legal validity and protection should be provided to them.

As introduced the Bill in parliament, the members of parliament opposed this Bill in various grounds. Hence, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pandit Madan Mohan views that it totally breaks down the Hinduism. Syama Prasad Mukharjee called it a conspiracy to break Hinduism. Due to the controversy over Hindu Code Bill, Ambedkar resigned from the post of Law Minister. But later, by making some amendment in this Act, the government implemented it, which is a landmark contribution of Ambedkar. As a social reformer he also wanted to abolish landlordism and capitalism for establishing the equity of the society.

B.R.Ambedkar was fully aware about the pathetic condition and the low status of women in the Indian society. He tried to uplift women generally and Hindu women in particular. According to Ambedkar, women were treated as mere tools to bear the burdens of the family and were restricted to the role of bearing children and fulfilling duties of a wife or mother. They have to face discrimination on the basis of gender and because of this, equal opportunity remains a dream for them. They have to endure poverty, illiteracy. Lack of health, inequality and powerlessness. Traditional attitudes regard them as physically, intellectually and socially inferior to men and subject them to male exploitation and unjustified division of lab our. Therefore, he stood for the economic equality of women as well as pleaded for the spread of women education. He blamed Manu for giving women degraded position in Hindu society. According to Manu, women have no right to study the 'Vedas'. It also debarred women from participating in religious activities by the Brahmins. Ambedkar viewed that Manu deprived women from their social freedom as a result women in modern times also suffered from oppression and humiliation in the society. Hence, he fought for giving justice to women for establishing strong democracy.

He was also a firm believer of Democracy. He viewed that political democracy alone is not sufficient for India. India needs to be transformed into social democracy in order to survive as a nation. For him, social democracy as a 'way of life which recognized liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life'. For him, liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty, equality could not become a natural course of things.

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar thoughts an social justice were progressive. He did not believe in violence, he considered the press to be a powerful tool for the social changes for justice and freedom. Due to Ambedkar's prominence and popular support amongst the Untouchables, he was invited to attend the 2nd Round Table Conference in 1932. In this Conference, he emphasized the separate identity at the Untouchables in India and demanded the status of separate electorate for them. On this matter, he had a confrontation with Gandhi in the 1st Round Table Conference held from November 1930 to January 1931. The British Government accepted Ambedkar's demand and granted a 'Communal Award' in 1932 providing a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes. But in against Communal Award, Gandhi resorted to a Fasting unto Death. As a result, fearing a communal reprisal and genocide of untouchable, Ambedkar dropped his demands under massive coercion from the supporters of Gandhi. And as a result the agreement was signed between Gandhi and Ambedkar which known as Poona Pact.

Ambedkar's greatest achievement was that he brought all the downtrodden of India under the one names of SCs. It is the result of Ambedkar's constant efforts that today there are members of Parliament (MPs), members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Professors and Doctors from among these castes. He also enshrined the principles of reservation for improvement of SCs/STs to enable them to progress educationally, economically and socially by providing extra support to them in the form of reservations and concession to uplift them to the level of the advanced classes. It is clearly seen at present that many legal provisions have been made to give social justice to all classes. In this way many schemes and programmes have been started for the all-round development of the country and a measure of development has been achieved through it.

Again for ensuring political rights of Depressed Classes as well as establishing social justice he put forward following demand as-

1. That the education of the depressed classes shall be recognised as the first charge on the revenue of the province and that an equitable and just proportion of the total grant for education should be earmarked for the benefit of the Depressed Classes.
2. That the right of the Depressed Classes to unrestricted recruitments in the army, navy and the police shall be recognised without any limitation as to cost.
3. That for a period of 30 years, the right of the Depressed Classes for priority in the master of recruitments to all posts, gazette as well as non-gazette in all civil services shall be recognised.
4. That the right of the Depressed Classes to the effective representation on the local bodies shall be recognised by the provincial government.
5. That the right of the Depressed Classes to appeal to the government of India, in the case of violation of these rights by the provincial governments, the governments shall be given the power to compel the provincial governments to conform to the law in the matter.

Thus, in conclusion, it can be said that Ambedkar was the protagonist of new social order which was to be based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. His pragmatism and idealism prompted him to work for a new social order based on social justice so that the future of Indian democracy would be strong and stable. For establishing equality he view that for the Untouchables, the liberation from the degrading humanilitation imposed by Hinduism was a matter of more urgent necessity than even the political liberation from the alien British rule. Therefore, Ambedkar's ideas of social justice remain relevant in contemporary Indian society in promoting constitutional and legal methods for upholding the rights and dignity of the depressed sections people.

Thus, Ambedkar stood for a social system in which man's status is based on his merit and achievements and where no one is noble or untouchable because of his /her birth. The Constitution of India, which was drafted under his chairmanship, contains a number of provisions that secure all individuals with their social, economic and political rights along with exercise their liberty, equality and fraternity. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution declares untouchability as abolished. Ambedkar in his speech before the Constituent Assembly for the passage of the constitution, said, 'I have completed my work, I wish there should be a sunrise even tomorrow. The new Bharat has got political freedom, but it is yet to raise the sum of social and economic liberty'.

References:

1. Haridwar Shukla edited *Indian Political Thought II*, published by Mahaveer Publications , Dibrugarh, Assam 2022.
2. Dr. Sanjay Sen and Lakhi Debnath edited, *Indian Political Thought*, published by Mahaveer Publications, Dibrugarh, Assam ,2016.
3. Brijmohan Singh edited *Dalit in Contemporary Society*, published by Nilkamal Publications, New Delhi, 2020.
4. K.L. Sharma, edited *Caste Class and Social Movements*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur 1986.
5. Gouranga Charan Nayak edited *Indian Political Thought*, published by Kalyani Publications, New Delhi, 2021.
6. V.P. Varma edited *Modern Indian Political Thought*, published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal Educational Publishers, Agra, 2004.
7. U.Sharma edited *Indian Political Thought*, published by Lakshmi Narian Educational Publisher, 2001.
8. Urmila Sharma edited *Indian Political Thought*, published by Atlantic publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd, 2002.
9. N.Jayapalan edited *Indian Political Thinkers*, published by Atlantic publishers & Distributors Pvt Ltd, 2002.

