



From Social Reform To Women's Liberation: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Women-Centric Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar contribution towards women for their rights. According to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, women were the victims of the rigid, caste-based, hierarchical social system. Women in today's society become caught in a cycle of indecision, masculine dominance, ignorance of their rights, and lack of decision-making authority. He contributed contributions to Hindu personal law and included multiple provisions for the welfare of women to the Indian Constitution. He made an effort to integrate women's rights into the Indian constitution as well as political discourse. He increased understanding among uneducated; underprivileged women while motivating them to resist injustice and discrimination. Through law, Dr. Ambedkar frees women from antiquated forms of servitude and grants them equal rights and freedom. This paper aims to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues in pre- and post-independent India. It also discusses his involvement to the empowerment and independence of Dalit women as well as other social groups through various constitutional protections. His motto "Educate, organise, and agitate" helped mobilise women in the freedom movement, and even after seventy years of independence, the society had not provided women the rights they were due.

Keywords; women empowerment, rights, constitutional provisions

Introduction

"Unity is meaningless without the accompaniment of women. Education is fruitless without educated women and agitation is incomplete without the strength of women." Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was one of the main architects of the Indian Constitution. He was a very well-known political leader, philosopher, writer, economist, scholar and a social reformer who dedicated his life to eradicating untouchability and other social inequality in India. He was born on 14 April 1891 in Madhya Pradesh in Hindu Mahar Caste. He had to face severe discriminations from every corner of the society as the Mahar caste was viewed as "untouchable" by the upper class.

In our country many philosophers are, .Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar stands on a dais quite different from others for a variety of reasons in modern India's cluster of philosophers. First, his illustrious persona effectively conveys the extraordinary tale of an untouchable being capable of overcoming enormous social disabilities with unchanging bravery and an unrelenting commitment towards life to become an illustrious

constitutionalist, renowned parliamentarian, academician, and jurist, and above all, the messiah of the underprivileged. Second, his effort for the advancement of Indian women and Status is essential to accomplish sustainable human development which is also a very important aim in and of itself. It is a multifaceted, multidimensional, and varied idea. "Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of the Hindu society," former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said. He was an older statesman and a mentor in addition to being a crusader against the caste system and a valiant warrior for the interests of the downtrodden portion of society. As the head of the Constitutional Drafting Committee, the main character, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who shaped the socio-political landscape of the nation resulting from independence. the innovative way he recreated the anti-untouchability and social reform movements. Increased social, political, spiritual, or economic strength of individuals or societies is referred to as empowerment. empowerment and independence for women in the areas of their health, social, and political existence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to examine the circumstances facing women in the new millennium. This paper explains the various political and educational responsibilities played by women and argues that these roles were important in helping to redefine women's social, economic, political, and cultural positions in order to achieve Ambedkarite aspirations of progress in society.

CONCEPT OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The word "women empowerment" refers to authority, or the power invested in women who share corresponding rights. The phrase describes the release of women from socioeconomic slavery. Most of the women in the nation—roughly 50% of the total population—remain economically reliant on one another even in the absence of employment. In the era of feminism, certain women in India are liberated, can exercise their free will, and are allowed to live the lives they choose. But there is a significant section of women in this country who need upbeat reinforcement. Women are still not permitted to receive a basic education in the majority of Indian villages and semi-urban areas, despite having acquired the necessary skills.

Dr. Ambedkar towards the Empowerment of Indian Women

Ambedkar's views on women's oppression, social democracy, caste, and Hindu social rituals and philosophy are important to contemporary Indian feminist thinking because of the role that caste plays in both systemic levels and the functioning of patriarchy, as well as the growing social and cultural caste divide in feminist political discourse. Despite the fact that he demonstrated his genius, was a notable thinker, philosopher, revolutionary, prolific writer, social activist, and critic, and dominated the Indian social-political scene until his death, his ideas were never given sufficient attention in Indian society as a whole simply because he was born an untouchable.

However, the current socioeconomic status call for a critical assessment of his wide variety of issues, his vision, his ability to analyse things, and his sense of context. The writings and speeches of Dr. Ambedkar provide a strong source of inspiration for women's movement to develop a feminist political agenda that thoroughly tackles the issues of class, caste, and gender in the contemporary sociopolitical scene, which still maintains conservative and reactionary values in various acknowledges, especially on gender relations.

WOMEN RIGHTS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that society should be based on reason and not on dreadful tradition of caste system. His aim was to challenge the sociopolitical foundations of hierarchal caste system that denied liberty, equality, and human poise to women in Hindu Society. He suggested in "The Annihilation of Caste System", that Hindu mind should be expunged from the thralldom of the shastras. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made clear reference to the slavery of women that had occurred in ancient India in his writings and speeches in "Women and Counter Revolution" Vol. III. He attempted to show how the Hindu Brahminical order, which forces women to emulate a stereotypically feminine behaviour and wants them to be meek and docile, creates gender connections and distinctions that are only appropriate for a life of domestic and household responsibilities.

As the chairman of the drafting committee, he is aware of the dire circumstances of women, so on March 19 and 20, 1927, he addressed a large crowd of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including women, and appealed for their freedom and confidence by stating that education is crucial for the growth of the mind and the essence of a person. Dr. Ambedkar explicitly noted that the laws of Manu on the position of women are very vital in shaping the Hindu outlook and perception towards women, propagated and upheld through Hindu personal laws based on caste, endogamy, and shastras.

CONSTITUTION PROVISION FOR RIGHTS

Ambedkar was a champion of the notion of social justice as an unassailable component of the constitutional democratic framework in India. The Indian Constitution not only succeeds in restructuring the formerly dominant caste system but also strives to create a democratic and uniform social order devoid of a caste system. The hierarchical social structure, but also the unfortunate caste system victims' entitlement to equality and self-esteem.

By compiling the universal Civil Code for Hindus and other segments of the Indian social order, he created the foundation for concrete and sincere efforts. He suggested that women's sociocultural rights, well-being, and overall development should all be prioritised. He emphasised that Indian women from all social strata should receive their fair share, and that it is our responsibility to uphold and defend women's self-respect and discretion. He gave women powerful constitutional protections.

The following clauses in our constitution provide enough protection for women from all forms of discrimination: Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39, 42, and 51A(e). In 1976, the Constitution's provision for free legal aid (Article 39A) was enacted to help those who could not otherwise afford legal representation or access to the courts. Dr. Ambedkar made a concerted effort to include women's rights in the political language and Indian Constitution.

No matter their religion, ethnicity, caste, sex, or place of birth, everyone is expected to be treated equally before the law according to our constitution. The fundamental rights guaranteed by Articles 14 through 16 of the Indian Constitution ensure that women in India will never be considered in any way inferior to their male counterparts. The State is empowered by Article 15(3) to promote equality for women and children. Chapter 16 (1) and Equal pay for equal work is provided under Article 39. Humanoid work environments and maternity aid are covered by Article 42. The fundamental duties to abandon practises that are depreciatory to the self-esteem of women are stated under Art. 51 (a). Article 46: This article addresses the economic and educational welfare of the poorer section of the population. Articles 39 and 42 emphasise equal opportunities for all in the matter of employment and prohibit discrimination in employment.

AUTHORITY RULES

Numerous revolutionary legislation that grant women the same status as men were inspired by India's Constitution and followed its directives. The Legal Practitioners (Women) Act of 1923, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, the Family Courts Act of 1984, the Sati Prevention Act of 1987, and the Nation Commission for Women Act of 1990 are just a few of the laws that have been established to end all inconsistencies and disparities against women. The Prenatal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act of 1994, the Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993, and other laws were passed. Operational relief is provided by the recently passed Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005. women using violence and shields them from losing their portion of the home. The Constituent Assembly, which designed and drafted the Indian constitution, included fifteen women. They debated, argued, and presented their viewpoints while being led by Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar to create the Indian Constitution of Independent India. Dakshayani Velayudhan, one of the few Dalit women and a young woman, helped design the Indian Constitution. These are all effects of Dr. Ambedkar's commitment to women's rights.

As the law minister of independent India, Ambedkar defended women, and on April 11, 1947, the Hindu Code Bill was introduced in parliament. Dr. Ambedkar codified Hindu Law in order to simplify and restore women's self-esteem. Prior to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Law was

largely uncodified, with the exception of the 1937 Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, which was the subject of legislative action.

It's also important to note that the Sharda Act gave legitimacy to the social reforms that the heads of convention considered to be difficult and imminent. The dogmas that were codified in the Hindu Code Bill included: (i) the right to property; (ii) the succession order for property; and (iii) maintenance, marriage, divorce, minority, adoption, and guardianship. As it guarantees gender equality in all legal proceedings, the Bill was a component of societal engineering.

12. It actually was a pertaining to marriage, divorce, and succession. Prior to the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 and the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, the Hindu Law was India's first step towards recognising and empowering women. A woman will have property of her own and be able to dispose of it under these ground-breaking laws. Throughout his life, Dr. Ambedkar advocated for the rights of women. He not only granted them equal rights but also passed four laws that improved the status of women in society.

These were amalgamated in the Hindu Code Bill

13. These are:

i) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. ii) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

iii) The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956.

iv) The Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.

1. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 established monogamy as the norm and raised the legal age of marriage for both boys and girls to 18 and 21 respectively. Divorce was also permitted under specific conditions. In terms of marriage and divorce, men and women were given equal rights.

2. Act of 1956 Concerning Adoption and Maintenance: This Act allowed any female Hindu who is of sound mind, is not a minor or disabled, or if disabled, whose marriage has been dissolved, whose husband is dead, has completely abandoned the world, or has ceased to be Hindu, or who has been determined to be of unsound mind by a court of competent jurisdiction, to adopt a son or daughter. the mother's and the father's approval.

The 1956 Hindu Succession Act: Previously, the widow was not permitted to adopt a son or daughter under this act, but now she is permitted to do so. Additionally, she was allowed the freedom to remain independent and dispose of her property anyway she pleased (Section 14). A standard succession plan for the assets of Hindu women who pass away intestate after the passage of this Act is also provided for in Section 15.

Act of 1956 Concerning Minority and Guardianship of Hindus: According to this law, the mother has the right to revoke the father's guardianship and designate a new guardian in her will. Father's power to appoint a guardian for the child through living will this Act forbids the mother of the minor from celebrating her Hindu Succession period.

CONCERNING LANDMAKS

During the post-Independence era, a highly anticipated piece of legislation was finally passed. The Kotturuswami v. Verravva¹⁸ case had a significant impact on the woman with regard to Stridhan, in which she had a keen interest. Githa Hariharan v. Reserve Bank of India¹⁹ established that "father and mother both are the natural guardian" under the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956. The Quranic Law of Inheritance, according to Hirabae v. Sonabae²⁰, provides that "a wife, daughter, mother, and grandmother to have their share in the heritable property." In Vasantha R. V. Union of India²¹, the employment of women for night shifts was fully rejected due to their employment in several factories for two-day shifts.

CONCLUSION

In last we conclude that Dr. Ambedkar opened the way for social justice for all women in this situation regardless of gender, caste, religion, or any other category. He created agitation for the advancement of women through his ideas and convictions. He deserves gratitude from everyone for his amazing and never-ending steps in society's progress. Ambedkar is the current scenario's and his ideas about creating an egalitarian society have not yet been acknowledged for transforming the Indian improving society and the lives of women.

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