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AMBEDKAR CRITIQUE OF HINDU PATRIARCHY AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

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Abstract: Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a key architect of the Indian Constitution and a prominent social reformer, critically examined Hindu patriarchy as a system that perpetuated gender and caste-based oppression. His critique highlighted how Hindu religious texts and social structures subordinated women, particularly those from marginalized castes, reinforcing Brahmanical patriarchy. In addition to being the father of the Indian Constitution and a vocal opponent of caste and untouchability, he vehemently denounced ancient lawgiver Manu and his teachings the Manuscripts or Manav Dharma Shastra in which he talks about treating women with disdain and treating them like intellectually inferior slaves, he denied women their right to learn, their right to own property, and their right to chant the Vedas. Ambedkar asked Indian women to publicly disregard the Manu rules and not follow the Manuscript. He added a number of clauses to the Indian Constitution to guarantee gender equality as well as the liberation and advancement of Indian women. Ambedkar's advocacy for gender equality is evident in his insistence on education, legal rights, and social reforms. He believed that education was the most important tool for empowerment, advocating for universal and inclusive education that transcended caste and gender barriers, equal rights and respect for men and women in society are the hallmarks of gender equality. From prehistoric times to the British era, gender inequality and bias have been prevalent in Indian society. It may also occur frequently in the present era under the guise of culture, religion, and other absurd beliefs and customs. In this paper, take a deep dive into Dr Ambedkar's contribution to the feminist movement in India. It would draw attention to and examine how women have been treated in society from antiquity to the present. This paper is based on secondary databases, research papers, articles and books and also this paper explored Ambedkar's analysis of Hindu patriarchy and its lasting impact on Indian Society. In this paper, take a deep dive into Dr Ambedkar's contribution to the feminist movement in India. It would draw attention to and examine how women have been treated in society from antiquity to the present.

Keywords: Hindu patriarchy, Gender, Brahminical Gender Equality, Women empowerment.

Introduction

One of the most powerful icons of rebellion against the oppressive aspects of Hindu society was Dr.B.R Ambedkar. Ambedkar's political and social philosophy was fundamentally a persistent attempt to think things through despite the fact that many have attempted to categorize it under one of the ideological headings; here it becomes crucial to compare how Ambedkar's social standing and position in a hierarchical Hindu society set him apart from others. His study and contribution, as a matter of his epistemology, embraced understanding of political or society (Jayraj, 1968) Dr. Ambedkar ultimately succeeded in giving legal rights of equality and social justice to suffering masses of untouchable and exploited. In patriarchal Indian society, women have been oppressed and subjugated by men for all of recorded time. The Dalit community has long regarded him as their saviour. Dr. B R. Ambedkar spearheaded the Hindu Code Bill, which marked a significant milestone in acknowledging women as equal citizens with inherent rights also discussed in this paper. Ambedkar has underlined the need to grant women's rights and equality to all segments of society. Maintaining their modesty and dignity is our duty. He also supports movements that have been spearheaded by female leaders. It is his belief that women of all backgrounds should be given confidence and given the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to socio-cultural changes. Additionally, he is in favour of movements led by women.

He thinks that women from all occupations ought to be empowered and given the chance to significantly affect societal and cultural shifts. Since he thought that social justice could only be achieved within a contemporary institutional framework, his approach to women's liberation was liberal and progressive. He so championed the ethos of constitutionalism that guaranteed women's equality and dignity.

This paper explored Dr. Ambedkar's critique of Hindu patriarchy and its implication for gender equality in contemporary India. As a social reformer and the creator of the Indian constitution Dr. Ambedkar methodologically dismantled the systematic oppression of women that was ingrained in Hindu holy texts, law and rituals, this paper critically examined Dr. Ambedkar's analysis of Manusmriti, his advocacy for the Hindu code bill and his efforts to secure legal social rights for women. This study aims to highlight the necessity of an intersectional approach to achieving Gender justice. The profoundly ingrained gender disparities within the caste-based social structure and shown by Dr. Ambedkar's critique of Hindu patriarchy. His thesis emphasizes how women are systematically oppressed by Hindu patriarchy, which is supported by Hindu texts like the Manusmriti by limiting their access to the autonomy of education and property. This study looked at Ambedkar's feminist beliefs and his support of women rights and how applicable his criticism is to the current battle for gender equality in India. The study intends to investigate why patriarchal parties skilfully evaluate the effect of Ambedkar's reforms and society in accordance with the ideals.

Ambedkar's critique of Hindu patriarchy:

Ambedkar's critique of Hindu patriarchy saw sexism and caste as intertwined oppressive structures. He maintained that Hindu patriarchy served as a means of unfolding caste purity in addition to bringing a system of gender subordination. Endogamy which he recognized as the cornerstone of the caste system, was maintained in large part by controlling women, especially their reproductive choice (Ambedkar, 1916). He famously stated, 'The Superposition of endogamy and exogamy means the creation of caste the most effective way to enforce endogamy is to control women and their freedom.' Ambedkar's work critically analysed Brahmanical patriarchy and incorporated his viewpoints into current feminist discussion. She reinterprets Ambedkar's writing to address contemporary feminist issue by highlighting the structure connection between caste-based violence, sexuality and labour (Rege, 2023). Pardeshi (2020) places Ambedkar in context of the non-Brahmanical revolutionary school of thought highlighting his critique of the established caste, class and patriarchal structures. She emphasizes Ambedkar's clear connection between the caste system and women servitude, especially in relation to endogamy and forced widowhood. The Manusmriti is notable among the many writings he examined because of its historical impact on Hindu societies' social structure among the numerous Dharma Shastras of Hindu literature. The Manuscript is an ancient legal treatise that is frequently referred to as the Manu Dharmashastra. Ambedkar's criticism of Manusmriti examining his viewpoint against the backdrop of Hindu scripture, traditional and historical Socio-Political development. One of the most striking aspects of Ambedkar's criticism of Manusmriti is his objection to the tax support of an immutable caste system where social mobility was restricted and rights and duties were prescribed based on one's birth. The primary reason behind his rejection of Brahmanism was the treatment of women, who were viewed as objects of amusement and placed at the bottom of humankind.

Social Transformation through Women's Empowerment: Dr. Ambedkar's Blueprint:

Dr. Ambedkar supported social reform movements to challenge gender inequality, encouraging grassroots activism and mobilization for social change and the eradication of discriminatory practices. Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of women's empowerment through knowledge and awareness of their rights, emphasizing the need for women to be assertive in demanding their rights. Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged the intersectionality of gender, caste, and class discrimination, focusing on women's empowerment for marginalized women from lower castes and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Dr. Ambedkar's vision for social transformation through women's empowerment continues to inspire activists and policymakers in India and beyond. His ideas laid the foundation for ongoing efforts to promote gender equality, social justice, and inclusive development. Ambedkar emphasized the significance of economic empowerment for women, advocating for increased access to resources, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship development programs. Ambedkar supported social reform movements to challenge gender inequality, encouraging grassroots activism and mobilization for social change and the eradication of discriminatory practices. Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of women's empowerment through knowledge and awareness of their rights, emphasizing the need for women to be assertive in demanding their rights. Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged the intersectionality of gender, caste, and class discrimination, focusing on women's empowerment for marginalized women from lower castes and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Dr. Ambedkar's vision for social transformation through women's empowerment continues to inspire activists and policymakers in India and beyond. His ideas laid the foundation for ongoing efforts to promote gender equality, social justice, and inclusive development.

Implications for gender equality in contemporary India:

The recent trends in gender studies in the Indian context have shifted the focus from the status of women of the nature and basic of gender relation (Chakravathy 1993). Dr. Ambedkar as the chairman of the drafting committee of the Indian constitution emphasized equal rights for all citizens and ensuring equal opportunities in public employment. He also supported special provisions from the women and the children to address historical injustices. Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of women education for socio-economic upliftment and their gender equality and advocated for increased women's participation in the workplace and public life. Dr. Ambedkar fight against caste discrimination and patriarchal norms necessities social and legal reform to achieve gender equality in India (Yoganandham, 2024). Dr. Ambedkar once said I measured the progress of a community by the degree of progress women have achieved. When he introduced Hindu bill, it was not passed by the parliament; Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the Cabinet in protest. Dr. Ambedkar who was the law minister then to regulate Hindu personal law drafted the Hindu code bill. The bill was an attack on both Hindu caste system and Hindu patriarchy; the draft includes the right to divorce, equal rights for women to inherit property and the embolization of polygamy. Dr. Ambedkar's ideology holds significant importance in the discourse and gender as it challenges the traditional brahminical patriarchy and advocates for gender equality within Indian society(Paik,2014).In the modern era, when caste-based violence against women is on the rise and numerous academicians and social groups are working to expose the layers of discrimination faced by women because of their caste-based identity, Dr. Ambedkar's ideas are highly relevant and should be emphasised as one of the prominent and nuanced arguments highlighting the plight of women facing multiple oppressions of caste, class, and gender. Women now have liberty, equality, and fairness in life because of his vision and accomplishments. Because of this, women in contemporary India now play an equal role in contributing to overall growth. His contributions give women the willpower to combat social injustice and the law, giving them hope for equality and a life of dignity.

Ambedkar's Feminist Legacy in Modern India:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for gender justice continues to hold significant relevance in contemporary India, especially in the ongoing struggles for women's rights. His pioneering work on women's social, political, and economic empowerment provided the foundation for many progressive policies and legal frameworks aimed at addressing gender-based discrimination. Ambedkar's feminist legacy is particularly evident in the various social reforms he championed, including his advocacy for women's education, labour rights, political participation, and the legal protections guaranteed in the Indian Constitution (Ambedkar, 1948). In modern India, his influence can be seen in the legal and policy measures aimed at promoting gender equality. The passage of key legislative measures such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act (2013), and the constitutional amendments reserving seats for women in local governance bodies through the 73rd and 74th Amendments in 1992 can be directly linked to the principles Dr. B.R. Ambedkar championed while drafting the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar's commitment to embedding gender equality into India's legal framework laid the groundwork for these later protections for women. His vision was to create a society where women enjoyed equal social, economic, and political rights, which he sought to enshrine through constitutional safeguards and reformist legislation such as the Hindu Code Bill. These progressive laws reflect Ambedkar's ideals of social justice and empowerment, aiming to protect women from violence, ensure their workplace rights, and promote their political representation at grassroots levels. In essence, the modern legislative framework for women's rights in India is rooted in Ambedkar's pioneering constitutional and social reforms that sought to dismantle patriarchal and caste-based inequalities, thereby fostering an inclusive democracy that upholds women's dignity and equality (Rodrigues, 2002).

Conclusion:

A radical and revolutionary vision for gender equality in India it presented by doctor BR Ambedkar's critique of Hindu patriarchy his work highlights how religion teachings class hierarchy and social legal norms have historically sub judge dented women exposing the deeply inexperienced operative mechanic within brahminical patriarchy Dr. Ambedkar argument remains relevant today as the struggle against gender discrimination with cast based inequalities uh doctor Ambedkar analysed texts like the manuscripts explored how Hindu orthodoxy reinforced woman's operation by denying them educations and inheritance rights., Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for women empowerment and social transformation serves as a timeless blueprint for achieving gender equality and inclusive education in contemporary India. Ambedkar, a visionary leader and architect of the Indian Constitution, recognized the intrinsic link between women's empowerment and the overall progress of society. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of education as a means to uplift marginalized communities, including women. He believed that education was the key to unlocking individuals' potential and enabling them to break free from the shackles of social inequality Ambedkar's critics remain

relevant today as gender inequality persist in various forms of pain justified through religion and culture norms their therefore Ambedkar vision of gender equality is not just a call for individual right but a transformative gender for a more just and equally equality in society. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a vocal critic of the situation of women in India and constantly rebelled against the repressive aspects of Indian culture, particularly Hindu society. There is still work to be done to fulfil his dreams of gender equality. Therefore, even today, his work and thoughts are of utmost relevance. Nearly a century ago, Ambedkar sought to change inheritance rules to better benefit Indian women Ambedkar's transformative vision for women's rights remains a cornerstone of India's gender justice framework. His advocacy for legal protections, educational empowerment, labour rights, and political representation has left a lasting impact on the socio-political landscape. While substantial progress has been made, persistent challenges require continued policy innovation, stronger enforcement, and alignment with international best practices. The ongoing relevance of Ambedkar's work can be seen in contemporary gender movements advocating for intersectional justice. The rise of Dalit feminism, legal reforms in gender equality, and the push for stronger affirmative action policies align with his principles of social equity. However, institutional gaps, economic disparities, and cultural resistance continue to pose significant barriers, necessitating a more robust implementation framework. By strengthening affirmative action policies, enhancing workplace protections, and expanding gender rights awareness, India can further realize Ambedkar's vision. His legacy continues to inspire contemporary gender justice movements, reinforcing theoretical need for inclusive and intersectional approaches to women's empowerment.

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