



AMBEDKAR AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN INDIA

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The concept of "social justice" has been accorded a place of prominence in the Constitution of India. It is an absolute need for the country as a whole as well as for each individual state to provide its residents with equitable access to opportunity an order for the people to have the ability to live with "dignity" and "self-esteem". The provision of equal chances makes it obvious that the individuals will not be deprived on the basis of their caste, colour, religious affiliation, or economic standing. There should be no prejudice of any type and no one should be excluded from social fold meant for all on the basis of equality. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar believed that it was very important for Indian society to maintain a sense of equilibrium and to provide justice to all Indian residents. It also makes an attempt to highlight Ambedkar's endeavours and his concept of social justice in relation to the Indian environment. This paper focuses on the relevance of philosophy of Ambedkar relating to the concept of social justice present times.

Key Words: Welfare State; Equal Opportunities; Social Justice; Ideology; India.

I

Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as a social thinker and his theories on socio-political, religious and economic concerns, such as the pernicious effects of a strict caste or 'varna' hierarchy in Indian culture, are still applicable to contemporary Indian society. Ambedkar was the spokesperson for dalits and other subaltern groups. As a result of this, he did not believe in the hierarchy of castes. He started his fight against the discrimination based on the caste system and to strive for social justice. A significant part in ensuring that all human rights are respected and that all people are accorded equal opportunities. Ambedkar believed that a society base on the idea of equality was a good indicator of its level of social progress. Achievement of social justice is the essentially the first step toward achieving social, political and economic equality. After Dr. Ambedkar's idea was rejected at the round table, he turned his efforts to a more grassroots level and began educating people about the rights to which they were entitled. In every single one of these facets, there has to be inclusivity for all of the many classes and groups that exist.



His philosophy held that there must be some degree of social cohesion. Babasaheb was committed for elevating those in the lower classes. He was aware of the fact that breaking down the barriers of caste and untouchability may take many years. Therefore, he communicated his perspective on social justice and participated in round table discussions to present his opinions. His idea was intended for all underprivileged and marginalised communities, including the members of scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and backward classes communities and asserted that there should be no caste, no inequality and no supremacy. All should be treated as equal. The only path to equality in the society was to provide untouchables their dignity and set them free from their servitude. Ambedkar began his work as a social reformer by campaigning against the practise of untouchability and working on the grassroots level. His primary objective was to incorporate those who had been excluded (dalits). He was aware of the impossibility of achieving social fairness without first abolishing the caste system. As a result, he embarked on a career fighting for social justice. He made a suggestion about the dalit's reservation so that the concept of untouchability might be eradicated from society. He believed that providing dalits with equal rights and opportunities would help narrow the social and economic divide that exists between elite and dalit castes. He emphasised educational opportunities and inter caste marriage. However, the incidents of honour killings and caste conflicts became a barrier to overcome. His suggestions have not been adopted by the community, nor have they been comprehended by it.

Social Justice

It is possible for the phrase "social justice" to have a distinct meaning in various civilizations and within the field of social work. The notion of social justice incorporates the concepts of equality, human rights and dignity. The elimination of inequality, the fair distribution of resources, the implementation of laws and policies, the participation of society in social transformation and individual responsibility are all important issues. Making access to opportunities possible through the activity for the purpose of achieving social justice. The concept of social justice is based on the notion of maintaining a social and economic equilibrium. Its primary objective is to facilitate the elimination of social and economic distinctions. According to Georgianna Dolan, "Social justice is both a state of mind and an action". It is the beginning of the process through which governments, organisations and people begin to think about and fight for equality and justice for all persons. According to what Ghanshyam Shah has said, "Ambedkar's notion of social justice flows through his works



addressing equality, liberty, fraternity, human rights, socio economic democracy and the state and minorities." Second, Ambedkar's many theoretical stances, in particular those that pertain to social justice. These kinds of things often lead to misunderstandings. Caste, gender and socio-economic class all play a role in the perpetuation of social inequality in India. Due to the fact that the subaltern groups continue to experience feeling of exclusion from the mainstream, social inequities continue to prevail. We may witness lynchings of Dalits taking place in recent history. Following the prohibition of cow slaughtering in many states throughout India, we have recently been able to see a number of incidents of lynching, which has led to the deaths of a great number of dalits. This lynching targeted numerous dalits, who ultimately paid the price. They murdered and bit with extreme cruelty.

Structure of Social Justice

The Constitution of India was written with the intention of achieving the goal of providing social equality in terms of the expression of one's beliefs, opinions, and emotions. The preamble to the Constitution makes use of the phrases "Socialist," "Social and Economic Justice," and "Equality." In addition to this, it suggests that the state would be responsible for the people's social welfare as well as the building of an equitable society. In this way, the preamble and the provisions that make up Part IV of the Constitution make an attempt to provide social justice so that everyone has the opportunity to live a life that is meaningful and dignified.

II

Dr. Ambedkar's Thought on Social Justice

In a Hindu culture that practised severe caste discrimination, Dr. Ambedkar gave a voice to the shudra and untouchables - the social order that discriminated against the shudra. Dr. Ambedkar was adamantly opposed to any kind of discrimination against those of low birth. It was his opinion that the caste system had existed in the community for as long as he could remember. Ambedkar's efforts to promote equity and social justice to the most marginalised members of society were guided by the slogan "educate, agitate and unite". He did this in the hopes of gathering the social outcasts under his leadership. Too many people are moved to action by his notion, and they have begun rallying behind him. In his very first battle in public, Dr. Ambedkar fought for the rights of untouchables to drink water from a well known as "Chowdar Talab." The members of higher castes were the only ones allowed to utilise this. This activism helped to discredit the discriminatory practises of the past, which included unequal access to water and public water supplies. Ambedkar went against the order of his caste in order to restore



people's faith and raise their understanding of their rights. Since he was well aware, the only thing that could free them from their caste was knowledge. Because Hinduism was so thoroughly entrenched, it was difficult to bring about social transformation. As a direct consequence of this, he became a Buddhist. This was a significant step he took in achieving social justice. Many people began to practise Buddhism and consequently, many more found they could no longer adhere to the established order and began to negotiate for equal rights. The deconstruction that took place resulted in societal shifts. We have come to the same conclusion as the Bohras, namely that the methods used by academicians and political leaders have been distinct. According to Bohra, "Gandhi himself questioned the existing caste structure in his own manner." One example of how Gandhi did this is when he asked the members of his ashram to clean the toilets. The caste system, as well as Ambedkar's interpretation of it, was approached in a far more radical manner by Ambedkar (Bohra). In this context, I will not go into the specifics of the conversation or argument between Gandhi and Ambedkar. However, the important thing to investigate is as to how Ambedkar's concept to include the untouchable was met with opposition from other people's opinions at some point. Ambedkar thus carried on the fight that had been going on before for dalits in order to achieve social justice.

Ambedkar as a Social Worker

Babasaheb was the mastermind behind the establishment of the progressive state. With his holy spirit, he cultivated a patriotic and secular mindset. His viewpoints on the caste system, class, the practise of untouchability and discrimination on the basis of race, religion, colour, gender, and geographical location have always been crystal clear. He believes that no nation or state should be divided on the basis of religion or in fundamentalist manner. In light of the fact that such components offer an undeniable risk to the progress of the nation. He spoke in front of the Indian society and the parliament on a number of occasions, particularly advocating for the establishment of a secular state. As a direct consequence of his ideas, India included the principle of secularism in its constitution. He proposed many policies to the planning commission in order to empower marginalised section, reservation for disadvantaged section and women as the primary step to be taken for the welfare of these categories. This synchronised thought of Ambedkar was for the empowerment of landless communities and women. Reservation is the primary step taken for the welfare of these categories. He had a strong commitment to social justice and a positive outlook on progress. Because of his ideas, I believe that during the next several decades our nation will emerge as a superpower.



His social activism manifested itself in the form of the formulation of a number of different social programmes. Along with the government, the social work profession and social workers have a greater responsibility in the process of need assessment of local communities and encouraging the marginalised sections to make optimal use of the resources that are available to them. The implementation of policies is one of the most important responsibilities of the government. The field of social work encompasses a wider scope than the majority of academic specialisations in terms of the breadth and depth of issues it investigates, the breadth and depth of settings in which it operates, the levels of practise it offers, the interventions it employs, and the populations it helps. Social workers may find employment in a wide range of settings, including healthcare facilities, educational institutions, medical clinics, law enforcement organisations, government offices and judicial system as well as private firms and corporations. Knowledge of human growth and behaviour, as well as social, economic and cultural institutions as well as an understanding of the interplay between all of these elements is necessary for the practise of social work.

National Policy on Women, Education, Health, Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and Prevention of Atrocities Act and Reservation Policy, etc. are some of Babasaheb's significant contributions to the welfare of the marginalised sectors of society. In a similar vein, social work may be seen as the provision of institutional as well as non-institutional services with the goal of empowering disadvantaged groups. The provision of services is carried out in accordance with the directives outlined in relevant policies and acts. The longitude and latitude of the social work profession have both significantly expanded in recent years, contributing to the field's growing vitality. Practice of social work's fundamental approaches is the starting point for direct roles played by social workers. The participatory approach, which includes the person, the group, and the community, is the primary technique. Secondary approaches may be either participatory or non-participatory and are used for the benefit of society as a whole using either way. As a result, the job of the social worker has been expanded for the benefit of individuals, groups, and the community as a whole. The growth of disadvantaged groups in the areas of education, health, and public service led to more economic autonomy and a more respectable social life as a direct consequence of Babasaheb's efforts. This is his most significant contribution to society. His approach to social work and social service is centred on empowering those who are disadvantaged by providing them with moral, financial and political backing. In addition, he states that education, economic autonomy and political authority are



the master keys to the growth of the nation's downtrodden, weaker and more marginalised portions.

III

Ambedkar's Struggle for Social Justice

Ambedkar was a member of the Mahar caste in India. The Mahar people were discriminated on the basis of their socio-economic status and were regarded as untouchables in the society. In such a society, not only did man detest man, but the caste Hindus kept themselves away from the shadows of the Harijans and oppressed. The word "Harijans" was popularised by Mohandas Gandhi to refer to dalits, who were historically regarded to be untouchables. Their ways, dwellings, wells, and temples were all distinct from one another even if one side had a strong desire to communicate, the other side may have easily rejected their overtures. The means in which interactions were maintained were peculiar. The individuals who were lower on the social hierarchy did not have the guts to approach those in higher castes, lift their eyes, or stand alongside them in order to have a conversation. In the same way that the doors of the schools were closed to them, the doors to the temples were also closed. The social structure and the caste system were responsible for the inheritance of these harmful customs. Ambedkar was born and raised in a community like this one. It was the setting for his whole life. However, he managed to get a higher education in spite of all the obstacles that stood in his way. Almost immediately after he finished his education, he entered politics and began advocating for the rights of lower-income classes and fighting against the inequality that was prevalent in the society. He was a fighter for social equality and justice throughout his life. He never compromised with wrongdoing and he was never concerned with elevating his own status or promoting his own interests.

He was a staunch opponent of unequal treatment and social injustice, and he never compromised. He laboured ceaselessly for the rebirth of humanity, the improvement of the condition of people, and the revolution of man and society. He was a social liberal of the highest calibre. His goal was to establish a new social order that was founded on the values of justice, equality and brotherhood. As a result, the concepts of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity served as the driving force behind all of his endeavours. The name of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar will live on in the annals of Indian history as a figure of unwavering commitment to the cause of social equality. Not only was he the primary architect of the Constitution, but he was also a staunch advocate of social justice and worked to improve the lives of those who were



disadvantaged. He dedicated his whole life to helping the underprivileged and untouchable members of Indian society, many of whom were exploited.

In a culture like that, Dr. Ambedkar had just one power—the power of his reasoning and thought—to bring about a significant social shift. He depended on the strength of his ideas and commandments to guide him. Rousseau is credited with writing that "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains". In 1789, he said three words that changed the course of history in France: equality, liberty and fraternity. The words of Rousseau had a significant impact on Ambedkar, and as a result, he made the decision to fight for justice that was founded on equality. Ambedkar prioritised economic and social equality above political equality, and he did all in his power to guarantee that those who had been historically oppressed were given their rightful position in society. As a result, he placed a greater focus on social justice than political justice. He placed a great deal of attention on equal opportunity together with individual liberty in order to eradicate the disparities that were brought about by the caste structure of the nation.

According to P.B. Gajendragadkar, former Chief Justice of India, "Ambedkar is the law creator of the 20th century and contemporary Manu, but unlike ancient Manu, this new Manu favoured human equality and social justice." In honour of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the oppressed, the Government of India commemorated his birth centennial as a "Social Justice Year" from April 14, 1990, to April 14, 1991. This took place between the dates of 14 April 1990 and April 14, 1991. In this manner, several programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of individuals belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) were launched over the whole of the nation. SC/ST students were made eligible to receive financial aid in the form of scholarships and stipends. Books, educational supplies, and stationery will all be provided at no cost thanks to the provisions that have been made. In addition, grants have been awarded for the development of educational institutions and lodging facilities. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) have also included relevant provisions. Many different housing programmes such as the Indira Awas Yojana have been started in order to develop micro habitats and housing units for socially and economically disadvantaged people and the provision of drinking water has been given the highest priority. They are provided with assistance in the form of self-employment opportunities, such as the establishment of poultry and dairy units. Centers for training and coaching have been set up



specifically for the purpose of assisting members of SC/ST groups in achieving success in gaining access to services. Special programmes were initiated in order to hire the candidates from these classes who were eligible for the reserved seats. Because there were insufficient qualified applicants, the government issued an order preventing the filling of such positions until the applicants for these classes had completed their education and been appropriately qualified.

The idea of justice is very complicated since it may be derived from a variety of places and can take on many forms. It has been investigated by a variety of individuals with a variety of perspectives, all within the confines of the time, location, and circumstances in which those individuals lived. One of the components of the overarching notion of justice is social justice, which refers to the arrangement of a society in accordance with the ideals of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. It places a stronger focus on the idea of equality, which applies to both the social and economic spheres, as well as fraternity, with the goal of establishing such human social circumstances that guarantee the free and equitable development of all human beings. As a result, the idea of social justice may sometimes require unequal or preferential treatment for certain segments of the population, which have been deprived of certain values for a long period of time in order to bring them on an equal footing with other segments of the population. This is done with the goal of bringing them to a position where they are on an equal footing with other segments of the population.

The idea of social justice proposed by Ambedkar prioritises the notions of liberty, equality and fraternity for all people on Earth. He advocated for a social order that is founded on appropriate interactions between individuals in all aspects of one's existence as a human being. In his capacity as both a rationalist and a humanist, he was opposed to any kind of hypocrisy, injustice or exploitation of man by man that was carried out in the name of religion. He advocated for a religious system that was founded on timeless ethical precepts that could be practised in any era, wherever in the world, and by people of any and every race. It is essential that it be consistent with reason and that it be founded on the fundamental principles of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. He believed that the Hindu caste system was the most pernicious aspect of that religion. According to him, the varna system is the underlying reason for all forms of inequality. It is also the progenitor of the caste system and the practise of untouchability. Ambedkar advocated for a social order in which a person's rank is determined only by his or her own merit and accomplishments, and in which no one's birth status qualifies them as



untouchable or noble. He was a proponent of a programme that would provide preferential treatment for the people of the nation who were economically exploited and socially oppressed. The Constitution of India, which was drafted under his chairmanship, contains a number of provisions that enjoin the state to secure to all of its citizens justice on all levels (social, economic, and political), along with liberty, equality and fraternity. These provisions were included in the document because they were important to him. In addition to that, it has a number of rules that ensure the most disadvantaged persons will get preferential treatment in a variety of areas. The Indian Constitution specifically states that the practise of untouchability is no longer legal. In his address to the Constituent Assembly for the purpose of the adoption of the Constitution, Ambedkar declared, "I have accomplished my task; I desire there should be a dawn even tomorrow." The new Bharat is free politically, but it has not yet reached the point where it can raise the sun on its social and economic liberties.

IV

The use of religion as a tool for overthrowing repressive systems may be fraught with peril since it raises the risk of dragging religion into the political sphere, where there is the possibility of clashing ideologies with those of one's political opponents. Despite the existence of such risks, the 5.8 million Ambedkarite Buddhists who live in India have had a one-of-a-kind experience. Ambedkarite Buddhists participate disproportionately more in the social justice movement, draws on the social movement theory, in the civil rights movement. Buddhist beliefs that support social justice movement provide cognitive and emotional resources. Ambedkar framed the socio-political canvas, and his work laid the foundation for organisational resources. Caste composition of newly converted Buddhists creates group consciousness, and Continuation of caste-based oppression creates political opportunity (or more appropriately a threat), resulting in the mobilisation of organisational and cognitive resources.

The Indian Constitution was written with the goal of promoting social justice as its guiding principle. It is the responsibility of the state to maintain a social order in which the judicial system of the nation promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and ensures that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen due to economic or other forms of disability. This obligation falls under the category of the state's constitutional responsibility to maintain social order. This essay makes an effort to investigate the thoughts that Ambedkar had towards social justice. Following that, it concentrates on Ambedkar's battles and views on



social justice in the context of India, and it ultimately investigates the continued applicability of his goal for social justice in the modern day.

Social justice is the most important and central concept of the Indian Constitution. It is an absolute need for the country as a whole, as well as each individual state, to provide its residents with equitable access to opportunity. In order to have the ability to live with "dignity" and "self-esteem," The provision of equal chances makes it clear that the rights of individuals will not be disregarded on the basis of their caste, colour, religious affiliation, or economic standing. There should be no prejudice of any type and no one should be excluded from the social fold. In this regard, this adds to a better understanding of Ambedkar's concept of social justice. This paper attempts to address Ambedkar's thoughts on social justice and how significant they are for the Indian society's efforts to achieve balance and deliver justice to all Indian people. It also makes an attempt to highlight Ambedkar's endeavours and his concept of social justice in relation to the Indian environment.

Ambedkar was the worldwide personality with a high level of constitutional understanding and knowledge of law. He became an expert on all the progressive constitutions that were in use at the time and then drafted the Constitution of India, which is now considered the model constitution for all nations. His efforts towards irradiating a number of social ills as well as discrimination on the basis of caste, class, colour, gender, race, language, and geographical location, are addressed in his series of speeches, and he discovers solutions for them through constitutional efforts. In addition, he addresses colour discrimination on the basis of caste, class and colour. His dedication to social reform and development was unwavering, and he never stopped working toward his goal of providing justice and dignity to society's most underprivileged members. In India, the practise of non-institutional social work began a very long time ago. Nevertheless, it did not gain momentum until after Ambedkar's attempts to legitimise his commitment to the welfare of India's marginalised parts. There is now an attempt being made to comprehend the role that Ambedkar played as a social worker and scientist in the process of empowering those members of society who were previously disadvantaged and marginalised.

V

Conclusion

The concept of social justice advocated by Ambedkar focuses on "equal rights" and "human dignity." His contribution, to some extent, was responsible for bringing about social awareness.

His never-ending advocacy and support for the reservation of Dalits. Because to his significant efforts, we are now here. Even if his goal has not yet been fully realised, we still need to take some further measures in the direction of empowering women and Dalits. We can now state that the LGBTQ community, which was formerly considered a minority, has also been classified as a subaltern. If we reconsider Ambedkar's ideas and follow his vision, then it is inevitable that one day we will arrive at a point where we can deliver justice to everyone. And India will have matured into a socially angelic country in the framework of industrialised nations. Let's expand our conception of India a little bit farther. Every location that includes prejudice and segregation must fulfil the requirements for social justice. The concept of social justice may be applied to a wide range of problems all around the world in order to effect positive change in existing social structures. It has been brought to our attention that the concept put out by Ambedkar is, indeed, quite pertinent on a global scale. Even in this day and age, we can see that many people all across the globe are speaking out to bring about social justice and equality. Ambedkar's concept of social justice is still relevant and it is necessary to study it in depth in order to successfully apply it in our society. There are many more subaltern voices that have also been silenced. He was able to get a few sentences out before he passed out from asphyxiation. His death reveals the voices of many others who have been denied opportunities and silenced. Ambedkar's views might be investigated in relation to black and dalit situations in order to get an understanding of the similarities and differences between these groups' concerns. Those voices have a responsibility to be heard. Only then will we be able to provide social justice by putting an end to racism and casteism.

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