

Social and Political Ideas of Ambedkar

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ABSTRACT: India is a nation who has seen the best personalities who not only contributed for the freedom of India but had also developed the Indian society. As India not only suffered from the colonialism of Britishers but it was internally affected by the various religious rituals. Ambedkar himself was also affected by religious evils. Here I have provided the great workings of ambedkar. This will cover the social and political ideas of Ambedkar.

KEYWORDS: Untouchability, Indian constitution, partition of India and democracy of India.

"I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity". B. R. Ambedkar

1. UNTOUCHABILITY PROBLEM: VIEWS OF AMBEDKAR

As Ambedkar was educated by the Princely State of Baroda, he was bound to serve it. He was appointed as Military Secretary to the Gaekwar but had to quit within a short time. He described the incident in his autobiography, *Waiting for a Visa*. Thereafter he tried to find ways to make a living for his growing family. He worked as a private tutor, as an accountant, and established an investment consulting business, but it failed when his clients learned that he was an untouchable.¹ In 1918 he became Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics in Bombay. Even though he was successful with the students, other professors objected to his sharing the same drinking-water jug that they all used.² Ambedkar had been invited to testify before the Southborough Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919. At this hearing, Ambedkar argued for creating separate electorates and reservations for untouchables and other religious communities.³ In 1920, he began the publication of the weekly *Mooknayak* (Leader of the Silent) in Mumbai with the help of Shahu II (1874–1922), Maharaja of Kolhapur.⁴

Ambedkar went on to work as a legal professional. In 1926 he successfully defended three non-Brahmin leaders who had accused the Brahmin community of ruining India and were then subsequently sued for libel. DhananjayKeer notes that "The victory was resounding, both socially and individually, for the clients and the Doctor".⁵ While practising law in the Bombay High Court, he tried to uplift the untouchables in order to educate them. His first organized attempt to achieve this was the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, which was intended to promote education and socio-economic improvement, as well as the welfare of "outcastes", at the time referred to as depressed classes.⁶ For the protection of Dalit rights he started many periodicals like *Mook Nayak*, *Bahishkrit Bharat*, and *EqualityJanta*.⁷ By 1927 Ambedkar decided to launch active movements against untouchability. He began with public movements and marches to open up and share public drinking water resources; also he began a struggle for the right to enter Hindu temples. He led a satyagraha in Mahad to fight for the right of the untouchable community to draw water from the main water tank of the town.⁸ He took part in an event in which an ancient Vedic text, *Manusmṛti*, was burned by G. N. Sahasrabuddhe, a Brahmin.⁹

In 1930, Ambedkar launched Kalaram Temple movement. This was non-violent movement for which he was preparing since three months. About 15000 volunteers assembled at Kalaram Temple satyagraha making one of the greatest processions of Nashik. The procession was headed by military band, batch of scout, women and men walked in discipline, order and determination to see the god first time. When they reached to gate, the gates were closed by authorities. This movement was for human dignity and self-respect.¹⁰ He was appointed to the Bombay Presidency Committee to work with the all-European Simon Commission in 1925.¹¹ This commission had sparked great protests across India, and while its report was ignored by most Indians, Ambedkar himself wrote a separate set of recommendations for the future Constitution of India.¹² Due to Ambedkar's prominence and popular support amongst then so called untouchable community, he was invited to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1932.¹³ Gandhi fiercely opposed a separate electorate for untouchables, saying he feared that such an arrangement would split the Hindu community into two groups.¹⁴

In 1932, when the British had agreed with Ambedkar and announced a Communal Award of a separate electorate, Gandhi protested by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. The fast provoked huge civil unrest across India and orthodox Hindu leaders, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Palwankar Baloo organised joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yerwada. Fearing a communal reprisal and genocidal acts against untouchables, Ambedkar was coerced into agreeing with Gandhi.¹⁵ This agreement, which saw Gandhi end his fast and Ambedkar drop his demand for a separate electorate, was called the Poona Pact. Instead, a certain number of seats were reserved specifically for untouchables (who in the agreement were called the "Depressed Class").¹⁶

Dr Ambedkar: And the Indian Constitution

The first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, praised the services rendered by Dr Ambedkar in the making of the Constitution and said:

"I have carefully watched the day-to-day activities from the presidential seat. Therefore, I appreciate more than others with how much dedication and vitality this task has been carried out by the Drafting Committee and by its chairman Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar in particular. We never did a better thing than having Dr Ambedkar on the Drafting Committee and selecting him as its chairman".

Due to his seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution, Dr Bhīma Ambedkar is popularly known all over India as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. His efforts to eradicate social evils were remarkable and that is why he is called the "messiah" of the Dalits and downtrodden in India. Dr Ambedkar was appointed the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Constituent Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs for members of the SC and ST. Ambedkar kept the clauses of the Constitution flexible so that amendments could be made as and when the situation demanded. He provided an inspiring Preamble to the Constitution ensuring justice, social, economic and political, liberty, equality and fraternity. The creation of an egalitarian social order, however, remains an unfulfilled wishful thinking to this day.

Dr Ambedkar was not only a learned scholar and an eminent jurist but also a revolutionary who fought against social evils like untouchability and caste restrictions. Throughout his life, he battled social discrimination while upholding the rights of the Dalits and other socially backward classes. He was not only a great national leader but also a distinguished scholar of international repute. He not only led various social movements for the upliftment of the depressed sections of the Indian society but also contributed to the understanding of the socio-economic and political problems of India through his scholarly works on caste, religion, culture, constitutional law and economic development. As a matter of fact he was an economist and his various scholarly works and speeches indicate his deep understanding of the problems faced by the Indian society. He was appointed as the nation's first Law Minister and was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1990.¹⁷

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Ambedkar's stand on the partition of India: Ambedkar was as much interested in burying the Hindu Raj as Jinnah was in avoiding it. But he was in favour of forming a non – communal party(mixed party of Hindus and Muslims) to fight against the Hindu Raj. But later on, when he found that the Muslims were bent upon having Pakistan he began to support their demand. He felt that if there was no other alternative Pakistan had to be

accepted .in his book “Pakistan or the partition of India”, he wrote “once it becomes certain that Muslims want Pakistan there can be no doubt that the wise course would be concede the principle of it”.²¹ He realistically pointed out that “Pakistan would liberate both the Hindus and Muslims from the fear of enslavement and encroachment” while surveying the relations of the Hindu-Muslims relations down the ages, he found that in Islam there is no room for “territorial nationalism”. At one time in his paper, “*Bahiskrit Bharat*” he put forward the preposition that “Hindus and Muslims constituted two different nations”.²²

Ambedkar and Indian democracy: Ambedkar was a true and sincere democrat. For him, political democracy without social and economic democracy was a double deception. He warned that as long as there was inequality on the social and economic plane there can be no political democracy, except in name or form. Unlike most of the Indian leaders, he never indulged in unnecessary glorification of the Indian civilization. He frankly pointed out to the several weaknesses that the Indian society suffered from. He honestly contended that “democracy was a top dressing on the Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic”. He believed that constitutional morality is not national sentiment and it has to be cultivated.²³

II. CONCLUSION:

Dr.Ambedkar was a social revolutionary. He vehemently denounced the inequalities. Brahminical Hinduism has heaped upon the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar was a most renowned and the most militant champion of the untouchables. Through his scholarly writings, he made significant awareness of the political, economic and social problems of the untouchable community. Though provoking provocative, his life is highly instructive to everyone who yearns for human dignity and equality in social relations. More than any other Indian it is he who fought for the cause of social equality. His ultimate achievement lay in ushering in a silent social revolution in Indian society. He stood for the social liberation, economic emancipation and political advancement of the downtrodden. Ambedkar’s other major contribution to Indian progress; his faith in constitutional order. Though he believed in change, but stood for change through constitutional method only. The civil-disobedience methodology could be a dominance of anarchy, he thought. His contribution as a parliamentarian, scholar, statesmen and a reformer was outstanding. Notably, the chief Architect of the Indian constitution also drafted and introduced the Hindu code bill to end the complexities of marriage system in India.

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