



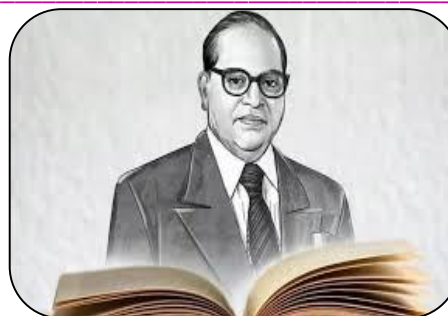
DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Prof. Dr. Sanjay Gaikwad¹ and Monali Sidharth Londhe²

¹M.A., M.Ed., SET, Ph.D

Head of Department, Mahadik Arts and Commerce College, Modnimb, Solapur.

² Research Scholar , Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University, Solapur.



INTRODUCTION:

India is a caste based society. Caste is based upon birth. Caste denies ones fundamental right to choose profession, it denies ones achievements based on merit, irrespective of merit caste is based upon the principle of graded inequality, it denies dignity and in the context of untouchability it denies basic human rights. Caste, thus is antithetical to the principle of liberty, equality, justice and fraternity. From the perspective of Nation –State rather than uniting caste is a divisive force. In spite of living in the 21st century caste Discrimination is still practiced by people throughout India. This research paper takes a review of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's thoughts and work for elimination of casteism and untouchability within India.

Dr. Babasaheb's idea about Indian history is based upon his theory of Revolution and counter Revolution. Accordingly the history of India is nothing but struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism¹. Buddhism stands for Humanity, equality, liberty, and compassion whereas Brahmanism stand for justifying hierarchical Varna based society. Reflection of this struggle in medieval times can be seen in the bhakti movement of Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Basveshvar, and Jagatguru Tukaram maharaj. In the modern times its reflection is seen in the movement of Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Ch. Shahu maharaj. Babasaheb inherits this long tradition of struggle between humanity and Brahmanism. The central idea here is annihilation of caste system in India without which India cannot survive as a united and strong country, without which it cannot achieve the goal of inclusive and sustainable growth.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar advocate of social transformation by peaceful means:

Babasaheb believed in complete social transformation and not reform. He believed to establish a new social order. Babasaheb believed in peaceful methods of social change. All his movement was based on peace and rationality. He supported constitutional means of struggle. He believed in founding and sustaining institutions that will make better social order. Welfare state of all cannot be developed on the grounds of force and brutal methods. He meticulously took planned steps and executed his struggle step by step.

Awareness campaign and intellectual attacks on Brahmanical ills:

Dr. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started aggressive propaganda against the Brahmanical social order and launched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920². He founded and Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha 1927³. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had great faith in creating public opinion for against the

gross inequalities prevailing within the society. Through writings within it he successfully brought caste issue at the centre of public life.

He founded Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha for undertaking welfare programs. Under it boarding schools were started, for he believed in education as a potent weapon for social change. The seeds of Peoples Education Society were sowed during this time. This is testimony to his belief in reason and peaceful struggle. He urged the depressed class to found organizations to deal with urgent needs of the oppressed and depressed classes and to work in different sectors. Various Mandal's and sports clubs emerged within the depressed classes. These micro organisations played a great role in uniting the class. These organisations acted as primary line of defence as well as alternative cultural centres of the depressed class. Both male and female were active participants in these organisations.

The agitations:

A) The Mahad Satyagraha Struggle for basic human rights:

Denial of basic human rights and imposition of discrimination, segregation, and social ostracism formed the core of social relation between caste Hindus and the untouchables. The Mahad Satyagraha was a response to these injustices and aimed to challenge the deeply ingrained caste-based discrimination. Water was symbolic, He challenged everything that was unfair and prejudicial within it. For such revolutionary measures he burnt down the 'Manusmriti' which was the source of inequality and injustice⁴. Through his social movement, he wanted to instil in minds of his followers confidence and the idea of self-respect. He gave a strong message that his was a movement for human rights and self-respect.

B) Right to religion- Kalaram Satyagraha:

Temples acted as power centre of Brahmanical supremacy. Dr. Babasaheb in his speech on inauguration of Satyagraha said 'We don't want to go to temples though but we should have rights.' He undertook Kalaram temple entry Satyagraha to expose the congress propaganda that untouchables formed an integral part of Brahmanical society. It was also meant to assert the right to religion. It took almost six years to open the temple door to untouchables⁵. The Satyagraha confirmed that the caste Hindus are not ready for change and establish relationship with the untouchables on equal footing. Resultantly In his Yeola speech of 1935 he declared "though, I am born as Hindu, I'll not die as Hindu"⁶. It was an indication of leaving the oppressive Brahmanical society.

Idea of annihilation of caste and embracing Buddhism in search of Justice Liberty, equality

According to Dr. Babasaheb mere inter caste marriages, inter dining is not sufficient to annihilate caste. It is the Dharma Shashtra literature which advocates caste and all means to preserve it, unless and until caste Hindus demolish Dharma Shashtra's it is impossible to annihilate caste system in India. He thus suggests to make every man and women free from slavery of the Shashtra's, purify their minds of negative views on the Shashtra's and he or she will inter dine & inter marry. According to him, society must be based on reason and not on the vicious traditions of the caste system⁷. 22 years after his declaration at Yeola On 14th October 1956 on the occasion of Vijayadashami, he and his almost 6 lakhs of followers converted to Buddhism, which makes it the only example of all-encompassing socio-political movement in contemporary world.

Establishment of political parties and Institutionalisation of opposition:

With his movement in the social field same time Babasaheb was busy in building political agenda for modern free India. The government of India Act 1919 popularly known as Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms introduced direct elections in India⁸. It ushered beginning of electoral politics in the country. Babasaheb gave his memorandum before the Southborough commission of 1917 demanding Adult suffrage within the country⁹. He was first Indian leader to put forth such demand within the country. In this demand lay the seeds of representative democracy. This demand proves that

he is a national leader par excellence than any of his contemporaries and the propaganda that Babasaheb is leaders of untouchable is wrong. He strongly believed that the caste Hindus never consider the untouchables as an integral part of the society and so they form a deprived minority. He therefore demanded separate electorate for them and remained unshaken on this demand during the three Round Table Conferences¹⁰. Independent Labour Party was the first political party founded by Babasaheb. It had its social base amongst the textile workers the majority of whom belonged to the depressed class. Through this party he provided social security, better working conditions and representation to the workers in Bombay legislative assembly¹¹. Throughout pre independence electoral competition Babasaheb, the justice party of Periyar, the leftist parties formed the political force in opposition. These parties set the agenda for the depressed classes and the development of the country as a whole. He entered into the constituent assembly through the Scheduled Caste Federation party¹². Through this opportunity he gave to the country a constitution having provisions of social transformation.

CONCLUSION:

The constitution is a blue print of building an enlightened, egalitarian India. It guarantee's protections for a wide range of civil liberties for all individuals within the country irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth. It also provides for the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination. In this context Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar becomes the undisputed true architect of modern India. His slogan of Educate, Organise and Agitate remain of utmost relevance in present times.

REFERENCES:

1. Anand Teltumbde and Suraj Yengde 2019, "The Radical in Ambedkar: Critical Reflections" Penguin India Publisher Mumbai.
2. Keer Dhananjay 1966, 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar' Popular Publication Mumbai.
3. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Speeches and Writings Vol. 17 Part Two Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and His Egalitarian Revolution Socio-Political, Religious Activities. P-395. Publisher: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India.
4. Dr. Manak Singariya, Lecture in Economics Govt. College Jaitaran (Raj.), (2014), Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Women Empowerment in India.
5. Team Ambedkarite Today, Kalaram Temple entry movement by Dr. Ambedkar for Equal Rights accessed on 1st April 2024
6. <https://www.ambedkaritetoday.com/2020/03/kalaram-temple-entrymovement-by-ambedkar.html>
7. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Speeches and Writings Vol. 17 Part Three Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and His Egalitarian Revolution P-94. Publisher: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India.
8. Ambedkar B.R. Speeches and Writings Vol. 1 Annihilation of Caste Page-19-
9. 92. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2019.
10. Ambedkar B. R. Writing and Speeches Volume No. : 8 p-109-359 Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2020.
11. Ambedkar B. R. Writing and Speeches Volume No. : 1 p- 401 'Southborough Commission'. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2020.
12. Ambedkar B. R. Writing and Speeches Volume No. : 2 p- 114-778 Round table Conference Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2014.
13. Ambedkar B. R. Writing and Speeches Volume No. : 2 p- 90- 238 Bombay legislative assembly , Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2014.
14. Ambedkar B. R. Writing and Speeches Volume No. : 1 p-375 Schedule Caste Federation, Dr. Ambedkar Foundation Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Govt. of India, 2014.