



AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POLITICAL THEORY IN INDIA

Dr Pramod Pal Singh

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

K.R.(PG) College Mathura UP

ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's groundbreaking work in political philosophy and social justice has had a profound impact on contemporary India. For oppressed communities like the Dalits, who had endured centuries of prejudice and marginalisation, he played a crucial role in establishing human rights, justice, and equality as guiding principles in the Indian Constitution. Affirmative action policies and the end of untouchability were both ushered in by Ambedkar's campaigns for the empowerment of marginalised groups. Beyond only promoting changes to the law, his efforts for social justice aimed at establishing a society free from religious, caste, and socioeconomic discrimination. In politics, Ambedkar revolutionised the concept of democracy by highlighting the need for underprivileged groups to gain political and social power, and his thoughts on the role of the state in guaranteeing economic and social equality were revolutionary. Ambedkar, who had studied under Western philosophers like Montesquieu and John Stuart Mill, drew on his knowledge of India's social structure to develop a theory that challenged colonialism and attempted to reform the country's long-established caste system. Considered a seminal book by him, "Annihilation of Caste" analysed Hinduism's shortcomings in resolving caste-based disparities. India's continuous fight for equality and justice can be traced back to Ambedkar, whose legacy has inspired social justice and human rights groups.

Keywords: Equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, struggle, constitution, caste system, discrimination

INTRODUCTION

On April 14, 1891, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who was also known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, entered this world. He was born in the town of Mhow, which is located in what is now of the state of Madhya Pradesh in India. The challenges he faced as a youngster, which included economic hardship, social marginalisation, and prejudice based on caste, served as a source of inspiration for his tireless pursuit of equality and social justice throughout his whole life. Ambedkar was born into the Mahar caste, which was deemed "untouchable" under India's rigorous caste system. As a result of his birth into this caste, Ambedkar was subjected to a vast array of challenges from an early age. In spite of the fact that he was a bright and curious little boy, he was subjected to humiliation and continuous isolation from his peers in the classroom. In the same way that other children from disadvantaged groups were required to sit on a mat outside of class, Ambedkar was often denied access to water, and he was not permitted to sit with pupils who belonged to higher castes. As a result of his early encounters with prejudice on the basis of caste, he would develop

his perspectives and be inspired to battle against the caste system for a considerable amount of time (Kataria, 2012).

Due to the fact that Ambedkar's father, Ramji Maloji Sakpal, served as a Subedar in the British Indian Army, Ambedkar was able to finish his schooling despite the numerous challenging circumstances he encountered. Young Bhimrao Phule was indoctrinated with a dedication to education and social change by his father, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, who was a social reformer. His father was a rigorous disciplinarian. In contrast to the majority of children who were raised in untouchable villages during that time period, Ambedkar was guaranteed to get a formal education as a result of his pledges. In the year 1907, Ambedkar stood out as he was one of the few individuals belonging to his caste to successfully complete the matriculation exams at Elphinstone High School, which is currently located in Mumbai. As a token of appreciation for his exceptional academic abilities, the Maharaja of Baroda bestowed upon him a scholarship that would allow him to pursue further education. Despite the fact that Ambedkar received a Bachelor of Science degree in economics and politics from Bombay University in 1912, he continued his studies outside of India because he had an insatiable need for knowledge (Bardia, 2009).

Ambedkar went to Columbia University in the United States of America in 1913, and he was able to do so because he was awarded a scholarship by the Baroda State. In 1915, he received his Master of Economics degree, and in 1927, he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree. He was quite accomplished. His life was profoundly altered as a result of his time spent in the United States. After attending Columbia University, where he gained knowledge about democracy, freedom, and equality, Ambedkar became even more committed to tackle the issue of social injustice in India. In his academic circles, he was exposed to well-known philosophers and social thinkers, and the writings of these individuals had an impact on his perspectives about caste and social unrest. Ambedkar continued his scholarly pursuits even after an event like that occurred. After finishing his studies in the United States, he relocated to London in order to pursue his legal education at Gray's Inn and the London School of Economics (LSE at the time). After receiving a DSc in Economics from the London School of Economics, he went on to become a lawyer after being called to the bar. Because of his profound grasp of economics, law, and political philosophy, his efforts would be tremendously affected by the fact that he was a social reformer, a politician, and the architect of the Independence Constitution of India.

Both Ambedkar's early years and his academic career were marked by a number of obstacles, a tenacious determination to succeed, and an unyielding dedication to higher learning. Consequently, as a consequence of these formative experiences, he envisioned a society that was just and equitable, in which the appraisal of individuals would be based on their capabilities rather than their caste or social standing. He has spent his whole life fighting against discrimination based on caste and advocating for the rights of disadvantaged people. His battle was predicated on his own experiences with prejudice as well as his exposure to principles of freedom and justice from throughout the world (Rajasekhariah and Jayaraj, 1991).

Ancient Hindu Society

The ancient Hindu legal system, which aimed to uphold Hindu dharma, wholeheartedly endorsed the four Varnas (Varna meaning colour or class in Sanskrit). According to ancient Hindu texts, there were four varnas (castes) and a system of classification that divided all living things into four groups: the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras. Despite widespread agreement that all people are born equal,

the Hindu legal system has always rejected this principle. The worst thing that could have happened to Hindu culture was the obvious inequality and dehumanisation caused by the hierarchical caste system, which included a system of graduated impairments beginning at birth and humiliating and demeaning jobs that were given to the designated low castes and were followed by them until death. It was impossible to shape a new social order that would ensure social fairness. Social justice was completely undermined by the caste system that was based on Varnashrama dharma. In Hinduism, the caste system and the Varnashrama dharma established the Brahmins as an elite, hereditarily-privileged caste and the commoners as lower-caste "sudras" and "untouchables" relegated to the lowest-status occupations. They were doomed to a poor social position and denied access to educational possibilities. This social framework fostered status disparity and the denial of equal opportunity for everyone as the advantages of the favoured class grew over time while the other classes became increasingly oppressed and despondent. It brought forth a social structure in the nation that was unfair. A large portion of Hindu society is born into a series of progressively worsening disabilities, while a tiny fraction of the population, the Brahmins, enjoy special privileges and a dominant social position. This caste system is at the root of the obvious social inequalities in India, and the pursuit of social justice there aims to eradicate them.

OBJETICVES

1. To analyze Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts in promoting social justice through the eradication of caste-based discrimination and the empowerment of marginalized communities in India.
2. To examine Ambedkar's contributions to political theory, emphasizing his advocacy for constitutional democracy, social equality, and economic reform as foundations for a just society.

Dr b.r. Ambedkar's struggle for social justice

According to Ambedkar, his ancestors belonged to the Mahar caste. There was a discriminatory attitude towards the Mahars in society due to the fact that they were considered untouchables and had a lower socioeconomic standing. In addition to the fact that males in this society detested one another, caste Hindus also shunned the downtrodden and the "Harijans," which is a term that Mohandas Gandhi popularised to describe the Dalits, who were originally considered to be untouchables. In spite of the fact that both sides had a strong desire to communicate with one another, they chose to ignore one another and go with their own methods, residences, wells, and temples. It was strange that they continued to communicate with one another. individuals who were in lower social classes lacked the courage to confront individuals who were in better social classes, to raise their heads, and to initiate talks with them. Temples did not allow them to enter, just as schools did not allow them to enter. This destructive tradition was conferred onto people as a result of social stratification and the caste system. The culture in which Ambedkar was born and reared was similar to this one. In spite of this, he persevered through difficulties to get a bachelor's degree, and he joined politics without delay in order to fight for the rights of persecuted people and to fight against social inequality. The issues of social equality and justice were ones that he fought for with all his might. His tolerance for injustice was nil, and he had no interest in boosting his own rank or ego. He had zero tolerance for injustice. When it came to combating social injustice and inequality, he was unwavering in his resistance to the cause. The redemption of people, the betterment of the human situation, and the transformation of both individuals and society were all important to him, and he worked tirelessly towards these goals. It was remarkable how he behaved like a social liberal. It was his intention to establish a new social order that was

based on brotherhood, equality, and justice. His acts were centred on the values of justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity. These values were the foundation of his actions (Mallik, 2011).

The memory of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was a fervent supporter of social justice, will be preserved in the annals of India. In addition to being the principal architect of the Constitution, he was a staunch advocate for social justice and the plight of those who were suffering from oppression. He spent his whole life to assisting the members of Indian society who were considered to be untouchables and were subjected to oppression. Dr. Ambedkar's only weapon in such a society was his thinking and intelligence, both of which he used to great advantage. The power of his thoughts and decrees was the foundation around which he built his religion. In spite of the fact that he is born free, "Man is in chains everywhere," as the French revolutionary Rousseau phrased it. It was in the year 1789 that his revolutionary three words, liberty, fraternity, and equality, brought France to its knees. Ambedkar was profoundly influenced by Rousseau's ideals, and as a result, he made the decision to fight for justice that is founded on equality. Before Dr. B.R. Ambedkar advocated for political equality, he worked to ensure that those who were oppressed had a fair standing in society by fostering economic and social equality prior to his advocacy for political equality. As a consequence of this, he placed a higher amount of importance on social justice than he did on political justice. He concentrated his efforts on reducing inequities that were brought about by the caste system of the nation via the promotion of equal opportunity and individual liberty.

According to P.B. Gajendragadkar, India's former chief judge, Ambedkar was the Manu of the 20th century. Gajendragadkar said that "Unlike old Manu, this new Manu favoured human equality and social justice" (Pact, n.d.). A "Social Justice Year" was declared by the government of India to be the period of time beginning on April 14, 1990 and ending on April 14, 1991. This was done in order to honour the life and work of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was an advocate for those who were oppressed. The result of this was the commencement of a number of national projects with the objective of enhancing the quality of life for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who have been historically marginalised in the country. Students from SC/ST groups are eligible to receive scholarships and stipends throughout their academic careers. There will be no prices charged for the provision of stationery, books, and other teaching materials. Additionally, grants have been used to secure funding for the building of schools and hostels. In addition, facilities have been made available in accordance with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The distribution of potable water is being given first priority, and a number of housing initiatives, such as the Indira Awas Yojana, have been initiated in order to allow SCs and STs the opportunity to establish micro habitats and dwelling units for themselves. Individuals get assistance in establishing poultry and dairy enterprises, both of which are examples of self-employment. Specifically for the aim of assisting members of the SC/ST community in successfully gaining access to services, training and coaching institutions have been established for the goal of providing assistance. There are specific recruiting procedures that have been developed in order to fill the seats that have been designated for members of certain classes. As a result of the limited number of applicants who met the qualifications, the government issued an order to postpone the process of filling the posts until the graduates of the aforementioned courses were ready.

The constitution of free India ensures that all people of India are treated equally in terms of their political and social standing. While at the same time, the liberty to openly express one's religious views, spiritual activities, and other spiritual pursuits. In the perspective of those who draughted the Constitution, social

justice was more important than economic and political equality. A great deal of importance was placed on the concept of personal liberty in conjunction with equal opportunity. The 'Kaka Kalelkar Commission' was constituted on January 29, 1953, in compliance with section 340 of the Constitution. This was done in accordance with the Constitution. We took a clause from the British Constitution that specifies that the legislative is responsible to the executive branch for its activities. This provision was taken from the British Constitution. Making use of religious freedom and equality as a source of revenue. Those who discriminate against others on the basis of their gender, race, national origin, or language are no longer tolerated.

The mere mention of B.R. Ambedkar's name today gives rise to the concept of justice. His name stands tall and high among the builders of contemporary India who are considered to be among the most renowned and prominent. The caste-ridden Hindu culture, which was a stronghold of conservatism, reaction, inequality, injustice, and exploitation, had a deep influence on his sociopolitical worldview, which lays a great focus on justice. His upbringing, life experiences, and persistent battle against the caste-ridden Hindu society were all factors that contributed to this.

Ambedkar's Concept on democracy

In Western Europe, parliamentary democracies are rather widespread; nevertheless, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had a totally different conception of what democracy ought to look like. However, parliamentary democracies such as Russia, Italy, and Germany stressed political rights without addressing these problems, while Ambedkar believed that economic and social inequality were essential components of a real democracy. Parliamentary democracy, which he critiqued, did not take into account economic disparity and unconstrained freedom of contract, both of which he said led to the abuse of those segments of society who were more vulnerable. As far as Ambedkar is concerned, the development of political democracy is contingent upon the existence of social and economic democracy. He said that the reason why parliamentary democracy was unable to attain true self-governance was because it placed an excessive amount of emphasis on political rights. This, in turn, produced an unequal society in which the ruling class retained power over both the political and social spheres.

According to Ambedkar's political philosophy, democracy is more than just a political system; rather, it is a social framework that is founded on freedom, equality, and fraternity. According to him, real democracy could not exist in India until the socioeconomic basis of the nation was altered to eliminate caste hierarchies. He said that this was the only necessary condition. In his opinion, adult suffrage and written constitutions were not sufficient to guarantee rights; what was required was a social conscience that recognised the value and entitlements of every individual, especially those who were oppressed. In his quest of liberation for the oppressed from their centuries-long constraints, Ambedkar finally joined Buddhism on the basis that, in his opinion, the religion was established on the ideas of equality and social justice. Ambedkar had been a proponent of social reform throughout his whole life.

Ambedkar's Vision of Social justice relating to Women and globalization

It was Dr. Ambedkar's belief that Hindu women might be bound indefinitely by superstitions. The changes that Dr. Ambedkar brought about with the "Hindu code Bill" have been widely followed and approved. His codification of Hindu law on marriage, divorce, and succession legitimised and reinstituted women's dignity. Many people, both within and outside of parliament, were concerned that the Bill may severely harm Hindu

society, and it goes without saying that it was an example of social engineering by legislation. Muslim women are likewise the object of Ambedkar's unbiased attention. "Purdah" "deprives Muslim women of mental and moral nourishment," Ambedkar sharply says in her remarks. Because they are cut off from the outside world, they get engrossed in little household disputes and acquire a limited perspective.

With globalisation, India's economy is becoming more accessible to international corporations in several sectors, including food production, manufacturing, communication, transportation, power generation and distribution, education, and more. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes make up two-thirds of India's population, but the government paid little attention to these crucial human problems—providing a "social security net"—such as full employment opportunities, education, and Medicare—before enacting new economic reform policies. Members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continue to face social and economic disadvantages and disabilities in modern times. Reservations in services and positions were established to give constitutional protections.

Such a compromise does not exist in the commercial sector. As a result, the government should make a policy choice to ensure that members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have access to social security and business opportunities in the "private sector" as well. Reservations are not permanent, thus they will be eliminated at some point. If the scheduled castes do not get up and get ready to meet the Darwinian socioeconomic order of tomorrow, they will face a lot of problems in the next decade, when the nation will be hit hard by economic downturn, job losses, and food shortages. Finally, the Scheduled Castes are still suffering from extreme poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and illiteracy, proving that reservation has not helped improve their living conditions or alleviate their poverty. Only about half of the Scheduled Castes population has regular jobs, leaving the other 99.5% to fend for themselves. Even after 60 years of independence, social justice remains out of reach for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and globalisation isn't helping matters.

Ambedkar's Vision for Social and Economic Reforms

In his pursuit of social and economic reforms, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had as his primary objective the establishment of a society that was both inclusive and egalitarian, free from economic exploitation and prejudice based on caste. According to Ambedkar, in order for there to be real democracy, there must also be economic and social equality in addition to political liberty. It was his belief that the caste system, and untouchability in particular, was a significant barrier to India's prosperity, and he endeavoured to eliminate it via the implementation of his social reforms. Ambedkar's campaign for the equal rights, dignity, and opportunities of disadvantaged people resulted in the enactment of Articles 14, 15, and 17, which guarantee equality before the law, ban discrimination, and eradicate untouchability. These articles were published as a direct result of Ambedkar's efforts (Mishra, 1991).

Ambedkar was a vocal advocate for initiatives that encouraged the empowerment of disadvantaged populations and the establishment of a more equitable economic structure. It was his contention that genuine liberty required not just economic autonomy but also stability. The reform of land, the nationalisation of essential companies, and the protection of workers via the implementation of labour rights were all components of his program. There was a significant amount of legislation that he dragged out, including legislation that established minimum salaries, limited working hours, and guaranteed social security for workers. This illustrates Ambedkar's fundamental view that tackling poverty and unemployment alone

would make political rights inadequate. The fact that economic rights were Ambedkar's primary concern supports this belief (Jadhav, 1991).

In an effort to fight the long-standing social injustice, Ambedkar advocated for affirmative action laws that would offer seats in legislatures, schools, and jobs to members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These policies would also provide equitable employment opportunities. One of the most important aspects of his utopian vision for India's social and economic development was the dream of a caste- and class-blind India, in which every individual has the equal rights to life, liberty, and opportunity. Ambedkar's ideas continue to inspire attempts to redress economic and social disparities in contemporary India, further strengthening his status as a vital figure in the quest of fairness and justice. Ambedkar was born in the United States of America.

CONCLUSION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life and work have had a profound and revolutionary influence on the political landscape of India as well as on the fight for social justice. His unwavering commitment to eliminating discrimination on the basis of caste and ensuring equality for disadvantaged groups opened the way for a society that is more egalitarian and welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Ambedkar, who was a fervent supporter of a democratic society that acknowledges the inherent value of every individual, exerted a great deal of effort to guarantee that social justice, liberty, and equality were included into the Constitution of India, which was the instrument that originally established India. A holistic approach to justice and governance was ensured by his progressive program, which included economic changes and the empowerment of women. His plan also included the empowerment of citizens. Throughout the never-ending struggle for a more equitable and fair India, Ambedkar's legacy continues to inspire and guide movements for equality and offer direction.

REFERENCE

1. Bardia, R. (2009). *Ambedkar: The making of the Indian Constitution*. Pearson Education.
2. Kataria, S. K. (2012). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A study in social democracy*. Deep & Deep Publications.
3. Rajasekhariah, A. M., & Jayaraj, M. (1991). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and social justice in modern India*. Indian Council of Historical Research.
4. Ambedkar, B. R. (1946). *Annihilation of caste*. Thacker & Co., Ltd.
5. Mallik, R. (2011). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Crusader of social justice*. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers & Distributors.
6. Pact. (n.d.). *Dr. Ambedkar and social justice initiatives in India*. Retrieved from.
7. Ambedkar, B. R. (1991). *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 1-17*. Education Department, Government of Maharashtra.
8. Misra, J. P., & Mishra, J. P. (1991). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and The Constitution - Making In India*. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 52, 534–541.
9. Raju, K. H. C. (1991). *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Making of The Constitution: A Case Study of Indian Federalism*. The Indian Journal of Political Science, 52(2), 153–164.
10. Rodrigues, V. (2015). *Ambedkar as a Political Philosopher*. Economic and Political Weekly, 52(15), 101–107.

11. Rokade, S.T. (2014). Dr. B.R Ambedkar's Views against Manusmriti and Towards Empowering Women. Epitome Journal, 8(9), 9-14.
12. Sinha, S. (2015). Ambedkar's Role in the Eradication of Untouchability And Emancipation Of Women. The Indian Journal of Political Science, 76(2), 175–179.
13. Sanjay Prakash Sharma, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar a crusader of social justice, (Jaipur, RBSA Publishers, 2003), p.128.
14. R.G.Ayyanger, Nates on Indian constitution, (Madras,Natesan&co, 1954,)p18
15. B. R. Ambedkar, Annihilation of caste,Thacker and co,Ltd,Bombay,19937,p,79.