



DR. AMBEDKAR'S POLITICAL VIEW AND ITS RELEVANCE IN PRESENT INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

This article analyzes the political philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, emphasizing his vision for social justice and equality and its lasting significance in modern India. This study conducts a comprehensive analysis of Ambedkar's life, influences, and core beliefs, examining how his ideas have influenced India's democratic structure and persist in motivating social reform movements. Ambedkar's ideology, founded on tenets derived from Buddhism, Marxism, and Western political philosophies, confronts caste discrimination, economic disparity, and gender inequity. As the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar incorporated principles of equality, justice, and fundamental rights to safeguard marginalized communities, while his promotion of affirmative action, women's rights, and social inclusion established the foundation for an inclusive democracy. This study evaluates Ambedkar's legacy and its relevance to contemporary social justice movements, highlighting the transformative potential of his philosophy in establishing a just and equitable society. It also examines Ambedkar's political view, vision, contributing to the discourse on the realization of democratic values and providing insights into how his principles can inform India's quest for social justice in the 21st century.

KEYWORDS:

CASTE SYSTEM, INDIAN DEMOCRACY, POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, RELEVANCE, INDIAN POLITICS.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The political philosophy of Ambedkar may aid in renegotiating the predicament of western political theory in particular and leading the fights of the masses in general. People can observe Ambedkar's association with the grand political streams such as liberal, radical or conservative through his writings. At the same time, he distinguishes himself with these three dominant political traditions. Ambedkar's philosophy is fundamentally ethical and religious. According to him, the social precedes the political. Social morality is main focus to his political philosophy. He is neither a violent individualist nor a traditional communitarian. His ideas of democracy internalises the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity in their true spirit. Though there are many attempts but one may find difficulty in locating him in dominant political traditions. Often this may lead to misinterpretation of the essence of Ambedkar. Ambedkar's political thought stresses a new language to understand the intricacy of his opinions. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was perhaps the first Indian political thinker who realized the inapplicability of the Western pattern of democracy to India.

The importance of Ambedkar's political philosophy resides in its applicability to matters of social justice and equality. In a period characterized by repressive social conventions, his perspective offered a revolutionary re-evaluation of Indian society, emphasizing liberty, fraternity, and equality as fundamental principles vital for nation-building (Rodrigues, 2024). In contrast to numerous contemporaries, Ambedkar perceived social reform as

intrinsically linked to political freedom, contending that political independence devoid of social equality would fail to deliver genuine liberation to India's most marginalized communities. His critique of the caste system was both philosophical and pragmatic, acknowledging it as a framework that perpetuated injustice and impeded India's advancement as a democratic nation (Shah, 2019).

1.1 BIRTH AND EDUCATION:

Bhim Rao was born on 14 April 1891 in an untouchable 'Mahar' family at Mhow, near Indore in the present Madhya Pradesh. He was the fourteenth child of Ramji Sakpal and Bhimbai. Ramji Sakpal (1848-1913) was a head master in the Military School in the rank of subedar- major. Bhimbai (1854- 96) belonged to a well to do family of Murbadkars who were also employed in the British army. Bhimrao's family hailed originally from the Ambavade village located in the Ratnagiri District of the present Maharashtra. His official name in the school register was Bhima Rao Ambavadekar. There was a Brahmin teacher in his school with the surname Ambedkar, who somehow had a soft corner for the boy. It was the kindness of this teacher which made him ultimately adopt Ambedkar as his surname. Ambedkar got married to Ramabai, a nine years old girl, at the age of fourteen. He passed matriculation in 1907. With the help of a scholarship offered by Maharaja Syajirao Gaekwad of Baroda, he completed the B.A. degree in 1912. His higher education was in the West. There also his studies were financed by the Maharaja, on an agreement to serve in the Baroda state after completing the studies. He took his MA degree in 1915 and Ph.D.

degree in 1916 from the renowned Columbia University, New York. After successful completion of his studies at the Columbia University he left New York for London and entered the Gray's Inn for doing Bar-at-Law and simultaneously enrolled himself in the London School of Economic and Political Science. But, when he was half the way through his studies the Maharaja of Baroda called him back, as the period of scholarship granted to him was over. Back in India he assumed the office of the Military Secretary to the Maharaja. But due to the unbearable humiliation he had to suffer at the hands of caste-Hindus he left Baroda state. For a shortwhile he worked as a professor of political economy at the Sydenham College, Bombay. He resigned from this post to resume his economic and legal studies in London. This time the Maharaja of Kohlapur rendered him financial assistance. Before leaving for London he had given evidence before the South borough Commission on franchise; and had advocated separate electorate for the untouchables. In 1921 he got his M.Sc. for his thesis "Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India" He obtained the D.S.C. (Econ) degree in 1922 from the London University for the thesis. "The Problem of the Rupee: It's Origin and its Solution". Taking his Bar-at-Law degree from the Gray's Inn he went to Germany and joined the famous University of Bonn for a higher course of studies in economics. But he could not complete his studies due to shortage of funds.

2. OBJECTIVES:

1. To know Dr. Ambedkar's Political View.
2. To highlight his role against casteism and for human dignity in India.
3. To assess his Contribution and Relevance in Present India.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Methodology The present study on „A study of the contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Modern India“ is based on historical method. This research is based on a primary and secondary sources data that are available. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's publications, What Congress and Gandhi have done to untouchables (1945), Federation versus Freedom (1939), The problem of Rupee: Its origin and its solution (1925), Annihilation of Caste (1936), Castes in India: Their Genesis, Mechanism and Development (1918), Who were the Shudras (1946), The Untouchables: Who were they and why they became Untouchables (1948) and varied collection of secondary sources for the study were also consulted.

4. DISCUSSION:

PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE 1

01. To know Dr. Ambedkar's Political View:

Ambedkar had a long conversation on democratic form of government in his literatures. His conception of democracy is different from the parliamentary democracy of Western Europe. Democracy came with the principles of liberalism.

Parliamentary democracy has all the marks of a popular government, a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Ambedkar considered the problems and articulated displeasure against the parliamentary democracy in nations like Italy, Germany, Russia, Spain and some other European nations in proposing the parliamentary democracy in India. Ambedkar explored grounds for the let-down of parliamentary democracy that parliamentary democracy gives no free hand to repression and that is why it became a disgraced institution in the countries such as Italy, Spain and Germany which readily welcomed dictatorships (Roudrigues, Valerian, 2002).

The nations that were opposing dictatorship and vowed to democracy to find their discontent with democracy. First, parliamentary democracy began with equality of political rights in the form of equal suffrage. Some countries have parliamentary democracy that has not accepted adult suffrage. It has progressed by growing the notion of equality of political rights to equality of social and economic opportunity. It has documented that companies, which are anti-social in purpose, cannot hold the state at bay. With all this, 'the reason for dissatisfaction is due to the understanding that it has unsuccessful to assure to the people for the right to liberty, properties or the chase of pleasure. The causes for this failure may be found either in incorrect system or wrong organization or in both. He expounded this point by indicating the fault with both wrong ideologies and bad organization in following the ideals of democracy. The idea of freedom of contract is one of the liable factors for parliamentary democracy in terms of ideology. Parliamentary democracy took no notice of economic inequalities and did not care to scrutinize the result of freedom of contract on the parties to the contract, in spite of the fact that they were unequal in negotiating power. It did not mind if the freedom of contract gave the strong opportunity to deceive the weak. The result is that parliamentary democracy in standing out as a protagonist of liberty has continuously added to economic crimes towards the poor, subjugated and dispossessed class (Roudrigues, Valerian, 2002).

The second mistaken philosophy which has vitiated parliamentary democracy is the failure to realize that political democracy cannot thrive where there is no social and economic democracy (Roudrigues, Valerian, 2002). He exemplified this point by comparing the failure of parliamentary democracy in the countries of Italy, Germany and Russia with England and USA. He sensed that there was a greater degree of economic and social democracy in the latter countries than existed in the former. Social and economic democracy is major factors of a political democracy. Parliamentary democracy developed a desire for liberty. It never made even sleepy acquaintance with equality. It failed to realize the significance of equality and did not even strike a balance between liberty and equality. All political societies are categorized into two classes: The rulers and the ruled. This is almost stratified that leaders are always drawn from the ruling class and the class that is ruled never become the

ruling class. This happens because generally people do not see that they govern themselves. They are gratified to establish a government and leave it to govern them. This clarifies why parliamentary democracy has never been a government of the people or by the people and why it has been in reality a government of the hereditary subject class by a hereditary ruling class. It is this, a vicious organization of political life which had made parliamentary democracy such a dismal failure (Roudrigues, Valerian, 2002).

It is mistaken to believe that democracy and self-government automatically became realities of life. In fact, the existing governing class is inconsistent with democracy and self-government and made all its efforts to retain its power to govern. Ambedkar realized that self-government and democracy become unsuccessful when the constitution based on adult suffrage comes into existence but when the governing class loses its power to capture the power to govern. In some countries, the submissive classes may succeed in overthrowing the governing class from the seat of authority with just by adult suffrage. In some other countries, the governing class may be so deeply rooted that the submissive classes will need other protections besides adult suffrage to achieve the same end. Ambedkar blamed the western writers that they were insincere and have not displayed the accurate view of democracy. They casually touched the constitutional morality, adult suffrage and frequent elections as the be-all and end-all of democracy. Ambedkar projected a written constitution for an effective democracy. The conducts of constitutional morality may be essential for the maintenance of a constitutional form of government and he puts more emphasis on the moral society and its customs than the written legal law in governing its people. He invested on social morality for effective working of the democratic form of government. He stated that while devising the constitution, the principle aim of the constitution must be to remove the governing class from its position and to prevent it from remaining as a governing class forever.

PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE 2

02. To highlight his role against casteism and for human dignity in India:

Ambedkar's political dogmas are still relevant to not only to the politics of India but also to politics in South Asia in general. Presently, South Asian countries are facing deep crises, unable to develop political and social institutions to guarantee stability to their societies primarily because of oppressive and social political systems from centuries that were their heritage due to the caste system. The caste system essentially was a system of domination by a small group, called Brahmins, who developed most sophisticated forms of cunning into the social control systems of their time in a way that even for centuries they could maintain their dominance. The damage that was done in the process of repression that accompanied the creation and the maintenance of the caste system have become the difficulties to the development of the intelligence, the

creativity and the capacity of all the people to deal with contemporary problems. Their past holds them in their slavery. The bonds are so deep-seated into the nervous systems that generation after generation people are reproduced with attitudes that prevent them from realizing the capacity for freedom and capacity for deeper social communion in each other in their social situation. Deep divisiveness inbuilt into the South Asian culture was created by these centuries of understated of social control. Methods of control were formulated as rules of religion and rituals to which the individual life was so deeply tied up. The idea of the individual freedom is so unknown to this cultural heritage. The intricate mechanism that catches people emotionally and psychologically by various kinds of mythical beliefs got so entrenched in the minds of all due to this past. In 1943, Dr. Ambedkar argued that, "A democratic form of Government presupposes a democratic form of society. The formal framework of democracy is of no value and would indeed be a misfit if there was no social democracy". He further highlighted, "The political never realized that democracy was not a form of Government: it was essentially a form of society". He was highly anxious of the Dalits' fortune in the independent India. For, he could evidently see that most political structure of his time were preparing for a democratic form of government, without considering the varna/caste organisation of the Indian society. That is why, he was adamant ongoing thorough social reform movements along radical lines, of which, most political conflicts were averse to. He also observed that none of the political organisation was prepared to interfere in the internal affairs of the society. While referring to the experiences of other societies, he had warned, "As experience proves, rights are protected not by law but by the social and moral conscience of society. If social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognise the rights which law chooses to enact, rights will be safe and secure. But if the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no Parliament, no Judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word". B.R. Ambedkar also identified the cause of the retardation of the Indian creativeness, which is also the source of the obstruction of the attitudes of people of other South Asian countries. He saw that by way of mental exercises this bondage cannot be broken. Efforts must be done to break the social linkages which had tied up the minds of the people over centuries. To this he gave and for the understanding of this processes he devoted his time. And his way of understanding was not by reading into the text of the past but into the lives of the ordinary people of India. In India, people are living under poverty line. That was the evidence to discover the methods by which people lives are destroyed by this terrible heritage. Jawaharlal Nehru in the Discovery of India attempted to talk about the splendours of India in the past. Ambedkar made efforts to demonstrate how the brilliance was lost and how the bondage of the Indian minds and the Indian spirit and as a result the Indian way of life was come to what it is today. It is this innovation that has the capacity and the liberating

effect that not only the population but the entire country is in need of this to face the challenges of the modern times. Even though Ambedkar remained detached from the political program and activities of the National Congress, yet he cannot be named as portage of the British domination. He courageously criticized the shortcomings of the British Government. He indicated that the British Government supported the cause of Depressed Classes only out of hidden political motives and gave excessive weightage to the Hindu traditionalists. Ambedkar acknowledged and declared that the uplift of the Depressed Classes was ultimate of his life. He did not show any enthusiasm to earn the reputation of a nationalist leader. Therefore, he daringly and frankly expressed his outlooks for the cause of Depressed Classes and squabbled with Congress and even Mahatma Gandhi. In September 1932, when Mahatma Gandhi announced his decision to fast unto death, remonstrating against the provision of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes in the British Prime Minister's Communal Award, and when practically the whole nation supported Gandhi's attitude, Ambedkar disparaged Gandhi and entitled his fast "a political stunt". Gandhi took Ambedkar's views seriously and finally agreed to reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes in joint electorates, which was embodied in the Poona Pact.

Ambedkar was a social innovatory: He attempted to generate selfconsciousness and self-respect among the Depressed Classes. He recommended them to be impressive personality instead of remaining as innocent person. His aim was to eradicate social differences, based on caste and Varna, and establishing a social order, based on liberty, equality and fraternity. At the fag-end of his life, he with his followers encompassed Buddhism, as he considered Buddhism, to be a humanitarian religion, based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Ambedkar operated outside the conventional of Congress politics and also disapproved the Congress activities. He was supposed by many to be a separatist and pro-British. But all along the remained a patriot. He stated that patriotism was not the domination of Congress and that one could be patriotic without becoming a Congressman. He considered the uplift of the backward class of the society to be more important than mere political liberation of the nation. Political freedom was worthless without the promotion of the backward sections of the society. Mahatma Gandhi also held analogous views as he thought of the concept of Swaraj in terms of the meanest of the citizens. Even though Ambedkar had wrangled with Congress and Gandhi on some basic issues, on the evening before of independence, he accepted the invitation of the Congress to join the Union Government and extended his role in the building of the nation. As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, he played the vital role in developing a new constitution. He took all care to preserve the liberal ideas and ideals of the National Congress in the Constitution. 9 Usually Ambedkar is popular as the father of Indian Constitution. Dr. K.V.Rao has labelled him as the mother of the Constitution as he gave constitutional shape to the

ideas of Congress rather than his own. He held the portfolio of Law in Jawaharlal Nehru's first Cabinet. Because of his differences with the Congress and Prime Minister Nehru, he resigned from the Union Government. Ambedkar is considered as the great protagonist of reservation of seats in legislature and posts in Government. But in his final stage of life, when he accepted the principles of Buddhism with his followers, he counselled the Scheduled Castes to stand alone instead of depending on supports. Ambedkar is an unusual personality in the national life of India. He was an economist, a jurist, a social revolutionary, a constitution-maker, an able parliamentarian, an administrator, and above all a constructive statesman of extraordinary competence. Ambedkar was knowledgeable in history and the political theories which have been produced in the process of scuffles for democracy. He was also intensely aware of the history of minority problems in the world. He assumed that if a minority problem is not properly resolved, global populace can be destroyed in conflicts which not only extinguish the minorities but entirety of society. Ambedkar indicated that though the Caste Hindu Congressmen accepted a radical stand in politics, in social matters, they were traditionalists and supported social dissimilarity. Ambedkar philosophies must be studied by the younger generations who are finding solutions to the kinds of problems that they have no solution. The easy solutions many have sought but have not worked. There is a complexity that needs to be explored in order to be able to explore all the possibilities of getting over these severe problems. In the writings of Ambedkar, there are great understandings that are yet to be explored and in that investigation, the real brilliances of the past of the sub-continent could remerge. Pseudo respect for Buddhism today was challenged by Ambedkar who himself became a Buddhist by trying to revive the actual history of Buddhism in India. The annihilation of Buddhism in India was a result of the caste struggles in India and in that fight the certainties that the Brahmins had developed to get triumph and to win back their supremacy. These issues were also constantly exposed by Ambedkar.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar is the supreme political leader:

There is no doubt, Baba Saheb Ambedkar is the supreme political leader in modern South Asian history, with regard to his understanding of the linkage between social controls exercised by religion and its influence in the contemporary history. While Mahatma Gandhi viewed the meaning of 10 freedoms in terms of getting rid of the colonial power and passing the power to local elites, Ambedkar visualized freedom of Indians from the perspective of resolving cultural inhabited bondage created by the caste system. He saw centuries old practices in which social control of the masses has been done mainly by the use of language, rituals and 'ethical codes' reinforcing the caste supremacy over the masses. Ambedkar also observed moments of liberation in Indian history. That was the way he saw Buddhism. He called Buddha his maharishi. He said that he had not learned principles of democracy from Western

philosophers but from his guru, Gautama Buddha. It is well analysed that B.R. Ambedkar recognized the cause of the obstruction of the Indian creativity, which is also the source of the retardation of the mind-sets of people of other South Asian countries. Ambedkar was one of the inventors of social justice in India. It was Ambedkar who provided new dimensions to the concept of justice. People consider him as the 'Champion of Social justice. He was himself a victim of social injustice, faced its difficulties and he had not tolerated the injustice, but bravely fought against them. Ambedkar had a liberal concept of justice. Like Gandhi, for Ambedkar, justice is the synonym of liberty, equality and fraternity.' In this sense, the core value of Ambedkar concept of justice is human equality, equal distribution of the welfare materials and discrimination less society. Ambedkar asserted that the spirit of social justice gives a significant place to mutual understanding and admiration. He accomplished giant goal of his life due to his strength of character which displayed his individual personality. As a statesman, scholar, crusader of browbeaten and above all a spiritual guide, Ambedkar has good impression on the Indian History. His contribution to uplift the browbeaten masses made him an unusual figure among the dejected classes. He had made decent image in the heart and mind of the millions of the suffering people. They now look at him as remarkable soul whose memory will even guide the nation on the path of social justice, liberty and equality. Thus, Ambedkarism is of great significance to Indian society. Presently, people are motivated by reading his biography to achieve the goal of social justice, removal of untouchability, in establishing equality and freedom and true democracy. Democratic socialism is the major work of his political thought and constitutionalism is the only way to achieve it. Conclusion To summarize, B.R. Ambedkar was a demonstrative figure of Indian Politics in the Gandhian period. Ambedkar has emerged as a chief political philosopher with the rise of the dalit movement in modern times. There are 11 several attempts to understand Ambedkar and his philosophy. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief draftsman of Indian Constitution, emerged at the moment in British rule. In whole life Ambedkar worked outside the mainstream of national politics. He worked for the Depressed Classes' uplift within the political and constitutional framework of the imperialist period. He realized that being socially treated as an untouchable, he could not get a status of equality and dignity within the Congress politics which was dominated by Caste Hindu politicians.

PERTAINING TO OBJECTIVE 3

03. To assess his Contribution and Relevance in Present India:

Today we are the Indians are proud of our constitution proud of our democracy for which credit can be attributed among others to Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as he was architect of our constitutions. He observed democracy is a form of government by which revolutionary changes are brought about the economic and social life of peoples without bloodshed. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was of firm

belief that that two basic deficiencies in the Indian Society i.e the complete absence of equality and deficiency in recognition of the principle of fraternity shall be biggest hindrance in achieving the Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity for unity and integrity of the Indian Union. So he warned in Constituent Assembly its self, "On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into the life of contradictions. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote & one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reasons of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live the life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we shall be putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up." In the backdrop of Naxalites movements, Kashmir problem and other unrest that is increasing each passing day in India, we can well imagine the relevance of the above remarks of this great intellectual Giant. I conclude with the remarks that while deliberating Ambedkar & his phenomenon we must try to put a realistic and rationalistic view of the Principles and Thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar to the masses. We also must endeavor to carry forward Ambedkarism to the generation next by adopting ways and means for the same. Ambedkarite methods has to be applied to present day conditions to give political power in the hands of majority, that shall be annihilating the Caste by virtue of socio-educational-economic upliftment of the majority. So let us dedicate and devote 21st century to this great intellectual Giant for achievement of Liberty! Equality!! Fraternity!!! For long lasting peace and prosperity for mankind.

5. CONCLUSION:

Babasaheb is the individual, who with his efforts had build India in her early years. They fought for the independence of India and then strived to build India of their dreams. It is only regrettable that the press in the past as well as the contemporary has projected Ambedkar mainly as a great social rebel and a bitter critic of the Hindu religion. Critics of Dr. Ambedkar have ignored his basic humanistic instincts and strong humanitarian convictions behind his every act or speech throughout his life. Thus we conclude Dr. Ambedkar was one of the foremost makers of Modern India. This article seeks to analyze Ambedkar's political philosophy, investigating the relevance of his concepts of justice, equality, and human rights in contemporary society. The article establishes a contextual foundation by analyzing the socio-political landscape of early 20th century India, focusing on the entrenched caste system and its influence on Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar's early experiences, encompassing his education in India and overseas, significantly influenced his comprehension of social inequality and his dedication to fostering a more

just society. His distinctive viewpoint, shaped by Buddhist doctrines, Marxist concepts, and Western political theories, constituted the foundation of his political ideology and advocacy. Further I have discussed the philosophical foundations of Ambedkar's thought, investigating the fundamental concepts that informed his vision for a just society. Ambedkar's concepts of justice, equality, and fraternity hold particular importance in the Indian context, as they directly contested the hierarchical frameworks upheld by traditional Hindu orthodoxy. His incisive critique of Hinduism's caste-based discrimination demonstrated his dedication to transforming society in accordance with social equality and human rights.

Ambedkar's political philosophy and contributions to Indian democracy remain profoundly relevant in contemporary society. His lifelong commitment to social justice, equality, and the eradication of caste-based discrimination laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and equitable India. Ambedkar's experiences with systemic oppression shaped his understanding of the interconnectedness of political freedom and social reform, emphasizing that true liberation cannot be achieved without addressing the deep-rooted inequalities perpetuated by the caste system. His advocacy for fundamental rights, gender equality, and affirmative action in the Indian Constitution reflects his vision of a society where every individual, regardless of caste or gender, has the opportunity to thrive with dignity and respect.

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