



Relevance of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Concept of Social Justice and Equality in the Present Scenario

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Abstract : *The concept of social justice, like law, changes. It evolves itself into progressively new patterns and expands its frontiers and assumes new dimensions. Social justice has significance in the context of Indian society which is divided into Castes and Communities and they create walls and barriers of exclusiveness on the basis of superiority and inferiority such inequalities pose serious threat to Indian democracy. The concept of social justice takes within its sweep the objective of removing inequalities and affording equal opportunities to all citizens in social, economic and political affairs. Dr B. R. Ambedkar is also one of the proponents of social justice in modern India. According to Ambedkar, the term "social justice" is based upon equality, liberty and fraternity of all human beings. The aim of social justice is to remove all kinds of inequalities based upon Caste, race, sex, power, Position, and wealth. The social justice brings equal distribution of the social, political and economical resources of the community. Social justice is the spirit and vision of the Indian Constitution. It is the duty of the state to secure a social order in which the legal system of the nation promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and, in particular, ensures that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities. This paper makes an attempt to explore Ambedkar's ideas on social justice. Thereafter, it focuses on Ambedkar's struggles and ideas on social justice and equality in the Indian context and it finally explores the relevance of his mission for social justice in the present scenario..*

Keywords: *Equality, Liberty, Fraternity, Social justice, Struggle, Constitution, Caste system, Discrimination*

Introduction: Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar is one of the greatest figures of modern India who liberated a vast section of the Indian people from the debased, dehumanized, irrevocable condition of divine slavery. That is why; he was called, with devotional fondness, *Babasaheb*, the father by the destitute who goes resurrected into humanity. The Dalitbahujans, pay homage and respect, adore and worship their messiah, Babasaheb. Like the Buddha, he never made any compromise with injustice,

never cared for prestige and self-aggrandizement. He was an uncompromising rebel against social injustice and inequality. He worked relentlessly for the regeneration of humanity, for the well-being of mankind, for the transformation of man and society. He was a great social liberal. His vision was to produce a new social order based on the principles of justice, equality and fraternity. Thus, the idea of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity was the crux of his activities. He regarded justice



is the foundation of moral order and justice is related with equality. Justice is to be secured through Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Equity signifies equality. In a nutshell, justice is simply another name for liberty, equality and fraternity so far as Ambedkar was concerned. In Ambedkar's philosophy, liberty and equality had a place, but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality and absolute equality left no room for liberty. To restrain absolute liberty, equality comes in picture. Equality recognizes equal basic rights of people. Positively, his social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words, liberty, equality and fraternity. In Ambedkar's view, Hinduism does not recognise liberty and fraternity. He stated that liberty must be accompanied by certain social conditions. These are social equality, economic security, knowledge, and education. The Brahminical Social Order is thus backed in operation with the sanctions of Manu on education of the Shudras and others outside Chaturvarna. Thus, Ambedkar's foremost concern was equality. However, he showed the way to question these norms defined by the minority upper- caste people and by his forceful power of knowledge, redefined social justice by synthesizing political equality first, and

then by including freedom and liberty with social and economic equality. He believes equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. He therefore had given utmost importance on social democracy. As a champion of right of man, he fought for the cause of the down-trodden, most

exploded and oppressed people who had been suffering from injustice, inequality, deprivation, discrimination and exploitation perpetrated by the Caste Hindus for centuries. In India, social experience says that caste domination is very much prevalent. Social justice to ensure acceptability in a common society to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes living in inaccessible areas, and the people of backward classes along with religious minorities has not yet been dispensed. Most of the nation's SC and ST people are landless poor; they have no land and work for others as agricultural labourers. Hence, their main source of income comes from cultivation, wage labour or some kind of non-farm self employment. Thus, there can be little doubt in imagining their condition when it comes to education, healthcare and housing. Social and economic justice still remains unfulfilled. Likewise, equality in socio- economic life has not yet been achieved.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study about Ambedkar's ideas on social justice.
2. To focus on Ambedkar's struggles and ideas on social justice and equality in the Indian context.
3. To analyze the relevance of his mission for social justice in the present scenario.

Methodology: Secondary sources of data have been used for this study such as Dr.B.R. Ambedkar's writings on social justice and equality. Magazines, journals, subject related websites also used for this purpose.

Need for the study: There is very need to study about the relevance of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's concept of social



justice and equality in present scenario in Indian society.

Concept of Social Justice:

The concept of social justice emerged out of a process of evolution of social norms, order, law and morality. It laid emphasis upon the just action and creates intervention in the society by enforcing the rules and regulations based on the principles in accordance with social equality. The term 'social' as we can understand, is concerned with all human beings within the society and term 'justice' is related with liberty, equality and rights. Thus social justice ensures liberty, equality and maintains their individual rights in the society. In other words, securing the highest possible development of the capabilities of all members of the society may be called social justice. In dealing with the concept of social-justice, it becomes essential to differentiate between the traditional idea of 'justice' and modern idea of 'social justice' intended to establish an egalitarian society. The notion of social justice, however, is relatively recent phenomenon and largely a product of the modern social and economic developments. The traditional idea of justice which is described as often conservative approach, focused on the qualities of 'Just' or virtuous man, while the modern idea of social justice assumes a Just-society. In ancient Greek and Hindu approach, the justice is concerned with functioning of duties, not with notion of rights. Both Plato and Aristotle hold the state to be prior to the individual. Under ancient Indian tradition, Dharma is another name of code of obligations and justice is nothing but virtuous conduct with dharma.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Ideas on Social Justice:

"A Just society is that society in which ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into the creation of a compassionate society".—Dr B.R.Ambedkar .Justice is a very complex concept, as it has a number of sources and dimensions. It has been examined by different people from different viewpoints within the limits of the time, place and circumstances they lived in. Social justice is one of the dimensions of the concept of justice that stands for organization of society based on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. Its greater emphasis is on the principle of equality, both social and economic, and fraternity with a view to create such human social conditions that ensure free and fair development of all human beings. As such, the concept of social justice sometimes require unequal or preferential treatment for certain sections of the population, which have been deprived of certain values for ages, with a view to bring them on an equal footing with other sections of the population. Ambedkar's concept of social justice stands for the liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. He stood for a social system that is based on right relations between man and man in all spheres of his life. As a rationalist and humanist, he did not approve of any type of hypocrisy, injustice and exploitation of man by man in the name of religion. He stood for a religion that is based on universal principles of morality and is applicable to all times, to all countries and to all races. It must be in accord with reason and must be based on the basic tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. He considered the caste system as the greatest evil of Hindu religion. The varna



system according to him is the root cause of all inequality and is also the parent of the caste system and untouchability. Ambedkar stood for a social system in which man's status is based on his merit and achievements and where no one is noble or untouchable because of his/her birth. He advocated the policy of preferential treatment for the socially oppressed and economically exploited people of the country. The Constitution of India, which was drafted under his chairmanship, contains a number of provisions that enjoins the state to secure to all its citizens, justice, social, economic and political, along with liberty, equality and fraternity. It also contains a number of provisions that guarantee a preferential treatment to the downtrodden people in various sectors. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution declares untouchability as abolished. Ambedkar, in his speech before the Constituent Assembly for the passage of the Constitution, said 'I have completed my work; I wish there should be a sunrise even tomorrow. The new Bharat has got political freedom, but it is yet to raise the sun of social and economic liberty.'

Relevance of Ambedkar's Concept of Social Justice in the Present Scenario:

Dr B.R. Ambedkar's thoughts on social justice were progressive. He did not believe in violence; he considered the press to be a powerful tool for social changes for justice and freedom. He published *Mook Nayak*, *Janata* and *Samata* magazines, but these magazines remained largely unsold, perhaps because of the progressive and unconventional thoughts expressed therein. If there are prohibitions on the social evil of untouchability in the Constitution, then this credit goes to Ambedkar to a great

extent. Ambedkar's greatest achievement was that he made the downtrodden of India feel their separate powerful existence; the credit goes to him that he brought all the downtrodden, untouchable castes under the one name of SCs. If Ambedkar had not pursued special reservation *Contemporary Voice of Dalit* facilities for the SCs/STs in the field of education and government services of the central and states governments, their conditions would have remained as before—laden with sorrow and sufferings. It is the result of Ambedkar's constant efforts that today there are members of parliament (MPs), members of the legislative assembly (MLAs), The Indian Administrative Service (IAS)/The Indian Police Service (IPS), professors and doctors from among these castes. He enshrined the principles of reservation for improvement of SCs/STs to enable them to progress educationally, economically and socially, by providing extra support to them in the form of reservation and concessions to uplift them to the level of the advanced classes. It is clearly seen at present that many legal provisions have been made to give social justice to all classes. In this way, many schemes and programmes have been started for the all-round development of the country and a measure of development has been achieved through it. At the same time, we cannot deny the fact that in the field of social justice, much remains to complain about. Social differences and untouchability have not been removed due to the difficult caste system and the blind faiths that have been continuing for centuries. Every such incident, be it Khairlanji (Vishwanathan, 2010), Bhojpur (Agarwal, 2014), Dharmapuri (Teltumbde, 2012) and now Ahmadnagar and Badaun, is a crude reminder of the



feudal and patriarchal social relations that guard the grip over the resources and the supposed 'honour' of the dominant castes in this society. Today Ambedkar is not with us, but in his free India, social and economic differences have increased manifold. As a result, where on the one hand, there are buildings touching the sky and 5-star hotels are found in the cities, on the other hand, there are dirty drains, places full of mud and there are the huts that speak of a hellish life, even worse than the life of animals. In such a situation, the thoughts of establishing a society based on equality appears only like a dream.

Within the frame work of social, political, economic issues in the contemporary era Ambedkar's perspective and far sighted ideas on Just society is very much relevant, in the sense that every scheme and initiative taken by the government laid stress on the benefits for all which ensures equal distribution of wealth and resources to all the sections of the society. For the instance: Right to Education Act (2009), National Food Security Act (2013), Pradhan Mantri *Jan Dhan Yojana* (PMJDY), 2014 Demonetisation of thousand and five hundred rupee notes on 08-11-2016 etc. Apart from this, the initiatives taken by the International organisations such as Millennium Development Goals, United Nations, Nongovernmental organisations in the world and UNICEF, enables people to live with dignity, taken measures to eradicate poverty and hunger as well as improvements in health, education, living conditions, environmental sustainability and gender equality

Conclusion:

Though there is a remarkable progress in the economy, science and technology, infrastructure development but the gap between the rich and poor is widening day by day. The socially excluded sections of the poor are systematically left behind from their countries' progress. Their excluded status is the product of multiple and intersecting inequalities. Though various initiatives have been taken by the government to achieve the target even though some of the targets are far from to achieve and still comprehensive programmes and policies are required to achieve these targets. The constitution should be interpreted in such a manner to make it a living document in order to fulfill the aspirations of the people. The judiciary has played a great role in updating the constitution through its positive interpretation. It is the collective effort of all the organs of government which lead the social justice to all the citizens. The need of hour is to ensure the proper and balanced implementation of policies so as to make social justice an effective vehicle of social progress.

Resting on Ambedkar's thoughts, the Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights to all, based on social justice and human dignity. It is observed, however, that Ambedkar's ideas of social justice could not be realized in a proper manner over the years. As such, his concept of justice will have to be propagated by institutions through civil society. Ambedkar was concerned about the overall development of the vulnerable sections of the Indian society and he chose to demolish existing caste discrimination by enacting the Constitution. Therefore, Ambedkar's ideas of social justice remain relevant in contemporary Indian society in



promoting constitutional and legal methods for upholding the rights and dignity of the vulnerable sections.

So far as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar vision of 'Social Justice' is concerned, he is real earnest, sacrificed his whole life for the amelioration of the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the society. He strongly fought against the prevalent Caste system and Gender discrimination in the society and ventured to secure social justice to these sections of the society. His struggle for social justice could be visualized in the ideals and philosophy of the Indian Constitution. Thus the Constitutional ethos of the social revolution running through the 'preamble', fundamental Rights and the directive principles expressly emphasize the establishment of an egalitarian social order and based on human values of justice, Social, economic and political, equality of status and of opportunity and fraternity assuring human dignity. Thus Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar created a social revolution by awaking the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and breaking all social values based on Hindu Social System.

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