

Dr. Ambedkar's View and Its Relevance in Present India

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Abstract:- The freedom of a Country does not usually mean the freedom of the people in that country. The influence and the power of the state may be concentrated in a particular class of people. Before the promulgation of the Indian Constitution, the concept of the status of a particular class of people was based on birth and not on the capabilities and calibre of the people. The very vitals of the Indian social life had been eaten by religious dogmas and society was based on graded inequality.

Dr. Ambedkar was chairman of the drafting committee that was constituted by the Constituent Assembly in 1947 to draft a constitution for the independent India. The definitions of democracy given by Walter Bagehot or Abraham Lincoln were not satisfactory to Dr. Ambedkar. Bagehot defines democracy as “government by discussion” and Lincoln as “A government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” By “democracy” Ambedkar refers to fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people and the acceptance of those changes by the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed. He desired to remove contradiction created by economic and social inequalities. He wanted to establish the principle of one man, one vote, and one vote one value not only in the political life of India but also in social and economic life. He said, “We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy.”

Dr. Ambedkar's whole life is the continuous, unending and courageous struggle he had to make against social injustice, inhuman, unequal treatment. Dr. Ambedkar's was, par excellence, a spokesperson of the ignored community i.e. the workers, small peasants, landless labourers and women. So it is pertinent to raise some question to reflect on Dr. Ambedkar's legacy. Have his projects shaped out as he would have wished? Has India moved in the direction that he thought optimal? Have his inheritors embalmed his ideas in dogma or extended them while confronting new predicaments?

“We are Indians firstly and lastly” is yet to be realized.

I. INTRODUCTION

“A great man is different from an eminent one in that he is ready to be the servant of the society.”– Dr Ambedkar.

The aim of human society must be to enable every person to lead a rich, all around life involving as much the cultivation of the mind as also the satisfaction of basic physical wants. It includes demolition of all social barriers between man and man; . The worth and not birth is the measure of man and must promote equality between man and man. This is the way of life based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was perhaps the first Indian political thinker who realized the inapplicability of the Western pattern of democracy to India.

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His views on state socialism are similar to that of collectivism. Following are the essential features of Dr. Ambedkar's Socialism³:-

- A condemnation of the existing social, political and economic order which creates unjust.
- An advocacy of a new order based on one man, one value, one vote.

- A belief that this ideal is realizable in state socialism and parliamentary democracy.
- The conviction that immorality of established order is traceable to the attitude of Hindus and to corrupt social institution.
- A programme of actions leading to the ideal to be achieved through constitutional means only; and,
- A revolutionary will for establishing social democracy to carry out the programme of social solidarity.

II. AMBEDKAR BEYOND DALIT ICONOGRAPHY: ARCHITECT OF THE MODERN INDIA

Dr Ambedkar indeed falls into the list of great men who have served India since time immemorial. But it's a tragedy that Ambedkar has been reduced to a Dalit icon and is remembered only as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee of India. But Ambedkar's contribution in shaping the modern India is not limited to framing the constitution or championing the rights of Dalits & socio-religious reforms. Therefore, it is necessary to remember his role in the other arenas during the crucial period when modern India was taking shape.

In the pre-independence year of 1936, Dr. Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party (ILP) to champion the cause of workers when even Congress was ambivalent about the issue. His party demanded strong labour laws, remunerative wages, to fix maximum hours of work, leave with pay and a sanitary dwelling at reasonable amount. It advocated an extensive programme for the improvement of educational facility in technical institutes and an end of feudal practices and mindset.

He was instrumental in reducing the factory hours from 14 to 8 hours. He is also credited in framing various laws for welfare of women labours, mention worthy among them are: Women Labour Welfare, Women and Child Labour Protection Act and Maternity benefit for women. Indian Factory Act was also framed under his supervision. Due to his untiring efforts, National Employment Agency (Employment Exchange) came into being. Dr. Ambedkar also enacted the Employees State Insurance (ESI) scheme for providing workers with medical care, compensation for injuries, insurance etc. Dr. Ambedkar was also instrumental in enacting the Coal Mines Safety (Stowing) Amendment Bill for the benefit of the mine workers on January 31st, 1944. On 8th April 1946, he brought the Mica Mines Labor Welfare Fund, which helped the workers with housing, water supply, education, entertainment, and co-operative arrangements. Beside this, he is also credited to introduce various welfare initiatives for workers such as providing them with Dearness Allowance (DA), Leave Benefit to Piece Workers and Labour Welfare Funds. In 1943, he brought the Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill for the compulsory recognition of trade unions. Apart from the above mentioned initiatives, other significant measures taken by him to ensure the welfare of the workers are: Health Insurance

Scheme, Factory Amendment Act, Labour Disputes Act and determination of minimum wages.

III. INDIA'S CURRENCY PROBLEM

Dr. Ambedkar was an economist by training and had written three seminal works on the Indian economy namely: Administration and Finance of the East India Company, The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India and The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution. The institution of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was based on the ideas that Dr. Ambedkar presented to the Hilton Young Commission. Equally important is the fact that he was also the architect of Finance Commission of India, which is among the most important constitutional bodies today (it is appointed every 5 years & defines the financial relation between the center & states).

IV. AGRICULTURE AND LAND REFORMS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had made in-depth study of Indian Agriculture, wrote research articles, organised Seminars and Conferences in order to Solve the problems of agriculture and farmers, also led farmer's movement. His thoughts on agriculture are found in his article "Small Holdings in Indian and their remedies"(1917)and also in "Status and minorities"(1947).He mentioned that holdings of lands by few people is an acute problem of Indian agriculture which has various disadvantages, like difficulties in cultivation and utilization and resources, increasing cost, low productivity, inadequate income and low standard of living. According to Dr. Ambedkar Productivity of agriculture is related to not only with the size of holdings of land but also with other factors such as capital, labour and other inputs. Therefore if capital, or labour etc are not available in adequate quantity and quality, then even a large size land can become unproductive. On the other hand small size land become productive if these resources are available in plenty. With this thought the 'Land Ceiling Act' is passed after Independence. He also mentioned about the slavery and exploitation of Labour bounded under caste system is extremely bad for economical development and fought for its abolition. His other suggestion for solving agriculture problem is collective farming, economic holding of land or equal distribution of land,

Large scale Industrialization, Provision of money, water, seeds and fertilizers by the government, cultivation of waste land by allotting waste land to landless labour, minimum wages to labours, control and regulation of private lenders of loan to farmers.

V. NATIONALISATION OF INDUSTRIES

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar thought that fast development of India is impossible without Industrialization. According to him creating large scale employment produces essential goods for mass consumption. It utilizes raw materials, reduces foreign dependence and increasing security to labour, ultimately leads to the overall economical development of the country. The private sector industries can not make big industries for want of large scale investments. So, government should come forward to start large scale industries. The smaller industries should be kept in private sector. The insurance and transport companies should be nationalized. Rights to strike should be given to labourers. After the independence the industrial policy of the Indian government is in keeping with Dr. Ambedkar's expectations.

VI. DEMOCRATIC STATE SOCIALISM.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has presented a Democratic State Socialism to the constitution committee. The main points of it are

- All basic industries should be owned and run by the state.
- Insurance and agriculture should be nationalized and managed by the state.
- Maintenance of Productive resources by state.
- Just Distribution of Common produce.
- Provision for compensation of land or industry acquisition in the form of bonds.
- The distribution of village and among the families in a village for collective farming.
- No discrimination as landlord, tenants and agriculture labours.
- All agriculture input like capital, seeds fertilizers etc would be provided to collective farming by the government.
- Distribution of agriculture income only after payment of land revenue tax.
- Punishment according to rules who do not follow

VII. FREE ENTERPRISES ECONOMY

Surprising enough Dr. Ambedkar had already suggested free economy, globalization, liberalization and privatization as early as in 1923, Recently Indian government has adopted this policy. In this respect Dr. Ambedkar was a century ahead. He had stressed that the value (Price) of a rupee must be kept stable if the policy of free economy is to be successful.

VIII. POPULATION CONTROL - FAMILY PLANNING

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said that the control of the country's economy is impossible if the population is not controlled. Hence he forcefully argued for population control and family planning in India. Later on in keeping with his views the government of India has adopted family planning as a national policy.

IX. ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT OF INDIAN WOMEN.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to economic development and progress of women is significant. According to him, participation of women in the economic development is impossible without developing their social status and equality. But due to bad economic conditions of women in India, India's economic progress is hampered. So, it is important to improve the economic condition of women and give them equal rights and freedom of occupation.

X. CONCEPT OF HUMAN CAPITAL.

Dr. Ambedkar argued that concept of human capital in India is useless if the poorer and down trodden untouchable dalits are not recognized by other classes as human being with equal social prestige and religious basis. It is therefore impossible to use this human capital in the economic development of India.

XI. THREAT TO AMBEDKARISM

- There are so many NGO's in the name of Babasaheb Ambedkar in India and abroad also. Unfortunately real thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar are not reaching to the masses in desired manner. The NGO's are more interested in minting money from the Government exchequer rather than spreading the real message of Ambedkar.
- The Neo-pseudo rich culture in Dalits who have earned a lot after getting benefits of reservation is also a big threat to the survival of Ambedkarite thoughts. This class within caste in fact could have worked for spread of Ambedkarite thoughts but they are busy enjoying pseudo rich culture and are transferring same to their children. They are not allowing their children to struggle in life, they make things easy for their children. In fact they are not aware of the future implications of this fast emerging phenomenon of neo-pseudo rich culture. They shirk from discussing plight of their caste and their forefathers in front of their children.
- Worshipping Ambedkar as deity (Pseudo-Ambedkarism). Babasaheb Ambedkar himself said that his real death will be on the day people start worshipping him and garlanding his photo/statues. If we make Babasaheb to stand in the lines of Hindu deities it will be contradiction

to the philosophy of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Instead of worshipping, what is needed is that to follow the thoughts of Ambedkar.

- Ambedkarism not being transferred to the next generation. None amongst us even those who consider themselves as true Ambedkarite are telling their children regarding Babasaheb Ambedkar and his struggle for us. If the next generation is not made to understand Ambedkar and the Ambedkarism than Ambedkarism will remain restricted up to library racks only. 7.
- Less takers of social ideology. Commercialization/economic growth in competitive market has made our people to think on those lines only. There are hardly any takers of social ideology. There are hardly any dedicated individuals who can come forward and carry this mission ahead on daily basis.
- Social ideology in isolation. Not linked with religious and spiritual ideology whose takers are much more than social ideology. It has been seen that Religious/spiritual ideology is overshadowing social ideology. This is a pan Indian phenomenon that more and more Dalits are adopting some kind of sprituo-religious philosophy including philosophy of our own saints/revolutionaries. There is no second thought that pure spiritual philosophy weakens the human mind. A weak mind cannot think in terms of social revolution.
- Indian Media, politicians, intellectuals including historians downplayed the role of Babasaheb in shaping modern India. They never kept Dr. Ambedkar in the line of Gandhi, Nehru.

XII. CONCLUSION

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 changed 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.

An erudite scholar and thinker of international repute, “one of the finest flowers of the twentieth century renaissance, “⁴ a valiant fighter for human freedom and dignity, Ambedkar’s life and work shall remain a source of inspiration to man and women all over the world for a long time to come.

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