



## BRIEF STUDY OF THE IDEA OF NATIONALISM BY DR.BR.AMBEDKAR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDIAN LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT

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### **Abstract**

*BR. Ambedkar's concept of nationalism and his understanding of the Indian national movement rarely received relevant academic considerations from liberal or radical scholars and historians in India. In this study, an attempt was made to analyze Ambedkar's vision of nationalism, as well as to assess why he and dalits did not participate directly in the Indian national movement in accordance with congressional guidelines, which should be examined along with the current debate raised by Ambedkar's criticism of Arun Shourie . It is really true that Ambedkar never actively participated in the national movement of India, rather opposed the mainstream national movement, but this approach indirectly contributed significantly, laying the broad social foundations on which the present Indian nation state rests. The Indian national struggle of the first half of this century was not only a struggle to free political power from foreign governments, but also a struggle to lay the foundations of modern India by cleansing society of outdated social institutions, practices, beliefs and attitudes. Ambedkar's struggle was part of the internal struggle of the creating nation, one of divergent and sometimes conflicting currents, all of which helped secure "freedom" from external and internal oppression and enslavement. The absence of Ambedkar's opposition to the mainstream nationalism, the nation's internal consolidation process would not be carried out sufficiently to strengthen and expand the social base of Indian nationalism.*

**Keywords:** *India, Nationalism, Dalits, Ambedkar, Constitution, Minorities, Freedom Movement.*

### **Introduction**

This study, which contains the idea of nationalism and social structure and political system self-educated by Ambedkar, and Ambedkar's vision of this particular problem, which still puts us as critical, will help us discover various dimensions related to contemporary society and its politics. The canvas of Ambedkar's works is huge, but the issues discussed in this study are a modest attempt to reflect the scope of his idea of nationalism in the Indian perspective. Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), the great creator of the Indian constitution and the "symbol of revolt" (as Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India mentioned), was one of the leading builders of modern nations in India. The reactions of the Dalits (untouchables) to the criticism of the role of Ambedkar in the fight for India's freedom and the construction of a national movement led to a rethinking of his idea of nationalism. Ambedkar's thought in general, and nationalism in particular, are not just the ideas or opinions of a great thinker. These are aspects of collective ideology that act as a motor force, fighting other ideologies in a rapidly changing society. Of all modern Indian ideologies, only Ambedkar tried to develop a fully-fledged theory of nationalism by himself and tried to apply it critically in the Indian situation. It is a pity that theoretical reflections and justifications practically did not exist in the nationalist movement in India. One section claimed that India as Hindus is eternal and the Indian people are waking up from the long numbness imposed on them by external enemies, another section treated it as a "nation creation" phase whenever difficulties arose. On the contrary, Ambedkar struggled with this ideology of nineteenth-century Europe, deconstructed it, what is eternal and peripheral in it, and showed how it can be critically applied to the peculiarities of the Indian colonial situation.

### **Objective of the Study**

To understand Baba Sahab contribution of national building, or "nation creation". And also get to know his nationalism is an ideology based on the dedication to love of one's country, whether by birth or choice, which focuses on the attitude of the members of a nation when they care about their national identity and actions that members of a nation take when they seek to achieve some form of political sovereignty.



### **Research Methodology**

The study is basically depending on secondary sources of data literature through descriptive approach. Descriptive method was taken in to the consideration to examine relevant literature deeply, for this study purpose.

### **Indian nationalism is indebted to Ambedkar**

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar has become the most famous Indian leader, thinker and social philosopher of the 21st century. The celebrations marking her 125th birthday last year would have been more widespread than her centennial celebrations. One of the major consumer magazines has even described him as the greatest ruler of modern India. This must be seen as a physical manifestation of the fact that over the years, Ambedkar's ideas have emerged stronger and more relevant to contemporary discourse. Freedom was the zeitgeist of the country before dawn of 1947. Freedom for India was the meta-narrative that bound the country and was bursting with multiple stories at that time. Such a narrative has been prescribed by Congress. It focuses on India's freedom from British colonizers and can be considered the dominant narrative of the time. Other collective ideas, though weaker or marginalized in comparison, were those fed by RSS. This was the idea of national reconstruction - a vision that saw India as a glorious nation from time immemorial and aimed at rejuvenating it by strengthening its socio-cultural institutions.

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar is another powerful narrator of the time. He spoke of India's freedom from social ills such as inequality and untouchability. This may be considered a "subaltern narrative" of Indian nationalism, which examined the rise of oppressed, disadvantaged and marginalized strata who had no involvement in the public life of colonial India. Dr. Ambedkar has become the voice of these 60 million disadvantaged and untouchable people in society. Without emancipation from this segment, the struggle for Indian freedom was considered incomplete. The Indian national struggle during the first half of the twentieth century was not merely a struggle to shield political power from foreign domination, it was also aimed at laying the foundations for a modern India by purging the society of institutions, outdated social beliefs and attitudes. Ambedkar's struggle was part of this internal struggle, one of the divergent and sometimes contradictory currents, all of which contributed to the "freedom" of internal and external oppression and slavery. Without Ambedkar's opposition to traditional nationalism, the process of internal consolidation of the nation would not have gone far enough to strengthen and broaden the social base of Indian nationalism.

Ambedkar developed the idea of nationality and nationalism in his book "Pakistan or the Partition of India". He describes nationality as a "gender consciousness, awareness of the existence of this relationship" and nationalism as "the desire for a separate national existence for those who are related by this relationship". Ambedkar had immense faith in the promising future and evolution of this country. Even when he spoke about getting freedom for India, his ultimate goal was to unite the people. Ambedkar was not against the idea of nationalism, but against the version of Congress which implied the liberation of India from British colonialism, but not from the Brahminical imperialism under which millions of scheduled castes had been under the yoke for hundreds of years. It was Ambedkar's political challenge that forced the Congress to become aware of the national importance of the caste problem and to adopt measures that significantly contributed to strengthening the social base of Indian nationalism.

Early Indian nationalism, by the very nature of its historical development, was a higher class (upper caste) phenomenon reflecting the interests and aspirations of its members. Naturally, when nationalists spoke in terms of national interest, they certainly represented their own (class) interests. The evocation of the "nation" was a necessary ritual to provide the popular support necessary for an essentially partisan cause. This sectarian approach to nationalism could be seen in the writings of none other than Pt. Nehru in his seminal work, *Discovery of India*, "This Mix of Religion and Philosophy, History and Tradition, Custom and Social Structure, which encompassed almost every aspect of Indian life and could be called Brahmanism or Hinduism, has become the symbol of nationalism. It was indeed a national religion. "



### **What Makes a Nation?**

Shabnum Tejani writes that those who are at the forefront of the Indian libertarian movement, namely Congress and Hindu Mahasabha, were so adamant in convincing the British that India was a nation that they never stopped asking who the Indian people were. For Ambedkar, nationality was a "social feeling" that saturated the sense of community and replaced class and caste differences. Ambedkar's nationality was also associated with a deep emotional connection, "longing for not belonging to another group" (Ambedkar 1946: 31). What would be the conditions for such sentiment? A common race, culture and language can form the basis of patriotism, which was particularly Indian ... To exist a nationality, there had to be more than a common race, language or culture. You needed a "spiritual essence", a relationship of kinship. First of all, it required "the will to live as a nation" (Ambedkar 1946: 39).

### **Nationalism vision of Dr BR Ambedkar**

This section analyzes the vision that Ambedkar himself has generated for nationalism. Nationalism is an ideology based on the dedication to love of one's country, whether by birth or choice, which focuses on the attitude of the members of a nation when they care about their national identity and actions that members of a nation take when they seek to achieve some form of political sovereignty. Nationalism, in a broad sense, refers to any set of attitudes, demands, and guidelines for action that give nations and nationality a basic political, moral, and cultural value, and derive from this assigned value special obligations and permissions. . In Ambedkar, nationalism began to oppose internal oppression and external domination. He wanted equality and civil rights for those who have been deprived of them for centuries. Indian society, from Ambedkar's point of view, was a system that left no room for the growth of the sense of equality and fraternity that is essential to a form of democratic government. Many people have been deprived of basic human rights. He wanted constitutional guarantees to protect the oppressed. Ambedkar was of the opinion that Indian society was only a gradation of caste composed of an ascending ladder of reverence and a descending ladder of contempt. Ambedkar's point of view was very transparent with respect to foreign domination. Ambedkar considered that while he understood the need to eliminate some social ills that had horrified the lives of the poor, the British attitude was indifferent to the eradication of some social ills simply because his intervention in the code of social right economic life would provoke resistance. Ambedkar's spirit of nationalism took shape through the struggle against this British regime, although foreign power was the potential force of the country like India. Nationalism in Ambedkar stems from its spirit of dignity for the people and for the country. He had a deep feeling for the poor and untouchable, which led him to fight against the denial of basic human rights. Some congressmen described Ambedkar's attitudes as antanational, but in the true sense he is an expression of humanism and nationalism to which he sincerely devotes himself.

### **Opposition to the National Movement**

The absence of foreign domination was insignificant if it did not include the absence of internal forms of servitude and oppression. S M Gaikwad writes that Ambedkar was not opposed to the Indian liberation movement, but to the national movement led by Congress that did not see the emancipation of planned Castes as an exercise in nation-building. The national movement had to include not only the power to wrest British power, but also the building of a platform for modern India by purging the Indian society of outdated social attitudes and beliefs. The freedom that the nationalists struggled to obtain had very little to offer to the scheduled castes and other oppressed layers of Indian society. The liberation of British rule would not end their servitude and misery. It is therefore important to note that, while the nationalists representing the advanced strata of Indian society struggled to free themselves from British rule, personalities such as Ambedkar, representing the Indian "hilots" and other backward oppressed, were struggling to to regain the "virility" of peoples deprived of their inalienable humanity by the hierarchical system of the most oppressive and degrading social segregation in history, called the Hindu caste system. In addition, Gopal Guru claims that Ambedkar and the Dalits would have joined the national movement if their recognition as an autonomous political identity had been guaranteed. Ambedkar's hesitations were further reinforced by the vague promises of the nationalists about the redistribution of power to the marginalized.



Ambedkar was more skeptical about the narrative of nationalism, which until now reinvented the tradition of freedom, sacrifice, dedication and glory of freedom fighters, especially extreme extremists. But at the same time, this account of nationalism is very vague and abstract on the concrete and therefore questionable question of the unequal distribution of power and prestige of the Dalits and the other working masses ... the nationalists have always railed against the distribution of power between disadvantaged sections of society and have therefore rarely, if ever, had occasion to deplore the lack of power of the Dalits. On the contrary, they opposed such a distribution, of course for motives not as convincing as rational, but for patriotic reasons, which makes sense only for certain selective sections of the struggle for freedom.

With regard to Ambedkar, unless the Indian people get political power and that power is concentrated in the hands of the socially repressed part of Indian society, it would not be possible to completely eliminate all social handicaps, legal and cultural that this section has suffered. He was not only against British imperialism, but also for self-government. As a result, he said: "We must have a government in which the men in power will give their undivided allegiance to the best interests of the country." In Ambedkar's political thought, it is explicitly evident that he has tried to arouse social and social feeling, national conscience against British neutralism, which proved fatal to the social emancipation of peoples. Although nationality and nationalism are two different psychological states of the human mind, there can be no nationalism without the feeling of nationality. For Ambedkar, nationality is "a sense of gender consciousness that binds the people who have possessed it, so strongly that it outweighs all the differences resulting from economic conflict or social gradations, and on the other hand separate them. of those who are not their kind. It's a feeling of not belonging to another group. It is the essence of what is called a nationality and a national feeling. He considered that nationality can be transformed into nationalism when two conditions are met:

1. There must arise the desire to live as a nation and nationalism is a dynamic expression of that desire.
2. There must be a territory which nationalism could occupy and make it a state as well.

### **Linguistic Federalism as a Necessary Condition for Democracy**

Ambedkar's support for creating states on the basis of linguistic lines stemmed from his belief that social homogeneity would make democracy "work better." Shabnum Tejani writes that according to Ambedkar, a homogeneous society would ensure that no one group would attempt to abuse power. India's structured social difference was what made democracy in India difficult to execute. Ambedkar's solution was to have "one state, one language". Each state should be a linguistic unit, but to avoid the pitfall of creating further nationalisms, the regional language could not be the official language of the state, which had to be Hindi. Thus the administrative unit should be the linguistic state but the administrative language should be shared across the nation (Ambedkar 1955: 145-46). Ambedkar was arguing neither for the self-determination of linguistic groups, nor for a formulation of one language, one state (Ambedkar 1955: 165). Rather, it was the shared language that would make such states viable.

### **Criticism on Ambedkar's Position in India's Freedom Movement**

Ambedkar's notion of nationalism and his understanding of the Indian national movement have rarely been given sufficient intellectual attention by liberal or radical scholars and historians in India. The inability to situate Ambedkar in a proper historical and nationalistic perspective has left a vacant place for people like Arun Shourie to launch a ruthless attack on Ambedkar. Arun Shourie, who was appointed Minister of Disinvestment in A.B.Bajpayee's government in 2003, has long been accusing Ambedkar's growing popularity. For Shourie, this popularity is undesirable because she is blind, a position reflected in the title of this book, published in 1997, *Adoring the false gods: Ambedkar and the facts that have been erased*. The hidden facts that Shourie wants the Indians to recall are divided into three categories, which in turn are reflected in three-part books: the first relates to Ambedkar's long association with the British; the second, the counterproductive nature of his methods in relation to the social reformers of the higher castes; and finally, his role in drafting the Indian constitution.



### **Arun Shourie blames Ambedkar for opposing the National Movement**

According to Shourie, Ambedkar played in the hands of the British because he was motivated by selfish career interests, regardless of any nationalist sentiment. The appointment of Ambedkar to the Council of Viceroys in 1942 thus allowed the colonial power to benefit from the support of some Indians while severely repressing the movement to leave India. For Shourie, Ambedkar and Jinnah became not only compliments of imperial policy; they became the best agents, agents so flattered not to realize that they had been the cause of the imperial rulers "Shourie insists on placing Ambedkar and Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, even on foot. He pointed out that the former had participated in a meeting with the latter during the "Day of Rescue" when the Muslim League had celebrated the dismissal of congressional governments in 1939.

He describes Ambedkar as a collaborator devoid of any nationalist sense but above all of all the senses of truth and of falsehood. It is true that Ambedkar was weighed down by financial difficulties throughout his life, but this certainly does not allow Shourie to say that he was ready to betray his caste comrades and that his struggle to liberate Untouchables was not the reason why Ambedkar had supported the British. Ambedkar asserts that "the reason they did not join this sham" fight "is not because they are the tools of British imperialism, but because they fear that the freedom of the India will establish a Hindu domination that will not fail to come closer to them and forever life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness and that they will be turned into cutters of wood and water. Shourie says that "they have been loyal supporters and beneficiaries of British rule in India since the beginning," he said: "Until the advent of the British, the untouchables were content to remain untouchable. "It was also noticed that there was no obscuration at that time: Ambedkar repeatedly and explicitly declares that neither he nor the untouchables in whose name he claims to always have the sole authority to speak are or not. have never had anything to do with the fight for freedom.

His whole effort is to fabricate reasons to justify the opposition to this Moment and the pejoratives he has continually thrown at Gandhiji for twenty years. Shourie's attack on Ambedkar in his recent book *Adoring the False God* has led to the description of a complex set of responses from different layers of society. Some Dalit political leaders, deputies, reacted by demanding a ban on the book and some burned torn copies of the book in parliament. In this situation, it is interesting to note that this put the RSS and Hindutva forces on the defensive. The RSS who tactically approved Shourie's book had publicly stated in a major Marathi newspaper that the RSS had nothing to do with Shourie and her book. He adds that it is also interesting to note that the combined Sena-BJP government, which also lacks the capacity to protect freedom of expression and in fact has been intolerant of such traditions, has not long to take a pretty interesting position. According to Gaikward, the general underdevelopment of Indian nationalism may be due to the fact that its rapid growth was motivated mainly by anti-imperialist sentiments which, in general, reflected a rather instinctive aversion and hatred of the Indian nationalism.

### **Conclusion**

Ambedkar's concept of nationalism is primarily due to the dichotomy between political and social. As the well known, nationalist leaders Gandhi, and especially Hindu nationalists, placed excessive political emphasis almost ignoring the social aspect of nationalism. Ambedkar's argument was that in the absence of any comprehensive criticism of the caste system and Hinduism, politics certainly suggests that local / indigenous natives are better on "patriotic land." It is true that Ambedkar never took part in the fight for freedom, but rather opposed it. But the fact is, indeed, that his opposition has helped to broaden the internal range of freedom that has made her truly relevant to thousands of oppressed people. Nationalism is not a blind cult of the homeland. It is true that Ambedkar opposed the mainstream national mainstream, but this kind of attitude indirectly contributed significantly by laying the broad social foundations on which the present Indian nation state rests. Without the intervention of Ambedkar to introduce some means of material reinforcement of the untouchables, they would not be able to take their rightful place in national life. The interaction mentioned above provided a proper understanding of the true meaning of planned caste problems. Ultimately, this resulted in Gandhiji's reluctant decision to accept the request of members of the planned caste of the electoral assembly that



Ambedkar be included in the first government of India. This was Ambedkar's political challenge, which forced the congress to appreciate the national significance of the problem of planned castes and to adopt certain measures that significantly contributed to the broadening and strengthening of the social base of Indian nationalism.

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