



## **BABASAHEB Dr. BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR AND HIS VISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE MARGINALIZED GROUPS**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper attempts to discuss the Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and his vision of social justice for the marginalized groups. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was born in 1891 was an outstanding leader of our freedom struggle and a staunch crusader for the rights of the down-trodden and backward sections of our society. A recipient of the Bharat Ratna, he was a scholar, journalist, educationist, legal luminary, social reformer and political leader. He was the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and shall always be remembered for his role in painstakingly drafting our founding document.

Ambedkar was the symbol of hope for the millions of depressed, oppressed and exploited people of India. He was fully aware of the pattern and problems of the Indian society. He 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 economic resources of the community. He treated social justice as a true basis for patriotism and nationalism. Ambedkar did not accept the theories of social justice as propounded by the Varna

### **Introduction**

The present paper attempts to discuss the Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and his vision of social justice for the marginalized groups. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was born in 1891 was an outstanding leader of our freedom struggle and a staunch crusader for the rights of the down-trodden and backward sections of our society. A recipient of the Bharat Ratna, he was a scholar, journalist, educationist, legal luminary, social reformer and political leader. He was the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and shall always be remembered for his role in painstakingly drafting our founding document.

Philosophy and life of Dr. Ambedkar are a profile of courage and conviction. He dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge overcoming many adversities on account of his caste and poor economic background. He graduated from Elphinstone College in Mumbai and thereafter was awarded a scholarship to attend Columbia University in New York from where he obtained his Doctorate. Then, he moved to the United Kingdom in 1916 where he studied at the London School of Economics and was subsequently awarded the degree of Barrister-at-Law by Gray’s Inn. After his return to India, Dr. Ambedkar became the voice of the depressed classes and started many organisations to promote their cause.

The legacy and contribution of Ambedkar to India can be seen in many fields. His PhD thesis of 1923 titled “*The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*” provided academic basis for the Finance



Commission of India which was subsequently established through Article 280 of the Constitution to address problems of vertical and horizontal imbalances in finances. Similarly, the Reserve Bank of India was conceptualized based on the guidelines presented by Dr. Ambedkar to the “*Royal Commission on Indian Currency & Finance*” in 1925. Commission members found Dr. Ambedkar’s book “*The Problem of the Rupee- Its Problems and Its Solution*” an invaluable reference tool and the Central Legislative Assembly eventually passed these guidelines as the RBI Act 1934.

Dr Ambedkar as labour minister in the Viceroy’s Council, successfully led the struggle for reduction of work from 12 hours a day to 8 hours in 1942. He contributed the idea of setting up of Employment Exchanges in India. He was almost single handedly responsible for establishing the Central Technical Power Board, the National Power Grid System and the Central Water Irrigation and Navigation Commission. Dr. Ambedkar played an important role in the establishment of the Damodar Valley project, Hirakud project and Sone river project.

A voracious reader Dr. Ambedkar saw education as a tool for the liberation of the socially backward from illiteracy, ignorance and superstition. He founded the People’s Education Society in 1945 with the aim of advancing the educational interests of weaker sections of society. Dr. Ambedkar was also a crusader for gender equality and fought for equal rights for women in inheritance and marriage. He resigned from the Cabinet in 1951 when his draft Hindu Code Bill failed to receive the support of the Parliament.

Certainly, Dr. Ambedkar’s biggest and most important contribution was in his role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India. With tremendous foresight and erudite scholarship, Dr. Ambedkar not only piloted an outstanding draft through the Constituent Assembly but also outlined the philosophy and wisdom behind the various provisions.

### **Ambedkar’s vision of social justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

Ambedkar was the symbol of hope for the millions of depressed, oppressed and exploited people of India. He was fully aware of the pattern and problems of the Indian society. He 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. He treated social justice as a true basis for patriotism and nationalism. Ambedkar did not accept the theories of social justice as propounded by the Varna system.

Ambedkar’s concept of social justice included unity and equality of all human beings, equal worth of men and women, respect for the weak and the lowly, regard for human rights, benevolence, mutual love, sympathy, tolerance and charity towards fellow being. He emphasized more on fraternity and emotional integration. His view on social justice was to remove man-made inequalities of all shades through law, morality and public conscience, he stood for justice for a sustainable society.<sup>1</sup>

According to Dr. Ambedkar the root cause of social injustice to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is the Caste system in Hindu society. He observed, Castes are enclosed units and it is their conspiracy with clear conscience that compels the ex-communicated to make themselves into a Caste. The logic of their obdurate circumstance is merciless and it is in obedience to its force that some unfortunate groups find themselves closed out with the result that now groups by a mechanical law are



constantly being converted into Castes in a widening multiplicity. He further maintained that the root of untouchability is the Caste system and the root of the Caste system is religion, the root of the religion attached to varnashram and the root of the varnashram is the Brahminism, the roof of Brahminism lies with the political power.<sup>2</sup> Dr, Ambedkar's social vision is reflective in his own words. As an economic system permits exploitation without obligation untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation, but it is also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation. That is because there is no independent public opinion to condemn it and there is no impartial machinery of administration to restrain it, there is no check from the police or the judiciary for the simple reasons that they are all down from the Hindus, and take side of exploiters.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Ambedkar said, we must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society, one of these equality is on the social plane. We have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which means elevation for some and degradation for others. On the economic plane, we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who suffer from poverty.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar was dead against the Hindu Caste structure as he was of the view that this structure has been primarily responsible for committing all sorts of atrocities on the various sections of the society particularly the weaker sections Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. He was against Manusmirthi as it gives a blank Cheque to the Brahmins to commit all sorts of atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and justify their evil designs.

### **Social justice and Indian Constitution**

Social justice is the concept of distribution of benefits to the people of the society. It concerns such matters as the regulation of wages and profits, the protections of person's right through the legal system and allocation of housing, medicine and other welfare benefits. Aristotle described distributive justice as distribution of honors or money or the other thing that fall to be divided among those who have a share in the Constitution.<sup>5</sup> In every country Constitution is the fundamental and recognized source of social justice Constitution formulates the social justice in definite ways, these ways are status of individual, wants, satisfaction, wealth, education and job etc. these requirements are essential benefits for the full and dignified development of human beings.

In the democratic, republican states essential requirements can be achieved by human being through the Constitution of the country, according to the Constitution state is bound to distribute equal share of basic needs to the people of the society. In India, Constitution provides that the state as a form of social welfare organ will distribute these needs to the Indian people.

The concept of social justice has been enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The fathers of the Indian Constitution had the dream of a new social, economic and political order, the soul of which was social justice. Ambedkar was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He was fully aware of the pattern and problems of the society and their conflicting interests. The Constitution is a monumental example of social engineering. Social justice is not defined in the Indian Constitution but it is relative concept taking in its wings the time and circumstances, the people their backwardness, blood, sweat and tears.<sup>6</sup>

The preamble of the Indian Constitution is the mirror of social justice. It provides social, economic and political justice to the citizen of sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic of India. The first task of the Assembly was to formulate the objectives and the guiding principles of Indian Constitution. Therefore the resolution of the preamble and objective of the Constitution was discussed in the Constituent Assembly for nine days from December 13 to 19 and January 20 and 22 of 1947.



Part III of the Constitution as fundamental rights is related to the social justice. The fundamental rights inculcate the sense of reconstruction and foster social revolution by generating equality amongst all, prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of Caste, religion, sex, creed, place of birth, abolishing untouchability and making its practice punishable by law, banning trafficking in human beings and forced labour. Moreover, the Indian Constitution has empowered the states to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially, educationally backward classes and also for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.<sup>7</sup>

These provisions of the fundamental rights of the Constitution are related to the real concept of social justice. In this regard at the time of constituent Assembly debate Dr. Ambedkar expressed his views that “All of us desire that this unfortunate class could be entitled to the same privileges as members of the other Communities without any let or hindrance from anybody.”<sup>8</sup> He recreated that if any community or person will violate this provision it will impose duty on the state to stop such violation through the law, because the Constitution contains ample provisions.<sup>9</sup>

The ideology of the Dr. Ambedkar influenced the Indian judiciary on the basis of this ideology supreme court of India declared that directive principles of state policy are enforceable with the fundamental rights.<sup>10</sup> Court observed that the provisions in part III should be interpreted having regard to the preamble and the directive principles of the state policy. In addition to these, the directive principles of state policy also express in categorical terms the ideas of social justice article 38 of the Constitution of India requires the state inter-alia to minimize the inequalities in income and endeavor to culminate in equalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individual, but also amongst group of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

According to article 39 of Indian Constitution, the state is required to make available to all the citizens adequate means of livelihood, to distribute ownership and control of material resources. So as to sub serve the common good, to operate the economic system in such a way that. It does not result in concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment, that there is equal pay for equal work, to protect the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children against abuse and that citizen are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age and strength, that children are not given opportunities and facilities to develop in as healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and mental abandonment.

The state is also required to provide equal justice through the mechanism of free legal aid in order to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities<sup>11</sup> to provide right to work, to education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and other cases of undeserved want,<sup>12</sup> to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life<sup>13</sup> and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities,<sup>14</sup> to secure the participation of workers in the management of under taking establishment or other organizations engaged in industry<sup>15</sup>, to secure for all the citizens uniform civil code throughout the country<sup>16</sup>, to provide free and compulsory education for children below the age of 14 years<sup>17</sup>, to promote the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections<sup>18</sup>, to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living and to improve the public health etc.,<sup>19</sup>.



Ambedkar observed that “we do not want merely to lay down a mechanism to enable people to come and capture power. The Constitution also wishes to lay down our ideal before those who would be forming the government. The ideal is economic democracy having regard to the fact that there are various ways by which economic democracy may be brought about we have deliberately introduced in the language that we have used in the directive principles, something which is not fixed or rigid. We have left enough room for people of different ways of thinking with regard to the reaching of the ideal of economic democracy.”<sup>20</sup>

These provisions are towards social transformation and reconstruction of the Indian society which constitute the gist of social justice. Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that social justice alone could lead to social harmony, social stability and patriotic feelings. He believed that a democracy, which enslaves the working class, a class that is devoid of education which is devoid of means of life, which is devoid of any power of organization, which is devoid of intelligence, is no democracy but a mockery of democracy.

### **Social Justice in the context of Globalization**

India is plural society, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic for which democracy is most for balanced social and regional development. However, democracy can not survive without social justice. Unfortunately, new economic policy or globalization is bereft of human face, where man is treated as commodity and a person has to compete for the bread and business equally on the “Darwinian socio-economic order” i.e. struggle for existence and survival of fittest. Where as democracy thrives on the co-operative spirit so that strong and weak could survive and co-exist together like tall trees small bushes and grasses growing in the same socio-ecological plain. Therefore, before implementing the new economic reform policies, it was essential for the government to provide “social security net” i.e. full job opportunities, education and Medicare to weaker sections in general and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in particular who constitute two-third of India’s population. But government did not pay least attention on these important human problems.

Globalization in India means opening doors of our economy to the multinationals in the field of agriculture, industries, communication, transportation, electricity generation and distribution and also education etc. However, before opening the door of economy to the multinational companies, one should know the fact that these multinationals are not coming for charity in India but to make profit by utilizing our reserve resources, raw materials and treasury. They are not concerned with our environment, infrastructure development or to deliver social justice. These are not in their policies and programmes. Their programmes are to make exhaustive exploitation of natural resources on the cost of environment and make them and their country rich.<sup>21</sup>

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are socially and economically infirm and disabled even today. There were provided Constitutional safeguards by providing reservation in services and posts. In private sector, there is no such concession. Therefore, government must take policy decision to provide representation to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in “private sector” too; this is must to provide social security to them to protect their livelihood.

The advocates of social justice in the independent India laid main emphasis on “individual” gain through the policy of reservation in services and posts for the socio economic emancipation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, which has been very short sighted vision because in government services, posts are very limited and that too needs hard competition. Conclusively





reservation has not served much purpose to alleviate the poverty and living standard of Scheduled Castes because so far hardly 0.5 percent of the Scheduled Castes out of 25 corers of population have got regular job, the remaining 99.5 percent Scheduled Caste masses are still reeling under ragged poverty, hunger, malnutrition and illiteracy because reservation is like a bag of sugar poured in the sea which cannot make the brackish sea water sweet. Reservation thus has done little good by providing job opportunities to a handful of educated elites, but political reservation suppressed a great political revolution.<sup>22</sup>

Post-independence, India gained only political freedom “social and economic freedom” was yet to be fought. Because feudal hijacked the economic freedom in their favour, fate of Scheduled Castes remained hanging on the peg of reservation, so that neither they should economically grow nor they should revolt against the non-fulfillment of social justice. Thus social justice is not yet reaches to the Scheduled Caste people in India even today who are subjected to recurrence of killing, burning and gang rape of their women folk. Many people question, why do Scheduled Castes not fight against such atrocities done to them? How can they fight with empty stomach against feudal-land lords who are rich and resourceful, police and courts are also hand in glove with them, therefore, the social justice still beyond their reach even after 68 years of independence. The globalization is no way to help to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

### **Conclusion**

The basic meaning of “Social Justice” is to bring a just society. The main objective of this concept is to uplift the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the society and pull them to the main stream of the society. This concept also prevents unjust enrichment at the cost of the weaker sections. As 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 awakening the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and breaking all social values based on Hindu Social System. Due to influence of Globalization, liberalization and privatization, the concept of Social justice has assumed a greater significance. Many Multi-National Companies by insisting for merit have discarded the concept of social justice. All Multi-National Companies should be made to work with in the Constitutional frame work so as to ensure social justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India. So, the state for ensuring social justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should make various rules, regulations and procedures. If not, the concept of social justice just remains only on paper not in practical.

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