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Bhimrao Ambedkar: A synonym of social justice

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Abstract

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's name is taken as a commitment to the establishment of social justice and upliftment of the depressed classes in modern India. He considered the prevailing form of the Indian social system to be unjust. He considered 'Manusmriti' as the biggest obstacle in the establishment of social justice and social unity in India. He attacked the varna system, caste system and untouchability. He made tireless efforts to remove untouchability and uplift the Dalits. In order to improve the condition of women in family and social life, Ambedkar had worked tirelessly to get the Hindu Code Bill passed. He considered the injustice and exploitation in the Indian social system as the biggest obstacle in the path of democracy.

Keywords: Varna system, caste system, justice, exploitation, untouchability, women empowerment, dalit

Introduction

Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste² is an account of the belief that social reform has to take precedence over political and religious reform, providing instances of the tyranny practised by upper-caste Hindus on the untouchable community of India. Talking about social reform, Ambedkar highlights the need to reconstruct the Hindu society, break the caste system, and urges Hindus to admit that one caste is not fit to rule another caste. He did not reject socialism, but had strong belief that the grassroots of India can never unite to bring about a socialist revolution and welcome economic reform. On no front will they unite as the feeling of equality, fraternity and justice can never be achieved till the time caste system prevails. Speaking about freedom, he said that the division of labour was not a sharing out based on choice, and by not permitting the readjustment of occupations, caste becomes a monster, causing unemployment. The talk of equality stands as a fiction in Hindu society where there is no morality and rationality and excommunication is the punishment for dissent. Justice has been considered an important principle in political philosophy. Ambedkar considered the then prevailing form of the Indian social system to be unjust. The personality and actions of social reformer Jyotiba Phule had a great influence on Ambedkar. He took off in his life the message of Phule that 'no person is smaller or bigger than birth and the idea of high and low is a symbol of social distortions'. Ambedkar strongly opposed the Varna system, caste system and untouchability.

Dr. Ambedkar termed the Varna system divided into four characters. Ambedkar compared the Charutavarna system to Plato's vision of social order. Plato divided the ruler, the soldier, and the producer into three classes, and proclaimed that each person is endowed with certain abilities, so he is more capable of doing certain tasks. Therefore, Ambedkar believes that in the Varna system also there are basically those defects which were in Plato's system.

Therefore, Ambedkar opposed the Varna system and caste system and made efforts to prevent untouchability, upliftment of the depressed classes and improve the condition of women. He laid great emphasis on social justice.

Varna system and opposition to caste system

In modern India, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's name is taken as a symbol of commitment to the establishment of social justice and upliftment of the depressed classes. He considered the prevailing form of the Indian social system to be unjust. Ambedkar substantially pointed out that a Hindu's loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue and morality is caste-ridden, with no sympathy for the deserving or appreciation of the meritorious.

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The organization of Hindu society was divided into four varnas. In the Vedas, Brahmins, Smriti, Epics, etc., the four classes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras had divided labour as exchange of knowledge, defence, occupation and services, respectively. Ambedkar described this varna system as unscientific, impractical and unjust and severely criticized it and he criticized it on the basis that the Shudras were ranked lower than the other three varnas.

According to Ambedkar, the cruelty of this social injustice has been expressed in the social code created by Manu. He said that the code of Manu in respect of social rights is bad. Any other example of social injustice will fade compared to Manu's code.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar believed that the Savarnas deliberately deprived the Shudra varna to get education, keep arms for their safety, so that they could not resist the injustice being done against them. The coders like Yajnavalkya objected that they deliberately put the Shudras in inferiority in society and deprived them of many social and religious rights. Therefore, Ambedkar attacked the caste system and the traditional laws of Hindu society. According to him, in order to establish a social system based on these liberal values, religious support associated with caste and varna should be abolished, this is possible only if the varna system and the idea of superiority of some varnas embedded in it and inferiority of others. The idea of believing the scriptures to be divine should be denied.

The traditional system of Hindus operates on the basis of 'Manusmriti'. Therefore, Ambedkar believed that 'Manusmriti' was a symbol of Hindu social system based on oppression and injustice. He considered the awareness of the Shudras against the social code created by Manu and Manu as essential for establishing a harmonious and just social system. Ambedkar was of the view that the caste system should be eradicated from Indian society.

Opposition of untouchability

Untouchability is the Achilles' heel of the Indian society. Many leaders have tried to eradicate the untouchable issue from this country but failed. In India, terms such as 'untouchable' or 'harijan' were replaced by the word 'Dalit' since the 1970s. The new term was earlier used by Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. Although the Indian government has constituted many laws and policies to help the Dalit population, atrocities and inequality are quite common all over the country. In order to prevent such uncalled incidents against the Dalits, the government enacted the Prevention of Atrocity (POA) Act on March 31 in 1995. However, social ostracising against the Dalit people is still prevalent in the country. Ambedkar considered untouchability prevalent in Hinduism as immoral, unjust and unfair. According to Urna, the roots of untouchability are in the varna system. Instead of relying on the generosity of other highly regarded sections of Hindus for the prevention of untouchability, Ambedkar considered the administration of the social sector more effective by the state. He expected the state to abolish untouchability by law and provide special facilities to the sections considered untouchable, giving them an opportunity to be at par with other sections of society. According to him, the society must be based on reason and not on atrocious traditions of caste system^[1]. He envisaged the cohesive social order based on equality and justice i.e. social, economic and political. His aim was to realize the

ideal of one man one value in all walks of life i.e. Social, Economic, and Political.

Upliftment of Dalits

Dalits, a modern term for untouchables in India, are underprivileged people in all social, economic, cultural and political fronts of our society which led to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste dominated social stratification of India. Dalit family became the first Law Minister of India after independence and the chief architect of Indian Constitution. The text prepared by Dr. Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protection for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens. Ambedkar incorporated several Articles in the Indian Constitution for the upliftment of the Dalits and women which included the provision of equal status to Dalits with other segments of society, abolishment of untouchability and discrimination against them, provisions of fundamental rights to all, equal protection of laws, voting rights and reservation in education, jobs, promotion and political fields to them. Besides these several programmes in the form of grants, scholarships, loans, stipend etc. are being provided to Dalits by the States. This is all due to the provisions of Constitution drafted by Dr. Ambedkar. Therefore he may be regarded as the God Father of Dalits in true sense. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had a real visionary towards the upliftment of Dalits. His main aim was to uproot the evil of deep-rooted caste system, uplift the status of downtrodden society, create honour amongst so called upper castes and to transform this country from uncivilized state to civilized state. For the establishment of social justice in India, Ambedkar considered the upliftment of the downtrodden. He believed that political freedom has no meaning without social justice. In the first and second round table conferences, he gave the highest emphasis on separate representation for the Dalits, but Mahatma Gandhi said that the Dalit class is an inalienable part of Hindu society and in such a situation it cannot be accepted. Ambedkar had to sign the Poona Pact of 1932. Dr. He was of the view that the legal restrictions imposed on the untouchables of India on the basis of 'Manusmriti' can be removed only by law. Ambedkar's personality and actions have been compared to the great Negro leader of America, Paul Rabson, who expressed the indignation of the entire Negro caste against the white Bahim of America^[3].

Women's empowerment

Ambedkar stated that women must be treated equally and given equal prestige⁴. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was also a female thinker. In Article 14 of the Constitution created by Ambedkar, gender equality based inequality of all citizens under equal rights is also considered taboo. Dr. Ambedkar, as the Law Minister of India, also presented the Hindu Code Bill for women's empowerment in Parliament. They were in favor of ensuring women's equity in the household, family and society through women's participation in ancestral property. Due to the opposition of some people, that bill could not be passed in Parliament at that time, but in due course of time, women were given equal rights as men in different parts. Dr. Ambedkar's dream finally came true in 2005 when the daughter was also considered as a legally equal partner in the joint family and strongly supported legal equality. There are certain provisions of Hindu Succession

Act 1956 amended by Hindu Succession Act 2005 after this amendment various issues raised regarding interest of women in ancestral property. It was enacted to remove gender discriminatory provisions in the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. Under the amendment, the daughter of a coparcener shall by birth become a coparcener in her own right in the same manner as the son. So Dr. Ambedkar also made efforts in the direction of women empowerment.

Conclusion

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar gave more importance to the elimination of injustice, oppression and oppression than the political independence of India but Dr. Ambedkar did not ignore the political independence of India. He was a great supporter of human rights; he attacked the caste system, varna system, untouchability and worked tirelessly for Dalit upliftment. Dr. Ambedkar also made efforts for the upliftment of women. He not only supported the Hindu Code Bill to give women equal rights as men, but resigned from the post of law minister if it was not implemented. He emphasized on women's education, inter-caste marriage and legal equality. Ambedkar also had an important role in the creation of the Indian Constitution. He was the chairman of the important committee of the Constituent Assembly. He was in favour of restricting the constitutionalist and the power of the state in real terms. The Constitution of India provides equal rights to all its citizens' right to live with equality, honour and dignity. But the caste system and untouchability somehow and others are still playing negative roles from different parts of the society to some extent. It is the right time to adopt the principles of Dr. Ambedkar. The Constitution of India is designed in such a way that all its citizens are equal before it. Our nation is facing different sorts of socio-economic, educational and political evils in the society and only the effective implementation of Constitution in its real spirit can overcome them. The Dalits also will have to come forward and to labour hard in all social, Economical, educational and political fields to compete with the other members of the society. They should avoid power demonstration and enjoy their rights properly.

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