

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S PHILOSOPHY AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of India's most influential political thinkers and social reformers, continues to hold contemporary relevance in the modern political landscape ^(Auerbach et al., 2021). Not only was Dr. Ambedkar instrumental in drafting the Indian Constitution and championing equal rights for marginalized communities, but his ideas on social justice and inclusive governance continue to resonate in today's society. Dr. Ambedkar's emphasis on the importance of affirmative action and reservation policies as a means to address historical injustices and promote social equality remains crucial for creating a more equitable and just society. Furthermore, Dr. Ambedkar's critiques of caste-based discrimination and his call for the annihilation of caste are still highly pertinent in a country like India, where caste divisions continue to persist despite legal protections and social progress. By critically engaging with the political thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between political and socio-economic inequality in contemporary India. By studying and applying Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political thoughts, we can strive towards building a society that is more inclusive, just, and free from discrimination. Furthermore, Dr. Ambedkar's emphasis on the necessity for constitutional safeguards and protections for marginalized communities serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for social justice and the need for continuous efforts to combat discrimination and inequality. By considering his thoughts, we can analyze and reevaluate our own political practices, ensuring that they are aligned with the principles of equality and justice that Dr. Ambedkar espoused. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political thoughts continue to hold significant relevance in today's society, particularly in addressing historical injustices, promoting social equality, and fighting against caste-based discrimination.

Keywords: *Indian constitution, Social justice, Affirmative action, Inclusive governance, Caste-based discrimination.*

INTRODUCTION

Known by his famous nickname Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a vital engineer of the Indian Constitution. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a prominent Indian jurist, economist, and politician who played a vital role in shaping modern India and advocating for the rights and empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits. On April 14, 1891, he was born in the Hindu Mahar caste in Madhya Pradesh. The Mahar caste was thought of as untouchables by the people of upper caste, therefore he has to face discrimination from all sides of the society. Ambedkar had a chance to learn from the West, and he was lucky. He's earned a law degree and started practicing law in Mumbai. Ambedkar realised that the Dalits would not be able to live in dignity as long as they are uneducated. To combat the exploitation faced by Dalits, he believed that untouchability should be removed. By raising awareness among Dalits, he dedicated himself to the cause of abolishing untouchability. He's brought the magazine MUKANAYAK and a newspaper BAHISHKRIT BHARAT with him. He established Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, All India Depressed Classes Federation which was renamed as Republican Party of India.

POLITICAL THOUGHT

As stated by many thinkers, political thought is a mixture of ideas on matters relating to policy, state and governance. The aim is to explore, analyze and assess issues of common concern and interest. Political ideology explains our social reality, interprets it in a certain way, develops a set of interrelated principles, challenges the nature of the political system, and prescribes appropriate measures. Political ideas are, therefore, explanatory or interpretative as well as normative in nature. Political ideas relate to politics, but they're also connected with

history. Thus, understanding political ideas in their historical context is essential to understanding the same in the real sense. When a thinker takes account of this, his political ideas are born. Only the age of his time and therefore the political philosophy of the thinker can be understood. Political ideas are based on political issues of contemporary society. Such issues can be Feminism, Environmentalism and Social Justice etc. So to understand political ideas we should first understand political thought. Political thought is politics when it comes to subject matter, it is history when it comes to age, it is theory when it comes to concepts and it is philosophy when it comes to political theory.

1. Political Philosophy of Ambedkar:

"Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."-B. R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar's political ideas were closely related to human issues and Indian society at large. His political thoughts were influenced from three ideologies, namely left, conservative and radical. He was inspired by the theories of John Dewey and the realistic American. His political thoughts revolved around social equality, justice, and democracy. He believed in the abolition of the caste system and fought against discrimination and untouchability. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political thoughts emphasized the importance of constitutional safeguards and affirmative action to uplift marginalized communities, ensuring their social, economic, and political equality. His thoughts also focused on establishing a strong and inclusive democracy that prioritizes the welfare of all its citizens, regardless of their social background or identity. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political thoughts remain relevant in India and beyond. They serve as a foundation for social justice movements and policies aimed at addressing inequalities and uplifting marginalized communities. Furthermore, his political thoughts highlight the need for comprehensive representation and voice for all sections of society in the political decision-making process. They also underscore the importance of education and economic empowerment as pathways to social progress and mobility.

Ambedkar's ideology is primarily based on theological and ethical principles. He introduced political ideas, including freedom, fairness, state and privileges, based on his interpretation of Indian culture and institution. He was critical of Hindu authoritarian social order and supports democratic order. His methods were scientific, approach was logical and his writings were based on reason. His political thinking was based on two core principles- the rights of people are protected by social and moral conscience of society and not by law, and democratic form of government depends upon democratic form of society. For him democracy is a form of society.

2. Ambedkar on Parliamentary Democracy:

Ambedkar says that parliamentary democracy has all the characteristics of a popular democracy, that is, a government of the people, by the people and for the people". "In Parliamentary democracy, the legislature has a role to play in expressing the will of the people; there's an executive, which is under the jurisdiction of the legislature and has a responsibility to comply with the legislature. Ambedkar admired the Parliamentary form of government. According to him Parliamentary form of government has three characteristics. Firstly, free and fair elections. Secondly, in this form of government power is not concentrated in the hands of a single authority. Lastly, the elected representatives must have the confidence of the people. According to Ambedkar parliamentary is continuously evolving and progressing. Parliamentary democracy produces the best results in the long run, because it places great importance on virtues such as ability and cooperation, mutual respect, self help, discipline, and commitment to work. The principle of change and continuity, which Ambedkar refers to in great importance, is thus enshrined in the parliamentary democracy system. To him, parliamentary democracy can only function well with the spirit of the people. According to him equality and democracy has the same meaning. He further said that social, political and economic democracy is connected to each other. For the smooth functioning the entire three have to work properly.

3. Social Philosophy of Ambedkar:

The priority of Dr. Ambedkar has always been social reform. Only after the objective of social justice has been achieved should economic and policy issues be addressed. According to him, if priority is given to the issue of political emancipation, it would mean the transfer of power from foreign rules to the upper-caste Hindus, who are equally distant from the lower castes thus, there would be more injustice to the untouchable. Similarly, according to Ambedkar, the idea that economic progress will solve all social problems is also unfounded. Casteism is an expression of mental slavery of the Hindus. It's made them insensitive. Without eliminating the evil of casteism, there would have been no change at all. The precondition for revolutionary change in our society has been social reform. The reform of the family system and religious reform was part of the social reform. The abolition of practices such as child marriage, etc. has been included in the family reform. It was particularly relevant, in view of the fact that it included women's empowerment. Reforms regarding marriage and divorce laws, for instance, would benefit women who were as oppressed as the untouchables. In India, Ambedkar condemned the deterioration of women's status. It was his belief that women were entitled to the same status as men and must be given a right of education. He lamented that the Hindu religion had deprived women of the right to property. In his Hindu code bill he made sure that women receive a share of the property. He used to call on women from the untouchable community to come forward and take part in socially and political movements while he was organizing them.

4. Ambedkar's view on Agriculture and Land Reforms:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conducted an exhaustive study of the Indian Agriculture, wrote research articles, organized seminars, conferences for the purpose of solving agricultural problems. Ambedkar strongly believed in the need for agricultural and land reforms to address the socio-economic inequalities prevalent in Indian society. He stressed the importance of land redistribution, abolition of tenant arrangements, and landholding reform as means to empower peasant farmers and eradicate poverty. He advocated for the intensification of peasant agriculture, promoting family farms, cooperatives, and collective farms as alternatives to large-scale commercial farming. These reforms, according to Ambedkar, would not only enhance agricultural productivity but also ensure fair distribution of resources and opportunities among the rural population. Ambedkar's views on agriculture and land reforms remain relevant today for addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality, and sustainable development in our society. In today's context, Ambedkar's emphasis on land redistribution and agrarian reforms is relevant as it can help address the persistent issues of landlessness and land concentration among marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Additionally, his focus on empowering peasant farmers and promoting cooperative and collective farming can contribute to sustainable agricultural practices and mitigate the adverse effects of industrialized agriculture on the environment and rural communities. Ambedkar's political thoughts on agriculture and land reforms continue to hold contemporary relevance.

5. Ambedkar's view on Nationalisation of Industries:

Ambedkar's views on the nationalisation of industries were rooted in his belief in economic equality and social justice. He argued that the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few capitalist elites was detrimental to the welfare of the majority of the population, particularly the marginalized and oppressed communities such as Dalits and Adivasis. Ambedkar believed that nationalization of industries would help redistribute economic resources and opportunities more equitably among all sections of society. He saw it as a means to break the monopoly of the capitalist class and ensure that the benefits of industrial development reached the masses, especially those historically disadvantaged. Additionally, Ambedkar saw nationalizations a way to prevent exploitation of workers and ensure fair wages and working conditions. Ambedkar felt that nationalising industries would not only address economic inequalities but also contribute to the social transformation of backward regions. According to Ambedkar, nationalisation of industries would not only address economic inequalities but also contribute to the social transformation of backward regions. He believed that industries should be owned and controlled by the state or the people collectively, rather than being in the hands of private individuals or corporations. Ambedkar believed that nationalisation of industries would serve the interests of the marginalized and oppressed communities by providing them with economic opportunities and addressing historical injustices.

6. Ambedkar's view on Upliftment of Women:

Ambedkar believed that education, skill training, and access to employment opportunities were essential for the economic upliftment of women. He emphasized the need for investment in basic infrastructure, such as childcare, transportation, and water and sanitation, to enable women to fully participate in the workforce and contribute to the economy. Ambedkar also recognized the importance of creating awareness among women about the value of their labor to both the economy and their own families. Additionally, Ambedkar argued for the implementation of policies that promote equal development and provide special attention to disadvantaged and isolated areas ^(Verick, 2018). Ambedkar believed that empowering women through education and providing them with opportunities for skill development and employment was crucial for their economic upliftment.

7. Ambedkar on Labour Reforms:

Dr. Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party in 1936 for the benefit of the workers in India. The objectives of the party were to make strong labour laws, remunerative wages, to fix maximum work hours, paid leave and sanitary dwelling. He advocated for reducing the working hours from 14 hrs to 8 hrs. He also had laid down a number of laws concerning the welfare of women's professions, such as: Women Labour Welfare, Women and Child Labour Protection Act and Maternity benefit for women. Under his supervision, the Indian Manufacturing Act has also been adopted. Because of his untiring effort, National Employment Agency (Employment Exchange) came into being. Dr. Ambedkar has also set up a Workers' State Insurance (ESI) scheme for providing workers with medical care, compensation for injuries, insurance.

CONCLUSION

Today we 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 changes are brought about in 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.

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.

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