

## **Relevance Of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Ideology And His Contribution To The Suppressed People**

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### **Abstract of the Paper**

Dalit and suppressed people 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. The Constitution of India classifies Dalits as Scheduled Castes (SCs). They are the people who cultivate the land, mend the shoes, wash the clothes, clean the toilets, scavenge the dead animals or unknown human bodies and do all types of menial works, but share the stigmas of untouchability and are frequently denied the chance to eat, smoke and even seat with the members of upper castes. They often use separate wells and tube wells from those maintained for others. These pitiable conditions of Dalits were seen and addressed by some eminent social and political philosophers like Jyotiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and others. This is all due to the provisions of the Constitution drafted by Dr. Ambedkar. Therefore, he may be regarded as the God Father of Suppressed People in true sense.

**Keywords:** *Upliftment of Suppressed People, Women Discrimination, Indian Constitution, equal status, Social Justice.*

**Statement of the People**

*A great man is different from an eminent one in that he is ready to be the servant of the society.*

***Dr.B.R.Ambedkar***

Main aim of Dr. BR Ambedkar is to uproot the evil of deep rooted caste system and to transform this country from uncivilized state to civilized state. The Indian constitution is evolved as a result of Dr. BR Ambedkar's relentless efforts and strategic approach to the system. The provisions made by Dr. BR Ambedkar by fighting against British rulers and the articles included in the constitution of free India enabled Dalits and Women to present day developed state. The all round development of disadvantage groups in India is only because of Dr. BR Ambedkar.

Today's tragedy is that the rulers of our nation are not showing any interest for the effective implementation of constitution. Manu introduced caste system in India. Dr. Ambedkar introduced caste annihilation system in India. Indian Hindu orthodoxy stood by Manu. Ambedkar stood for Dalits and women development in India. Ambedkar defeated Manu through Constitution and incorporating several articles in it. Ambedkar was successful in fixing the Hindu orthodox people's attitude and behavior as enshrined in their holy books towards others as unjust and punishable through various provisions in the India laws and the constitution. The constitution of India provided to all its subjects right to live with honor and dignity. But the caste and untouchability is still playing effective role from various corners of the of the society. The constitution gave right to education, right to adult franchise to all, as against this being the privilege of a few in the pre independent India. But the era of globalization has privatized education. Constitution of India gave right to health. But the privatized and corporatized hospitals are far away from the reach of common people. Though the constitution gave right to work, but all Industries are mechanized with less and or no animated technologies leaving millions unemployed. Hence India shall follow the principles of Dr. Ambedkar and nationalize land and industries. So the need of the hour is to implement the constitution in its true spirit. It will enable the Indian society to overcome all social and economic evils that the Nation is facing. The constitution was designed in such a way that all its citizens are equal before it as "one man one vote and one vote one value"

### **Life of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb, was an Indian jurist, political leader, Dalit leader, philosopher, thinker, anthropologist, historian, orator, prolific writer, economist, women emancipator, human rights proponent, an eminent and erudite scholar, editor, revolutionist and a revivalist for Buddhism in India. He was also the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar made a frontal assault on caste using the brilliance of his legal expertise and his access to the political negotiating tables in London and New Delhi in the days preceding the transfer of power from imperial Britain to independent India. Dr. Ambedkar was an intellectual giant and India's great reformer. Born in a poor Mahar, then Untouchable, family, Ambedkar spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination, the system of Chaturvarna the categorization of Hindu society into four varnas and the Hindu caste system. The leader, throughout his life, fought for the rights of the dalits and other socially backward classes untiringly. His efforts to eradicate the social evils and for the upliftment of the deprived classes were remarkable. He was appointed as Law Minister in the first Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was also known as the "Father of Indian Constitution". Many Indians and even people from other countries revere him as a great social revolutionist.

### **Situation of Downtrodden after 72 Years of Independence**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had a real visionary towards the upliftment of Dalits. His main aim was to uproot the evil of the 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 a civilized state. By fighting against English rulers and including Articles in the constitution, he tried his best to enable Dalits and women of the present day developed state. Before independence the social, economic and political conditions of Dalits and women were very grim. Today we find all round development of disadvantaged groups in India. Untouchability has reduced, their socioeconomic and political status has improved. Today Dalits have become a powerful political force in India and enjoy greater access to education and economy than ever before. They are exercising their voting rights. Their political consciousness and awareness about various political activities and participation in these activities have increased very much. Due to these facts now-a-days the Government is also making various decisions relating to their rights and privileges. Efforts are still going on to remove different discriminatory practices against them. Now votes of the Dalits have become one of the major deciding factors for winning of a candidate or a political party in elections. The honours for Dalits in high caste society have also increased. Today we are not asking the person sitting beside us which caste he belongs to? Today, at least in towns both Dalits and non-Dalits enjoy the same tea stall, hotel and cinema hall but usually nobody bothers about knowing the caste identity of a person. This is all due to the un-tired and intelligent efforts of Dr.

Ambedkar. But it does not mean that the untouchability has totally abolished. Still, it is maintained in offices, colleges, ceremonies, etc. Today's tragedy is that the rulers of our nation do not want the effective implementation of constitution. There is a far gap in between their sayings and workings. Manu introduced the caste system in India. Dr. Ambedkar introduced a caste annihilation system in India. Indian, Hindu orthodoxy stood by Manu. Ambedkar stood for Dalits and women developments in India. Ambedkar defeated Manu through the Constitution by incorporating several Articles in it. Ambedkar was successful in fixing the Hindu orthodox people's attitude and behaviour as enshrined in their holy books towards others as unjust and punishable through various provisions in the India's Laws and Constitution. Recently an eminent sociologist, Pritish Nanda in Jaipur Literature Festival, 2013 blamed that SCs and STs were mainly responsible for corruption in India. This is a totally irrelevant, irresponsible and unjust statement which caused a great controversy between Dalits and non-Dalits. This shows the prejudiced mentality of the so called elite society people. Are the people of Upper Caste are not corrupt? The question arises, who is making SCs and STs corrupt? Who have taught the lessons of purchase – sail to the leaders of SCs and STs? The rulers of Upper Caste people are basically responsible for corruption in the society because all the dominating administrative powers and forces of society are retained within them. However, unfortunately sometimes the Sc and ST peoples, who are duly established in the society, misuse the rights given to them. A special type of power demonstration is expressed indirectly by them. They try to demonstrate their special power and unity in the society due to the privileges which they obtain from the laws, sovereignty, rules and administration.

Understanding the nature of Indian society and the caste system before independence is essential to study the contributions of Ambedkar to Law and Justice. As the caste base Indian society has defined a particular code of conduct to persons belonging to every caste. It also sanctified how a person or persons belonging to a particular caste shall relate themselves to a person or group of persons belonging to upper castes and lower caste with reference to this own caste. Similarly the women in every case has been ascribed a lower status than the man belonging to the same caste. Similarly the women relationship with men and women belonging to other castes is dependent on her particular caste. The lower the caste in the hierarchy the lesser is the social freedom to the people of the caste. Though this relation appears to be relative in nature the castes belonging to the lower strata are left with the freedom that certain animals could enjoy. Especially the saga of the downtrodden castes and the women belonging to these castes is highly deplorable.

In light of the peculiar social system existed in India before independence, Ambedkar has proposed several remedial measures as well as laws to address the exploitative social system and also to bridge the gap between various castes or social

groups in the country. Hence the present paper is an attempt to analyze the social system existed before independence and corresponding women status in the society to understand and study Ambedkar's contributions to deal the situation through law and justice.

### **Caste system in India**

The disadvantaged sections in Indian society are the victims of Hindu caste system i.e., untouchables who denied basic human rights by the upper caste and even denied the status of human being and treated as animals. The other dimension of caste system is the patriarchy which is the suppression of women of all castes by their own men and by the men belonging to other uppercastes.

In Hindu society, caste is the most powerful instrument in determining a person's dignity. Caste system is the result of the Hindu belief of 'Reincarnation and Karma'. The four castes eventually developed into a social mosaic of 3000 sub-castes, with the Untouchables at the bottom of the list and out of the list in particular. Such rigid caste system is not found anywhere in the world except in India. If a person is born into a caste, his status is predetermined and immutable. Birth decides one's status and this cannot be altered by the talent developed by the individual or by the wealth the person may accumulate. Similarly, the caste in which a person is born predetermines what vocation the person will pursue. One has no choice. Birth decides the occupation of the person. This caste system discriminates the human persons and stratifies them into different groups. According to Manu Dharma, the Hindu religious code of conduct divides human persons into four Varna's Here are the four major castes: 1. Brahmins (the priestly class) 2. Kshatriyas (the warrior class) 3. Vaisyas (the trading class) 4. Sudras (the servants).

The Manu dharma shastra denied equal status for the women along with men and put her in restrictions "Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in Youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence. A woman has no right to study, let alone Vedas. Women cannot utter the Veda Mantras, as they are unclean is the untruth. A Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaisya man can sexually exploit any Shudra woman. Even the act of killing a woman is explicitly justified as a minor offence for the Brahmins; equal to the killing of an animal.

### **Anti Caste Movements**

In this kind of society, many reformers right from the Gautama Buddha, have worked against the caste system and untouchability. He challenged the validity of caste and Brahmanism. Mean while other social reformers like Mahathma Jyothi Rao Phule, Sahumaharaj, Periyar, Kabeer, Santh Ravidas, Sri Narayanaguru in Andhra Pradesh Vemana and Pothuluri Vera Brahman are the social reformers who fought against the

evils of Hinduism. The movement they led was not given required relief to the victims of the caste system and patriarchy. After studying all these experiences, Dr Ambedkar declared that it is not possible to eliminate untouchability in isolation without destroying the caste system, which in turn means destroying Hinduism, and embraced Buddhism on 1956 October 14 along with his more than 5 lakhs followers in Nagpur.

Hence, Dr. Ambedkar's approach towards the caste system, untouchability and patriarchy is entirely different from other social reformers. Ambedkar proposed equality and fraternity in consonance with the principles of Democracy. His entire vision is to uplift the disadvantaged sections of the Indian society through practical means. We will see the results of the struggle by Dr Ambedkar that many of untouchables have reached highest positions. For example, K. R Narayanan becoming first Dalit President of India, Justice K.G Balakrishnan becoming first Chief justice of India is small fruits of the trees planted by Dr. BR Ambedkar. After his return to India, Ambedkar became the most eminent leader of the historically disadvantaged sections of Indian society and was instrumental in the formation of the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF). In the pre-independence political sphere, he made an articulate case for recognizing the socio-economic exploitation that had been suffered by those outside the caste system. However, he never chose the path of 'agitationist' politics and instead relied on reasoning and an appeal to moral values. When India earned its independence, Dr. Ambedkar chose to work with the Congress Party and served with distinction as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee in the Constituent Assembly, and later as the first Law Minister of the Union of India. In his later years, he gave up his position in the Union Cabinet on account of the government's reluctance to reform family laws – which were aimed at combating the entrenched gender and caste-based discrimination in private relations”

### **Upliftment of Suppressed People**

In May 1943, Indian labor conference discussed about modalities to set up constitutional body related to minimum wages in its third convention. After 1944 and 1945, Dr. BR Ambedkar (labor member in Government of India) recognized importance of special act, introduced minimum wages bill on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1946. The minimum wages act got approval after delay due to constitutional obligations to transform from bill to an act. According to this act, minimum wages can be defined as the wages which are not only fulfilling a laborers needs but also to live with dignity, to feed his family, to meet the expenses of health and protection and education of the children gathered all together can be considered as “Minimum wages.”

Dr. BR Ambedkar facilitated this act with all necessary fundamental articles which are essential for every ordinary Indian to flourish himself and state of living by his extraordinary intelligence. It is recognizable that the in depth perception of Dr. BR Ambedkar who mentioned about the food required for a person to live in proper health

condition. Dr. BR Ambedkar is a great visionary who got fame as “chief architect of the Indian constitution.” Prior to this he framed and got approval for minimum wages act.

Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly’s support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action. India’s lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socio-economic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India’s depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need basis. The Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly.

### **Article – 17 Abolition of Untouchability**

“Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “Untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. Based on this article, the Civil rights Protection Act 1965 and the Prevention of Atrocities (Scheduled castes Scheduled tribes) Act 1989 was enacted by the Parliament for the protection of Dalit rights.

Even though, caste-based discrimination and violence still remains a fact of life in Today’s India. There has been considerable progress for the historically disadvantaged sections of society. Numerous political parties have emerged on the strength of voters from the oppressed sections, and the benefits of education and economic development have also been gradually reaching these sections. The attainment of genuine social equality is of course a gradual process and may be several generations away, but it was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who set us on this path with a written constitution. It is not surprising that the invocation of his life and contributions continues to be a major factor in political mobilization, even today.

### **Article 13(2)**

Dr. B. R Ambedkar is a great visionary towards the fundamental rights of Indian citizens. He made a provision in the constitution of India in 13(2) as **Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the fundamental rights.**— The State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this Part and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of the contravention, be void.

### **Hindu code bill**

Ambedkar’s defense for women as the Law Minister of free India appeared in the form of the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament on 11th April 1947, which invited strong opposition from the Hindu orthodoxy in post-independent India. The Bill provided for

several basic rights to women. It sought to abolish different marriage systems prevalent among Hindus and to establish monogamy as the only legal system. It aimed at conferment of right to property and adoption of women. It provided for restitution of conjugal rights and judicial separation. It attempted to unify the Hindu code in tune with progressive and modern thought.

In 1948 when the Hindu Code Bill was introduced in parliament and debated on the floor of the house, the opposition was strong against the Bill. Ambedkar tried his level best to defend the Bill by pointing out the drawbacks of Indian society and arguing that the ideals in the Bill are based on the Constitutional principles of equality, liberty and fraternity and that in the Indian society characterized by the caste system and the oppression of women since women are deprived of equality, a legal frame work is necessary for a social change in which women have equal rights with men. He also pointed out that the aim of the Bill was “to codify the rules of Hindu Law which are scattered in innumerable decisions of High Courts and of the Privy Council which form bewildering motley to the common man”. However, the Bill could not withstand the opposition from the Hindu orthodoxy. Their major argument was that the Bill was an attempt at the “demolition of the entire structure and fabric of Hindu Society. The very foundations not only of one pillar but of all the pillars on which the Hindu society rests are shaken”. In reality, the Bill was a threat to patriarchy on which traditional family structure, was bounded and that was the major reason behind the opposition. Therefore, on the eve of the first elections in 1951 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dropped the Bill by saying that there was too much opposition. On this issue, the then Law Minister Dr. Ambedkar resigned. Even he is ready to give up the status for the cause of disadvantaged.

### **Summing Up**

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. Untouchability is a crime against humanity. Untouchability against mehtar/dom sub-caste of Dalits is still prevalent in our society which is inhumane. Hence 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 socioeconomic, educational and political evils in the society and only the effective implementation of the 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. Each Relevance of Dalit member will have to try to become a Second Ambedkar. God has created the entire creature, including human beings without caste identity. It is we who make all these discriminations. So the people of

advanced classes will have to change their mentality. They will have to be more generous towards the Dalits regarding untouchability and the upliftment of their socio-economic, educational and political status etc. by accepting them as equal humans like themselves. The social structure of our society is based primarily on them because they are the people who perform all types of menial works which are usually avoided by the people of elite class. Without them no society has run previously, not running now and will not run in future.

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