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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: An architect of modern inclusive society

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Abstract

Background: The Indian society has various differentiation the most common being caste based discrimination for eradication of which Dr. Ambedkar played a pivotal role.

Aim: To study the contribution of B.R. Ambedkar in eradicating the caste based discrimination.

Objective: To study the important role played by Dr. Ambedkar in formulating a constitution that aims to establish an egalitarian society.

Methodology: Qualitative analysis of the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar in upliftment of backward sections of the society.

Result: The efforts of Dr. Ambedkar paved the way for government welfare policies and integration of backward sections into mainstream.

Keywords: Upliftment, differentiation, hierarchy, constitution

Introduction

Indian society is a multi faceted society and numerous differentiation exist in the society based on religion, race, caste, sex, class etc. Dr Ambedkar touched all these differentiation and worked for the uplifting of various sections of the society.

Caste and inclusive society

The origin of caste system can be traced back to later Vedic times and since then it has become more complex with the emergence of numerous subcastes. Caste is a system of social stratification based on birth. It involves endogamy, hierarchy, restrictions on inter dining. The occupation of a person is determined by caste instead of merit.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said caste is not only a division of labour perhaps it is also a division of labourers. Since ancient times efforts have been made to free the society from evils of caste system by Buddha, Mahavir to Namdev, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to modern day reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Vivekananda, Gandhi to name a few.

It was Dr Ambedkar who in his capacity as a chairman of 'Drafting Committee' of constitution added Article 17 making abolition of untouchability as a fundamental right. Ambedkar himself belonging to Mahar community faced numerous discrimination and these humiliations further strengthened his resolve to fight the evils of caste system. Ambedkar considered caste system to be a threat to unity and integrity of the nation. The discrimination based on caste system creates social unrest and threatens law and order. It considers some sections as untouchables thus hindering their integration in the society.

It denies the opportunity for development of skills by determining occupation on the basis of birth. It reduces the efficiency of individual. This in turn Negatively impacts economic development as the principle of economic development is based on birth rather than skills and capabilities of the individuals. Thus Ambedkar considers caste system to be a threat to the liberty equality and justice which are the basis of democratic society. Dr. Ambedkar said "caste is not a physical object like wall of bricks or align off barbed wires which prevents Hindus from comingling and which has therefore to be pulled down. Caste is a Notion, it is a state of mind."

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Caste system obstructs the enjoyment of both civil and political liberties. The restrictions on temple entry, inter caste marriages, inter dining obstructs the liberty of movement, action and decisions of individuals. In this manner caste system obstructs political participation.

Ambedkar considered political participation essential as every individual as a responsible member of the society has to be vigilant about activities and actions of the government. Caste is against the concept of equality. Ambedkar recognized difference in skills and capabilities of individuals but this doesn't mean an unequal treatment to the people.

Similarly the concept of justice ensure social, political and economic justice. It ensures non discrimination on the basis of caste, class, gender, race. Ambedkar considered religion As an important part of life to ensure an egalitarian society. However such a religion should be based on principles rather than rules. According to Ambedkar society should be based on rational religion.

Throughout his life ambedkar contributed immensely to the empowerment of lower castes. He launched full fledged movements for the rights of dalits in 1930s. To promote social and educational development of the lights he established An organisation named Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha. In 1930 Dr Ambedkar launched kalaram temple entry movement. In 1936 he founded independent labour party which later transformed into all India scheduled caste association. He created public opinion against untouchability through his writings such as mook nayak. In his book Annihilation of caste Ambedkar critisized Hindu orthodoxy. He Mentioned that the principle of graded inequality determined Associated life among the four varna's. Ambedkar supported state socialism to establish a classless society for which he supported parliamentary democracy.

The various provisions of the constitution gives a glimpse of Zeal of Dr. ambedkar to work for the upliftment of various sections of the society. Article 17 of the Indian constitution prohibits untouchability and it's practise in any form. In accordance with the article civil rights protection act 1955 was enforced. In the like manner article 14 to 18 prohibit discrimination in accessing public places, educational institutions and occupational opportunities on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 325 ensures political liberty by ensuring that nobody is left out of electoral rolls on the ground of religion race, caste, sex or place of birth. Article 330 provides reservation for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in Lok Sabha. similarly article 332 provides for reservation for scheduled caste and schedule tribes in legislative assemblies. Article 338 provides for National Commission for scheduled caste To ensure that welfare provisions and constitutional rights are effectively implemented. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments are a right steps in the direction of an open inclusive society by reservation of seats for schedule caste and scheduled tribes.

Article 335 of the constitution Provides that claims off scheduled caste and scheduled tribes shall be taken into consideration consistently With the maintenance of efficiency of the administration. The directive principles ah state policy and fundamental rights are the steps in the right direction ensure liberty equality and justice. The literacy rate among the scheduled caste have witnessed a rapid stride from 10.27% in 1961 to 66.1% in 2011. The literacy rate

among the total population was 73% while that among the scheduled caste was 66% thus reducing that literacy gap among the population and Scheduled caste.

The government have also taken numerous steps for upliftment of the weaker sections of the society Such as national scheme for rehabilitation and upliftment of manual scavengers which now has become an act, Credit enhancement guarantee scheme for scheduled caste, pradhan mantri Others Graham yojana, scholarship schemes.

Article 15 (4) and 16 (4) provides for reservation for scheduled caste in educational institutions and employment respectively. The reservation policy have gone a long way in ensuring integration of hitherto backward classes into the mainstream.

Jawaharlal Nehru regarded Dr Ambedkar as the champion of oppressed classes. It was Dr Ambedkar,'s contribution in establishing an inclusive modern society that he was awarded highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna in 1990. It is the time to follow the provisions of the constitution with the same zeal shown by father of Indian constitution to fulfil the dream of a progressive nation ensuring development of all the sections of the society.

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