

# AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

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**Abstract:** B.R. Ambedkar concept of social Justice stands for the liberty, equality and social justice of all human beings. He stood for a social system which is based on right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. The humanoid problems that Indian society faced from ancient time down to social justice which was not only very controversial among the deforms in the one hand but also many historians justice statesman social reformers to be replaced by social justice respect the term social Justice is a foreign term to Indian society and concept of social justice. There before the present dissertation is a humble attempt to present what social justice was meant according to B.R. Ambedkar what were the perspectives of the social in justice prevalent in the Indian society. What were the necessities to take him the concept of social justice in an urgent manner in the beginning of the 20th century finally how a propagated social justice in Indian society? These are all some of the problems explained and highlighted so that the comprehensive addition contribution towards the social justice has been done. Although the present dissertation is about .B.R. Ambedkar and Social justice it would be better to know any other scholarly work have been done on this or a similar them, so that the present attempt may be improved in the light of those study.

**Keywords:** Liberty, Equality, Social Justice

## **1.0 Introduction:**

Man is a social animal. He is not an island in himself. He lives in society which is made up of social groups. Man is a member of these groups. Man is a member of these groups knowingly or unknowingly and has social relations.

Ambedkar felt that society plays a far important part in man's life than politics or religion. Man must have society he cannot do without it. The society should have either the sanction of law or the sanction of morality to hold it together without either, society is sure to go to pieces. It is always advisable to remove the social evils first. Wherever there are social evil, the health of the body.

## **2.0 Politic Suffers**

Ambedkar in his writings has given a picture of ideal society. He ideal society is based on liberty, equality and fraternity. It should be mobile and should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association.<sup>i</sup>

The birth centenary celebration of Baba Sahab Bharat Rattan Dr. Bheemrao Ambedkar on April 14, 1990 the former Prime Minister, Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh announced that the centenary year would be observed as the year of 'social justice'. In a way it was a recognition of the fact that even after 43 year of our Independence, social injustice continues to remain a formidable problem to be tackled.<sup>ii</sup> The increase in the frequency of the use of the term social justice in our academic, administrative, political and judicial circles makes me wonder. Whether the people who use this expression, usually in careless manner, indeed understand what the term really means. They tendency is more marked in social science seminars and conferences on themes as varied as 'development' 'social change' 'quality and justice' etc. Many learned presentations use 'social justice' as a convenient phrase, probably to sound radical or respectable.<sup>iii</sup>

Ambedkar is one of the very few public men whose social and political thought ranging over a great variety of subjects deserves to be studied in its entirety. He single mindedly to bring about the social integration of India, Ambedkar was of the firm view that all men are born equal and continued to be so till death. He finally succeeded in giving India a egalitarian society where no class would be unprivileged, underprivileged or privileged on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex place of birth or residence.<sup>iv</sup>

## **3.0 Concept of Social Justice**

The concept of social justice is as old as society itself. Its interpretation has however varied and kept changing. Many of the known social structures in history have been based on exploitation of man by man and on the passionate craving of some to dominate the many. The desire to wield power over the lives of others has been the chief source of all tension in human relation and foundational cause of social injustice.<sup>v</sup>

The concept of the social justice, probably in today's backdrop of the social-economic panorama, it would be best defined as 'justice in depth', justice that would penetrate and pervade the entire pathology of the inequality-syndrome of caste, creed, sex, race, religion, wealth and privileges. Social justice is thus, the quest for social and economic equality between equal citizenry, placed in equality.<sup>vi</sup>

The ideal of social justice is actually based on the economic justice according to which equality of opportunities to all citizens to develop their personalities and so practice happiness of life is the goal of economic justice.<sup>vii</sup>

That there was anything reprehensible in their owning slaves and perpetrating the practice of slavery did not occur even to those who were assembled together to sign the noble Declaration of Independence and proclaim the, "self-evident truths" that all men are created equal and endowed with certain "inalienable rights" so "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness."<sup>viii</sup>

The Constitution itself had provided for reservation of seats in parliament and the state assemblies for these two sections. The founding fathers had however taken an over optimistic view and expected that the progress in redressing the inequalities of age would be rapid, the reservation had therefore to be extended every decade, each political party vying with the others to say "age" to an amendment of the Constitution to ensure the extension.<sup>ix</sup>

### **3.1 Meaning**

The attempt to understand the linguistically entails the understanding of the import of two terms:- 'Social' and 'Justice'. The meaning of social in the context of justice is far wider than merely having to do with reciprocal relationships between interacting human beings, either as individuals or groups. Here, 'social' means something that pertains to the structure of society, more precisely the arrangement of social and economic relations.

Viewed in relation of justice, it is to be seen as an intelligent co-operation of people in production of an organically united society with every member having an equal and real opportunity to grow and learn to live as per her/his talents and abilities. When comprehensively understood 'social' includes economic as well as political arrangements in a society. Such a characterisation of the term 'social' may itself be a matter of separate debate. But one thing is clear: that 'social' when viewed in relation to 'justice' inevitably means justice-social economic and political.<sup>x</sup>

As a matter of fact social justice has various dimensions. Intellectually it means the acceptance of every human being not as a means but as an end. It means, as Kant says, "Every man has a worth and a dignity, which forbids his exploitation by any purpose whatever."<sup>xi</sup>

### **Ambedkar and Social Justice**

The term social justice emerged from the heritage of social injustice in India and took root because of our social order. 'Social Justice' as a term has been very often used in almost all walks of contemporary Indian life in general, and in intellectual discussion in particular. However, the social justice may be defined in very ordinary logical sense.<sup>xii</sup>

Before we discuss the views of Ambedkar concerning socio-economic justice for the depressed it may be worth recalling to know what social justice means and does it aspire for? The expression 'social justice' needs correct conception even much beyond the views concerned with 'public welfare' or the modern 'welfare state' or welfare as a by-product of economic action. However social justice is not only different but hard to define.

Social justice or distributive justice or compensatory justice is a quest for justice. It is a challenge of equality, liberty, and justice. It discerns that our Constitution envisages a tripartite picture of social justice, justice-social, economic, and political is directed in the Preamble; socio-economic justice is procured by Directive Principles of State Policy; justice-social and political is secured by Fundamental Rights thus in broader perspective social justice is the end.<sup>xiii</sup>

The most important Part of Ambedkar's career was in a nut shell to secure social and political equality. Evidently, it is worth remembering that Ambedkar issued a call to the untouchables that was their duty to defend India's hard-won freedom; identify their interests with the whole of people; in the past the Harijans had narrow outlook and thought in terms of welfare and prosperity of their community and themselves; now the time had come for them to change their outlook and think in the wider interests of a nation as a whole. The problem which Dr. Ambedkar confronted as a Constitution maker was two fold one was the annihilation of cast and the other the eradication of untouchability. All people who come under the system of caste do not have problem of untouchability, whereas people who come under the order of untouchability have none of the privileges available to the people of the caste system.<sup>xiv</sup> Ambedkar observes that far from being ashamed of untouchability, the hind try to defend it.<sup>xv</sup>

Ambedkar in his two well-known works 'Who Were the Shudras' 1947 and 'The Untouchables' 1948, has first time analysed in detail the 'Shudras' and Untouchables which crated a stir in Brahmins-Dominated Hindu Society. It should be kept in mind that Ambedkar used the term untouchable used the term 'untouchable' life. Ambedkar responsible the Hindu social system for dividing the society into various classes the lower and high caste.<sup>xvi</sup>

The equality is the basis of social justice. This enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution according to which the state would not deny to any person "equality before law" and "equal protection of law". The state of any citizen on grounds of religion, race, sex, place of birth. The particular clause has great significance in the context of India multi-caste, multi-racial and multi-religious set up. It also establishes equality of men and women in all matters.

Article 16 throws open the opportunity in public employment to al citizens an equal footing. There is also the principle of proportionate equality underlying the Constitution which allows the balancing of individual right and social justice. The functions performed by certain groups of citizens are more important for the state then those of other all the equal rights in this.<sup>xvii</sup>

Ambedkar was of the view that social justice alone could lead to social harmony and social stability, and kindle patriotic feelings to achieve this the depressed classes have to educate, agitate and organise themselves, Ambedkar is belief was that the Constitution should provide Fundamental Right and equality, social, economic and political to all citizen. Therefore, law must provide remedies against the invasion of Fundamental Right<sup>xviii</sup> under the Article 15 of Constitution which is part of Fundamental Right guaranteed to the citizens, though it was stated that the state should not discriminate against any citizen on ground of religion or any of them by the Constitution. First Amendment, section IV was added to the Article empowering the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.<sup>xix</sup> Speaking on the preferential policies for the reservation of seats in elective legislative bodies, Ambedkar held the view; this is the first time that I hear that such a concession should be extended to the backward classes. Hitherto the concessions that have been spoken of as being necessary for the upliftment of the backward classes are educational concessions and concessions in the services of the country.

However the term backward classes has remained to be a problematic phrase and it is still unclear as to what this term is Ambedkar clarified in the Constituent Assembly. A backward community is a community which is backward in the opinion of the Government.<sup>xx</sup> Born in a socially backward community, by exposed to a highly forward system of education, ration in outlook and rebellious in temperament, Ambedkar appeared on the scene at the appropriate moment to assume the national leadership and participate in the social struggles and Constitutional matters in a strategic way. Ambedkar was a great nationalist, political thinker, reformer and revolutionary and prolific writer with prodigious ideas.<sup>xxi</sup>

Ambedkar was totally committed to annihilation of the caste system. According to him, caste system is no merely a division of labour but a division of labourers. It is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other. This division of labourers is based on neither natural aptitude nor choice of individual concerned.<sup>xxii</sup> Ambedkar dreamt India to be an egalitarian state, a casteless society. In his draft Constitution he included safeguards for the minorities. There was a lot criticism in the Constitution Assembly. He emphasised that it was a wise decision taken by the Constituent Assembly. In India, both the minorities and the majority have followed a wrong path; it was wrong for the majority to deny the existence. This may be perhaps, on account of Ambedkar's inner feelings of social justice which he expressed at the meeting convened on behalf of the scheduled caste, Federation at Bombay on January 11, 1950 wherein he was presented with a golden casket. He had entered the Constituent Assembly with the sole subject of safeguarding the interests of scheduled castes and not with the ambition of drafting the Constitution.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Article 330 provides for reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Lok Sabha, Article 332 makes a similar reservation of seats for the two categories people in the state legislatures. Article 334 provides this reservation for a period of 30 years from the commencement of the Constitution ending with 1980. But the articulate section among these group of people have succeeded in getting extended the period of reservation by some years through a Constitutional amendment.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Article 46 the Constitution suggests the educational and economic interest of scheduled cast and scheduled tribes and other weaker sections should be the special care of the state. So that they are protected from social injustices and all forms of exploitation.<sup>xxv</sup> Ambedkar attached great important education. Ambedkar established people's education society in 1945, the primary objectives for the society were to start educational institutions for the benefit of the depressed classes established the Siddharth College in 1946. Today the people's education society is running eleven colleges which have more students.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Article 23 sought to prohibit the much hated system of forced labour and traffic in human beings. The clause has significance in the socio-economic set up that was obtaining in the socio-economic set up that was obtaining in the country immediately before independence. The feudal rural socio-economic order gave rise to the system of bonded labour and there was inhuman exploitation of the poor by the rich. By prohibiting this system of forced labour, an attempt was made to set these people free and afford them social equality with others. But in views of the conditions of utter. Poverty in which these people were placed, legal laws alone have not been able to produce the desired result. Out of the total number of bonded labourers, large per cent. belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It is an executive action flowing from the protective provisions of the Constitution.<sup>xxvii</sup>

The Constitution declared India as a welfare state when it said that is the duty of the state to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protection as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice-social-economic and political shall inform all the institution of the national life.<sup>xxviii</sup>

After a lot of study, Ambedkar had decided to renounce Hinduism and on October 14, 1956 at Nagbut, Ambedkar took Buddhism as his religion. About three lakh people joined Buddhism along with him on the occasion. He declared at that time, By discarding my ancient religion, which stood for inequality and oppression today. I am reborn. I am no longer a devotee of any Hindu God or Goddess.<sup>xxix</sup> Ambedkar in his book such as 'Who Were the Shudras' and 'The Buddha and his Dhamma' has demolished the divine status of these sacred texts.<sup>xxx</sup>

The Constitution has special reservation of seats in parliament and state legislative assemblies for representative of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Article 335 makes specific mention of reservation of places in recruitment to the state and central services for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.<sup>xxxi</sup> The Constitution provides sufficient provision to ensure adequate representation of scheduled castes/tribes in government services and posts. In spite of the safeguards and provision made for reservation in services for scheduled caste and tribes in the Constitution. The percentage of these employees is extremely poor. To clear the backlog in services the government has announced a special tribes during the birth centenary celebration year the Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.<sup>xxxii</sup>

States that the tender age of children and women should be protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. This suggests that women and children to be treated with special care and programmes that women and children have to be treated with special care and programmes for their betterment and happiness should be formulated and implemented. In particular this clause gives equality of status for women and recognises their special rights for protection from the monstrosities of social and economic life of the country.<sup>xxxiii</sup> He wanted social reforms as of right what is more, he was not so much for peripheral social reforms in the Hindu society like widow remarriage and child marriage. He was for total reorganization and reconstruction of the Hindu society on two main principles-equality and absence of casteism.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Women denied the right to education and right to property.<sup>xxxv</sup> The daughter has been an equal share in the property as the son or the widow.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The various legislative enactments abolishing some of the social evils that the women are subjected to in our country have their sanction under this clause of the Constitution. If much has not been done in creation the necessary awareness among women particularly in rural areas, it was because of laxity on the part of the executive with the renewed campaign of creation awareness among the rural women that currently going on, it is hoped that the rural women would be able to shake off the traditional bondages and breathe free to contribute to their social and economic upliftment.<sup>xxxvii</sup> All these the reorganization of the economic system, as called for in Article 39(b) and (c) involved steps that would effect property right. It was no easy to accomplish the government, therefore through the First Amendment to the

Constitution, add the Ninth Schedule to secure from legal challenge the various land reform laws passed by State Legislatures.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

It will be no exaggeration to state the emphasis of the directive principles to state policy seems to be somewhat different that is, there the state has been given the mandate to direct its policies in such a way that the objectives of social justice are realised to its full brim, and as such the state is to take into account the special need of certain of society.<sup>xxxix</sup> Under the Article 15 and 16 in pursuance of the directive contained in Article 46 the state has been making reservation of seats in education institutions, and in government services for candidates of the backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This is based on the doctrine of classification and the doctrine of protective discrimination in favour of these weaker sections. The spirit behind the reservation is to provide adventitious aid to these classes of people so that their social backward is removed in course of time and they develop the necessary confidence and skills to face the complexities of life.<sup>xl</sup>

Speaking in the Constituent Assembly Dr. Ambedkar has categorically said that the Directive Principles were not intended to be mere pious declarations. They were instead to be nature of a instrument of instructions and whoever captured power “will have to respect these” He had said

“It is intention of the Assembly that in future both the legislature and the executive should not merely pay lip service to these principle enacted in this part, but that they should be made the basis of all executive and legislative action may be taken here after in the matter of the governance of the country.”

Article 38 which is the keystone or the core of the Directive Principles lay down that state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice-social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of national life.<sup>xli</sup>

The emphasis in the entire scheme of the Constitution under the headings of preamble the fundamental right and the Directive Principle is on bringing about a reconciliation between in the right of the few and good of the many and social well-being and between political and social rights between individual freedom.

Ambedkar said earlier, has deliberately used an idiom in the Directive Principles of State Policy which is neither fixed nor rigid but quite flexible fixed nor rigid but quite flexible. The Directive Principle of State Policy therefore of which Ambedkar was the champion, not only represent the ideals objective resolutions but contribute effectively to the ideal of social justice.<sup>xlii</sup>

It may be emphasised that in India we have sought to achieve social justice through the rule of law. It is parliament and the state legislatures to make laws un respect of matters falling within their spheres. It is for the executive at the state and central levels to implement them.

The basic law of the land has put the citizen as the source of power but we have not been able to create institutions to impart the necessary training in respectable citizenship to the people. The urgent need to evolve a programme of mass education about the right of the citizens, particularly the weaker sections in the rural areas the means through which they could be enjoyed and the duties they have to perform towards the state and the society.

Another aspect that is noticed now is the needs of the weaker sections are perceived by the executive and very rarely articulated by the people themselves, the formulation of the development programmes is also done by the executive without the participation of the people concerned. The result of this has been that while the people are prepared to receive the benefits bestowed on them under several of the development programmes all because some money is being given to them, they are rarely concerned with making these programmes a success and absorb the beneficial effects on a permanent basis. There is therefore, need to evolve strategies to involve the people not only in identifying the areas needing development but also in drawing up schemes towards providing such need.

If public spirited organisation could pool their resource and champion the cause of the weaker section in matters relating to obtaining their due, then the achievement of social justice will be will within their reach and transformation as envisaged would be a reality.<sup>xliii</sup>

For the purpose of this analysis of the role played by rural development programmes, the weaker sections include the following categories:

1. Sections of the community who because of the caste system, were forced to engage in mental and unclean occupations, i.e., untouchables or the scheduled castes;
2. Groups who, forced by historical and other reason, lives in backward, remote and unproductive regions not influenced by modernism such as scheduled tribes;
3. Landless agricultural labourers and share-croppers;
4. Families below poverty line;
5. Women and children; and
6. Socially, physically and mentally handicapped persons.<sup>xliv</sup>

### **3.2 Problem of Social Justice**

Despite Constitutional provisions and impressive national programmes of planned development for the weaker section, particularly the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, landless labourers and those below poverty line, they have not taken full advantage of development. The reason and the problems which stand in the way of social justice are as under:

1. Untouchability, lower social status of scheduled castes and discriminatory attitude of the caste ridden society towards them;
2. Exploitation of tribals by money lenders, forest contractors and officials;
3. Institution of bonded labour;
4. Illiteracy and ignorance;
5. Class dominance; and
6. Ignorance about Constitution safeguards, plan provisions, and schemes about the welfare and the development of the weaker sections.<sup>xlv</sup>

### **4.0 Conclusion**

The Policy of Reservation as implemented in India has not yielded the solemn aim to which Dr. Ambedkar loved and lived. It has perpetuated Casteism and has created a new elite class among Scheduled Castes. Dr. Ambedkar throughout his life opposed casteism. He work for annihilation of caste, women, equality etc. Dr. Ambedkar concept of social justice was based on dignity and fraternity. He wanted justice and not charity. He wanted dignity and not denigration and hatred for poor. Speaking on All India radio in October 3, 1954, he said,

“My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words, liberty, equality, fraternity.”

In the extended year of Dr. Ambedkar’s centenary – ‘The Year of Social Justice’, the best tribute to him would be to relucate ourselves for greater cohesion among various castes and religions of India.

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