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Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's thought on Social Justice in India

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Abstract

'Social justice' is main significant idea of the Indian constitution. It is the fundamental need of all the state, and nation to ensure equal opportunities to its citizens. So that the people could dwell with 'dignity' and 'self-esteem.' Equal opportunities make it clear that the rights of the citizens would not be overlooked on the basis of their caste, colour, religion or economic status. There should not be any discrimination and exclusion of any kind. Here, this paper contributes to understand the idea of social justice by Dr B R Ambedkar. To some extent, the paper explores views of Dr. Ambedkar on social justice how relevant for Indian society to balance and give justice to all Indian citizens. It also tries to emphasize on Ambedkar's efforts and notion on social justice by the Indian context. Ultimately, the work endeavours to do research on the significance of Ambedkar's social justice ideology with the present scenario.

Key words: *welfare state; equal opportunities; social justice; ideology; India*

Introduction

“Turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform; you cannot have economic reform, unless you kill this monster”

– Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (Moon, 2008th Ed, 16).

Being a social thinker, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas on social, politico-religious, and economic problems (i.e. the evil of rigid caste/'varna' hierarchy in Indian society) are still relevant to Indian society. Ambedkar was the voice of Dalits/subaltern. Therefore, he does not believe on caste hierarchy thus, he started to fight against its discrimination and work for the social justice. Social consciousness has a major role to provide the equal opportunity and justice with all human rights. According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar,

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social development can be measured by the equality. We also stand with the same view and understand social justice is a key to open the door for social-political and economic equality. When Dr Ambedkar's proposal failed in the round table, he moved to work from the ground level and started to aware people about their rights. There must be inclusion of all groups and class as well as it should be in every aspect. According to his beliefs, social stability is necessary. Yet not one-sided caste system power destruction (Barnwal, 2014). Barnwal writes, Babasaheb was dedicated to uplift to the suppressed classes (Barnwal, 2014). He knew that this caste untouchability may take years and years to bring equality. So, he shared his vision on social justice and put his ideas in the round table conferences. His concept was for all deprived (SC, ST, and OBC) and marginal groups (even for women also).

M. Sampathkamar (2015) says, "According to Dr. Babasaheb, no caste, no inequality and no superiority. All are equal" (Gupta, and Jain, 35). Dignity and emancipation of untouchables were only way to bring equality in the society. As a social reformer, Dr B. R. Ambedkar started to campaign against untouchability, and work in ground level. His main aim was to include the untouchables (dalits). He understood that without breaking caste system social justice was not possible. Thus, he started to work for social justice. He gave a proposal of dalit's reservation. So that untouchability may disappear from the society. His idea was the chance and opportunity to Dalits will minimize the social and economic gap between elite and dalit classes. He says "Shikshan he vaghineche doodh aahe, tumhi pyalya nantar, gurgurlya shivay rahnaar naahot! (Marathi)" He promoted to educate. Another idea was inter-caste marriage (In hindi, "Roti-beti" vyavhaar). But the cases of honour killing and caste issues became the hurdle (as a film literature: Sairat movie is also one example of honour killing). Again, his ideas have not been implemented and understood by the society.

Objectives

The main objective of this study to draw our attention to social justice in India.

Dr Ambedkar's ideas of social justice how is relevant to today.

To understand the significant of Dr Ambedkar's social justice to minimise our social disparities.

Method and Materials

This paper contributes the work done by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for the betterment of the deprived, suppressed and the poor in order to provide them social justice. However, the Hindu's varna or caste order and problems related to it were firmly embedded in pre and post-independent India. In the process, secondary data have been compiled from the internet, published papers, books and official websites.

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Social Justice

The connotation of 'social justice' may vary in different societies and within the world of social work. Social justice's concept includes the terms- dignity, human rights and equality (eco., poli., and socio. levels). Equal dispersal of resources, justice, laws and policy's practice, removing inequality, societal contribution in change, personal responsibility. Generating admittance to chances with the action in the course of social justice (Dolan-Reilly^a, 2013). Chitkara mentions that the idea of social justice is based on the idea of social and economic balance. It aims to assist the exclusion of social and economic differences (Chitkara, 2002, 7). In the words of Georgianna Dolan, "Social justice is both a state of mind and an action. It is the process by which governments, groups, and individuals begin to think about and strive for, equality and justice for all individuals" (Dolan-Reilly, b 2013).

Ghanshyam Shah writes,

"Ambedkar's thought of social justice runs through his writings regarding equality, liberty, fraternity, human rights, socio economic democracy and the state and minorities. Secondly, Ambedkar's several theoretical stands with particular references to social justice. Those often leads to misinterpretation" (Shah, 2002, 40).

In short, social justice is found when we do have equalities and equal opportunities for all. In India, social injustice can be found in caste, gender, and class. The subaltern (SC, ST and OBC) groups are still feeling exclusion from the mainstream thus, there are social inequalities exist. In the recent, we can see the lynching of Dalits. After ban of cow slaughtering in various states of India, we could see in the recent days that various lynching examples and this causes the death of many Dalits. Muslims, Chambhars and many Dalits became the victim of this lynching. They brutally killed and bitten.

Structure of Social Justice

The Indian Constitution tries to attain the aim of offering social equality in relations of articulating thoughts, opinions and feelings. The terms i.e. "Socialist", "Social and Economic Justice", and "Equality" used in the Constitution' Preamble. It also indicates that social welfare of people and construction of an egalitarian society would be the duty of the state (Bohra, 1). This is how the preamble and different Articles of Constitution's Part IV makes an effort to offer social justice so that everyone could live a meaningful and dignified life.

Dr. Ambedkar's Thought on Social Justice

Dr. Ambedkar raised voice for Kshudra and untouchables in deeply discriminated Hindu society. The system that devalued the Kshudra. Dr Ambedkar did not support it to any inequalities of the lowborn

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persons. It was his belief that up to when there is a caste system in the society. Dr. Ambedkar tried to assemble the outcastes with the motto “educate, agitate and unite” to bring equality and to provide social justice to the greatest overlooked part of the social order (Bohra). His idea inspires to too many people and people started supporting him. Dr. Ambedkar’s very first public struggle was for untouchables to have water from ‘Choudar-Talab.’ This was reserved for the use of higher castes only. This agitation assisted to spoil past inequality was even discriminated for water or public water supply. To reestablish the confidence and awareness of rights, Ambedkar was against the caste’s order. As he was aware that education only will liberate people not caste. Hinduism was rooted deeply, so it was difficult to change the society. As a result, he converted to Buddhism. This was his major step towards the social justice. Many were started converting to Buddhism and from then many could not follow the hierarchy and started negotiating to equal rights. This deconstruction brought change in the society. Similar to the Bohra’s view we noticed that the approaches of scholars and leaders have been different. Bohra says, “Gandhi himself challenged existing caste system in his own way – for example, by asking the members of his ashram to clean toilets. Ambedkar’s analysis of caste system and struggle against it was much more radical” (Bohra). Here, we are not going in detail about the discussion or debate of Gandhi and Ambedkar. But we are trying to see how Ambedkar’s idea to include untouchable but somewhere other’s ideas were against it. So, the struggle of working towards social justice for Dalits was continued by Ambedkar.

Conclusion

Ambedkar’s social justice is for ‘equal rights’ and ‘human dignity.’ His contribution some level has brought social consciousness. His constant fight support to ‘reservation system’ for Dalits. Due to his valuable efforts we are here. Although, his vision has not yet completed, we need to take certain other steps in favour of Dalits and women. Now, we can say, the minority LGBTQIA group also have been included as a subaltern. If we revisit Ambedkar’s ideas and follow his vision, then obviously one day we will reach to give justice to all. And India will be a developed nation in the context of social angel. Let’s go little bit beyond the idea of India. Social justice is required everywhere where the discrimination and segregation include. Across the globe, we can take many issues and see apply the theory of social justice to bring the change in the society. We understand that Ambedkar’s idea is very relevant to the international level as well. Even today, we can see several voices are coming out from the world to bring social justice with equality. According the recent case of the USA: “I can’t Breathe” these were the words of George Floyd (Black, American). However, this recent news paid attention of the whole world and

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protests started to give justice to George. This is the case of Minneapolis, USA. There are many other subaltern voices also have been locked thus the Ambedkar's idea of social justice is still relevant and needs to study deeply to implement in our society. After uttering these words, he died by suffocating. His suffocation tells us many deprived and suppressed voices. This study can be a comparative study with race and minority context. Also, Ambedkar's ideas can be explored with the black and dalit contexts to know their similar and dissimilar issues. Those voices need to be listened. Then only we can give social justice by stopping racism and casteism.

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