



B.R. Ambedkar's Philosophical Insights to Social Justice and Their Influence on Modern Indian Values

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Abstract:

In this article, we look at how Ambedkar's concept about philosophy and social justice have influenced contemporary Indian principles. An eminent figure in India's political and social history, Ambedkar argued for the abolition of caste discrimination and the establishment of a socialist nation placed on the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Beyond mere political advocacy, Ambedkar laid the groundwork for social reform in India with his ideas, which drew from both indigenous Indian philosophical traditions and Western liberal thought. Ambedkar's views on caste and how he rethought Buddhism to promote social liberation, to prioritise equality and basic rights. Justice in India was transformed by Ambedkar's fight for the rights of women, Dalits, and other oppressed groups; he advanced the idea of human dignity and challenged traditional hierarchies. Through a critical analysis we will see that how Ambedkar's philosophy intersects with modern Indian values, this paper shows how his ideas still influence discussions about equality, secularism, and democracy today. We also look at Ambedkar's social justice vision through the lens of the continuous fights for equality, especially as they pertain to gender and caste rights. In the end, this research highlights Ambedkar's significant role in shaping the moral and ethical values of modern India, establishing him as a pivotal figure in the country's philosophical evolution.

Keywords: Social justice, Equality, Socialist nation, Gender and Caste discrimination.

Introduction:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of India's most influential intellectuals and social reformers, has left an indelible mark on the country's moral, political, and social fabric. His contributions, particularly in the areas of social justice, caste abolition, and the advocacy for equal rights, have fundamentally shaped modern Indian values. The architect of India's Constitution, Ambedkar envisioned a nation founded on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity values that continue to resonate in India's democratic and pluralistic society today. His philosophy of social justice was not only an academic exercise but a deeply practical call to action for the marginalized, especially Dalits, women, and other oppressed groups.

Ambedkar's thought was revolutionary in its critique of caste, which he viewed as the greatest barrier to equality in Indian society. His re-interpretation of Buddhism as a philosophy of social liberation sought to dismantle these entrenched hierarchies and provide a new framework of human dignity. His relentless fight for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized communities went beyond mere policy advocacy; it was a philosophical

challenge to the social and moral order that perpetuated discrimination.

In contemporary India, Ambedkar's ideas continue to influence discussions on equality, democracy, and secularism. As issues related to caste and gender discrimination remain pertinent, his vision of a just society is more relevant than ever.

Research Methodology:

Rather than relying heavily on factual and measurable evidence, In the course of an inquiry into current discussions on Ambedkar's concept about philosophy and social justice. My study seeks to provide an ethical and conceptual explanation of current discussions. For this work, I mostly used content analysis and a critically textual framework as my research methods. My research has relied on primary and secondary resources. Still, I restrict my attention to theoretical or conceptual considerations in this work.

Ambedkar on Social Justice:

Social justice is founded on ethical morality and is essential in influencing developmental policies and social welfare initiatives. It is characterised as a social system that fosters

happiness for all individuals by effectively regulating behaviour. This concept underscores the necessity of eliminating social disabilities and inequalities originating from birth, thereby guaranteeing equal opportunities for all individuals to realise their potential. Social justice is intrinsically connected to equality and social rights, promoting a framework that upholds ethical principles and dignity. Ambedkar posits that justice includes social, political, and economic aspects, all governed by the Indian constitution (Arumugam, 2011, p 2). Ultimately, social justice seeks to establish an equitable society in which all individuals can prosper.

Ambedkar's notion of social justice, founded on liberty, equality, and fraternity, is fundamental to India's Constitution. It preserves the dignity of human identity and fosters fraternal relations among citizens, denouncing caste divisions and advocating for the respect of all individuals. Social justice underscores reciprocal respect and accountability within societal interactions. Social democracy, as articulated by Ambedkar, is a lifestyle that acknowledges liberty, equality, and fraternity as fundamental principles. These principles should be regarded collectively as a unified trinity, as separating one from the others would undermine the essence of democracy (Sampathkumar, 2014, p 54). Social justice is essential for societal welfare and fosters self-respect and dignity.

Ambedkar's perspectives on social justice are dynamic and progressive, emphasising equitable opportunities for all individuals to cultivate their identity and social entitlements. His concepts have influenced numerous developmental policies and welfare initiatives throughout India. Ambedkar's contributions to the constitution, characterised by his intellectual, legal, and humanistic insights, enhanced the egalitarian nature of social democracy in India. He advocated for the eradication of societal oppression through the inclusion of provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, religious minorities, women, and children. States are obligated to protect, promote, and safeguard the interests of the marginalised segments of society (Bragta, 2021, pp 587-88). Ambedkar envisioned the liberation and independence of women through the provision of equal rights equivalent to those of men. He also afforded political representation to marginalised groups, guaranteeing equity in decision-making and governance. Notwithstanding the obstacles of social justice in the era of globalisation and information technology, Ambedkar's writings and publications remain potent instruments for addressing discrimination rooted in caste and class. His concepts have been integrated into numerous

developmental initiatives and social welfare programs to foster inclusive growth in India.

Ambedkar on Gender and Caste Discrimination:

When one goes through the list of the feminist icons for the upliftment of women in India, the efforts and work of Dr. Ambedkar are often overlooked. He is labeled as a Dalit leader only and such a labeling process does not accept to recognize the other aspects of his work that have benefitted not only a particular class but every citizen of India including women of both lower caste and upper caste. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed in the equality of women and he always opposed gender-based oppression in Indian society. Ambedkar strongly emphasized equality-based Hindu society reformation. His contribution was appreciable in the empowerment of women. He always advocated for the liberation of women and gender equality in Indian society. He Says that:

“I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved” (The Indian Express, 2023).

Dr. Ambedkar, a distinguished Indian philosopher, acknowledged the significance of gender equality in social reform initiatives. His conception of women's empowerment was embodied in the Indian Constitution, which enshrines the principle of gender equality within Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Duties, and Directive Principles. In Castes in India their mechanism, genesis, and growth, Ambedkar highlighted Hindu and Muslim women's oppression in societies. He conducted a thorough examination of women's roles in both religions and condemned the deprivation of rights and personal status. Dr. Ambedkar contended that the purdah system, which denies Muslim women mental and moral sustenance, constituted a critical concern. He endeavoured to embrace Buddhism, which granted women equal status to men and recognised their potential for spiritual attainment. By embracing Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar liberated marginalised groups, including women, and affirmed their dignified equal status. He also refuted the veneration of Hindu deities, emancipating women from barbaric customs, rituals, and superstitions, ultimately resulting in their liberation.

Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to women's empowerment exemplify the significance of gender equality in social reform. His work underscores the necessity of social justice and the significance of advancing gender equality in all facets of life. Empowerment entails enhancing the abilities of individuals and communities to integrate into mainstream society. Education serves as a potent instrument for empowerment, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar underscored its significance for social emancipation and liberation. He contended against professional education and underscored the

importance of secular instruction for social liberation and autonomy. Ambedkar's educational philosophy sought to cultivate the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and moral integrity among boys and girls across all religions, regions, classes, and castes (Yeasmin, 2018). He advised policymakers to redefine education's goals, use it to promote substantive equality, and promote women's education. Dr. Ambedkar disagreed with Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohon Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Mahatma Gandhi on women's rights. He sought to establish a society founded on social justice, affording women equal status with men. He criticised traditional and conservative values, asserting that women should possess equal status with men and the right to education.

Gender and caste discrimination are deeply intertwined in many societies, particularly in India. Caste-based hierarchies often perpetuate the subjugation of women, especially from marginalized communities. Both systems reinforce inequality, limiting access to education, employment, and social mobility, thus maintaining patriarchal and caste-based oppression. The Caste system and Untouchability are the cornerstones of the Hindu Social Order. How Shudras came into existence has been analyzed and explained. There was yet another class called Untouchables which was not even considered a part of the Varna System. They were considered as Avarnas. They were addressed as Chandalas, Atishudras, and Dalits oppression by Hindu upper caste (Moon and Dolas, 2016). But Ambedkar was totally against the caste system and he stated that:

“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” (Ambedkar, 1995, p 40).

The harsh reality ingrained in Indian culture is the caste system. The conventional social structure of India was sustained by the burdens of caste-based inequality for an extended period. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the social injustice resulting from the caste system on an international scale. Dr. Ambedkar authored numerous books and delivered various papers elucidating the complexities of the caste system in India, advocating for its abolition. Dr. Ambedkar's study of the caste system primarily focusses on social exclusion, the legal enforcement of endogamy, and the segregation of society into impermeable compartments. To comprehend the social dimension of the caste system, it is essential to grasp the mechanisms necessary for maintaining the integrity of the caste institution.

Conclusion:

This paper seeks to explore the intersection of Ambedkar's philosophy with modern Indian values, analyzing how his vision of social justice has shaped the ongoing struggles for equality. By doing

so, it highlights Ambedkar's enduring influence on the ethical and moral evolution of Indian society, making him a towering figure in India's intellectual and philosophical landscape. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's profound contributions to social justice, gender equality, and the abolition of caste discrimination have fundamentally shaped modern Indian society and its constitutional framework. His visionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity are not merely theoretical constructs but practical imperatives that continue to resonate in contemporary discussions on social reform.

Ambedkar's emphasis on the interconnectedness of social, political, and economic justice underscores the necessity of addressing systemic inequalities that persist in various forms today. His advocacy for women's rights and empowerment highlights the critical role of gender equality in achieving a just society, while his relentless critique of the caste system serves as a powerful call to dismantle entrenched hierarchies that perpetuate discrimination. As India navigates the complexities of globalization and modernity, Ambedkar's writings and philosophies remain vital tools for fostering inclusive growth and ensuring that the principles of social justice are upheld for all citizens, particularly the marginalized. His legacy continues to inspire movements for equality and justice, affirming the importance of his vision in the ongoing struggle against discrimination and oppression.

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