Contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to the Modern India

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Abstract

Dr. Ambedkar was a great nationalist, social thinker, political reformer, philosophical writer with progressive ideas. He stood for all political, social and cultural actions which increased the reason of human development and happiness. He was the soul for the constitution of India. He crusaded for the betterment of the exploited and depressed classes. He stood rare crusading spirit, carving out in this procedure plays important role for himself between the leading architects of modern India. In this process, Dr. Ambedkar emerges not only as a Valliant upholder of the Indian democratic republic, but too captures the outstandingly distinctive place in the Indian Pantheon as an unusual intellectual mass leader who awakened the social conscience of contemporary India.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know the revolutionary work of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as the social reformer of modern India.
2. To highlight his role against casteism and for human dignity in India.
3. To assess his Contribution as nation builder, an architect of Indian constitution and as an eminent economist and educationist to Modern India.

Methodology

The present study on 'A study of the contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Modern India' is based on historical method. This research is based on a primary and secondary sources data that are available. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's publications, What Congress and Gandhi have done to untouchables (1945), Federation versus Freedom (1939), The problem of Rupee: Its origin and its solution (1925), Annihilation of Caste (1936), Castes in India: Their Genesis, Mechanism and Development (1918), Who were the Shudras (1946), The Untouchables: Who were they and why they became Untouchables (1948) and varied collection of secondary sources for the study were also consulted.

Introduction

Dr. B.R Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the best sense of the word. He was a leading activist and social reformer who gave his life functioning for the

upliftment of the Dalits and the socially unwilling class of India. A messiah for the oppressed, he continuously fought for eradication of caste discrimination that had fragmented the Indian society and made it cripple. Born in a socially backward family, Ambedkar was the victim of caste discrimination, inequality and prejudice. However, fighting all odds, he attained higher education thus he became the first ever untouchable to attain the same. No sooner after completing his higher studies, he launched himself politically fighting for the rights of the depressed class and inequality practiced in the society. He was an advocator of social equality and justice. Academically trained as a jurist, he went on to become the first Law Minister of Independent India and the framer or chief architect of the Constitution of India. He laid special emphasis on dignity, unity, freedom, and rights for all citizens as enshrined in the constitution. Ambedkar advocated democracy in every field social, economic, political. For him social justice meant maximum happiness to the maximum number of people.

Birth and Education

Bhim Rao was born on 14 April 1891 in an untouchable 'Mahar' family at Mhow, near Indore in the present Madhya Pradesh. He was the fourteenth child of Ramji Sakpal and Bhimbai. Ramji Sakpal(1848-1913) was a head master in the Military School in the rank of subedar- major. Bhimabai (1854- 96) belonged to a well to do family of Murbadkars who were also employed in the British army. Bhimrao's family hailed originally fiom the Ambavade village located in the Ratnagiri District of the present Maharashtra. His official name in the school register was Bhima Rao Ambavadekar. There was a Brahamin teacher in his school with the surname Ambedkar, who somehow had a soft corner for the boy. It was the kindness of this teacher which made him ultimately adopt Ambedkar as his surname. Ambedkar got married to Ramabai, a nine years old girl, at the age of fourteen. He passed matriculation in 1907. With the help of a scholarship offered by Maharaja Syajirao Gaekwad of Baroda, he completed the B.A. degree in 1912. His higher education was in the West. There also his studies were financed by the Maharaja, on an agreement to serve in the Baroda state after completing the studies. He took his MA degree in 19 15 and Ph.D. degree in 1916 from the renowned Columbia University, New York. After successful completion of his studies at the Columbia University he left New York for London and entered the Gray's Inn for doing Bar-at-Law and simultaneously enrolled himself in the London School of Economic and Political Science. But, when he was half the way through his studies the Maharaja of Baroda called him back, as the period of scholarship granted to him was over. Back in India he assumed the office of the Military Secretary to the Maharaja. But due to the unbearable humiliation he had to suffer at the hands of caste- Hindus he left Baroda state. For a shortwhile he worked as a professor of political economy at the Sydenham College, Bombay. He resigned from this post to resume his economic and legal studies in London. This time the Maharaja of Kohlapur rendered him financial assistance. Before leaving for London he had given evidence before the South borough Commission on franchise; and had advocated separate electorate for the untouchables. In 1921 he got his M.Sc. for his thesis "Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India" He obtained

the D.S.C. (Econ) degree in 1922 from the London University for the thesis. "The Problem of the Rupee: It's Origin and its Solution". Taking his Bar-at-Law degree from the Gray's Inn he went to Germany and joined the famous University of Bonn for a higher course of studies in economics. But he could not complete his studies due to shortage of funds.

Dr. Ambedkar as a social reformer

Dr. Ambedkar believed in peaceful methods of social change. He was supported to constitutional lines in the evolutionary process of social transformation. He thought the factors like law and order which are indispensable for social life. It also strives to sustain institutions that will make better 'social order'. He was opposite to the aggressive method in communal change for it obstruction the composure and create chaos. He had no faith in anarchy methods. A welfare state of all cannot be developed on the grounds of terror, force and brutal methods. According to him violent method to a peaceable culture is not only inappropriate but too irrational and immoral. He was a true Renaissance man, a person who excelled in many different areas of inquiry. Though he was hated by conventional Hindus and labelled as a demolisher of Hinduism, historians now realize the crucial role Dr. Ambedkar played in recognizing Hindu society. Far from being a traitor, he played an important role in revitalizing Hinduism, reviving it by challenging everything that was unjust and unfair within it. In fact, he brought about a renaissance of Hinduism by provoking the Hindus to rethink some of the basic tenets of their religion.

Dr. Ambedkar had a great faith in social reformers to create public opinion for against of the gross inequalities in the society. He urged them to found organizations to deal with urgent cases of discrimination. The organizations should deal the powerful section of society to give a chance to the oppressed and depressed classes to work in different sectors. The Hindu society should give a space to depressed sections by employing them in their various sectors suited to the capacities of applicants. According to him, social change and social justice are indeed critical to the egalitarianism that any democracy must aspire it. As a social democrat Dr. Ambedkar worried on a much broader view of steady rebuilding of country with comprehensive expansion and cultural integration in the Nation without caste discrimination. As the major architect of the Indian constitution, Dr. Ambedkar constructed the safeguards for establishing a more equitable society to millions of oppressed and depressed classes. He was strongly believed that political institutions were responsible for reforming the existing social institutions by using legislative force to yield the results. Political institutions will survive only when they actively work for social reformation.

Dr. Ambedkar was a freedom fighter of the truest kind, not merely dreaming of setting India force from British rule, but of transforming India into a country where freedom holds meaning for everyone. While Mahatma Gandhi led fellow Indians in a struggle against discrimination in South Africa, Dr. Ambedkar led a battle, too, against prejudice within his own country. By securing equality for his community, he was creating a more equal world for us all.

Dr. Ambedkar as an Educationist

Dr. Ambedkar considered education as a powerful instrument for raising the overall status of the depressed and deprived classes. He thought, It is education that furnishes moral arsenal for any social movement, the more education the more the chances for progress. In his struggle for the liberation of the Dalits from the Hindu social slavery, Ambedkar had the right cognizance of the role that education has to play. He desired the elevation of the depressed classes to be the responsibility of the enlightened people in the country. Thus he established a chain of schools colleges and hostels under the shield of the People's Education Society which he had founded in 1945. His emphasis, however, does not rest merely on academic education. He had realised the importance of mass education. Accordingly he conceived education as a means to make the Dalits aware of their social realities and to develop in them courage and commitment to fight casteism. He published four periodicals namely 'Mooknayak' (1920), 'Bahishkrit Bharat' (1927), 'Samatha' (1929) and 'Janata' (1930). He exhorted his followers that 'it is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self respect and it is out of hard and 4 ceaseless struggle alone one derives strength, confidence and recognition . His career as teacher, principal and member of legislative enabled him to get insight into the academic and administrative problems of higher education, it also provided him rich experience and knowledge of the complexities of educational concerns. He urged the teachers and the educated parents to meet the requirements and challenges of the modern world and called on them to work for inculcation of rational thinking and scientific temper among the masses in general and the young generation in particular. To him, education is the only right weapon to cut down social slavery. It will enlighten the dalits to achieve elevated social status, economic betterment and human and political rights. It would enhance adjournment of the age old values and would inculcate the values required for a pluralist society. It is out of this conviction that he made 'educate' the first word of his slogan "Educate, Agitate, Organise".

As a Warrior against Casteism

Ambedkar's birth in an 'untouchable' community made him undergo humiliating experiences. In those days untouchability was deeply entrenched in the minds of the caste Hindus. Ambedkar fought the caste-ridden unjust society on all fronts- social, religious, political and economic. His encounter with casteism and untouchability opened a new course in the social reform movement in India. Unlike the earlier reformers who limited the cause of social progress and welfare within a general frame of reference, Ambedkar concentrated his power and resources on the cause of liberation of a particular section, the Dalits. Ambedkar's ideological conflict with the Hindu social order and casteism developed into direct action in March 1924 when a meeting of the untouchables was convened at the Damodar Hall, Bombay. The foundation of" Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha" set a concrete platform to represent the grievances of the depressed classes. During the early phase of his movement Ambedkar demanded equal rights particularly social and religious, for the Dalits. But later the association set importance extra on the political rights of the

depressed classes. Ambedkar no more fought within the fabric of Hinduism. While the congress boycotted the Simon Commission he did not hesitate to tender evidence before it on behalf of the Dalits. He felt that it was his duty to promote their interests by demanding separate electorates. On this matter he had to confront with Gandhiji in the Second Round Table Conference. Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party (1LP) to promote the cause of the depressed classes. When, under the Government of India Act 1935, election to the provincial legislatures was declared, his party contested the election in seventeen seats in the Bombay Presidency and won fifteen. However, congress formed the government and Ambedkar joined the opposition. A notable achievement of his party in the legislature was the introduction of the bill for abolition of Mahar Watan and Khoti. The bill was aimed at liquidating the feudal land tenure system that prevailed in the Konkan region. As a member of the constituent assembly and as chairman of the Draft Committee of Indian Constitution, Ambedkar did his best to safeguard the interests of the depressed classes. The constitution established a uniform or single system of citizenship law for the country. It outlawed the stigma of untouchability and prohibited discrimination on the ground of religion, caste, race and sex. There are provisions in the Constitution for protecting the political rights of the depressed sections of the society.

Ambedkar as an eminent economist

Dr. Ambedkar work in economics is noteworthy. His views deals with public finance and agriculture are landmark in the economics. Prof. A. K. Sen has also said, “Ambedkar is my Father in Economics. He is factual celebrated champion of the disadvantaged. He deserve additional than what he has achieve today. His contribution in the field of economics is splendid and will be remembered forever..!”Ambedkar said, ‘Economy’ in public expenditure does not simply mean a low level of public spending, but it is the clever use of finances so that every paisa fetches the most benefit. Those in charge of public funds must strive to evaluate alternative methods of achieving the objectives and see to it that leakages do not occur. Ambedkar’s commitment was internal stability and he was convinced that only an automatic system based on gold standard with gold currency could achieve this desirable end. He was of view that governments should spend the resources garnered from the public not only as per rules, laws and regulations, but also to see that “faithfulness, wisdom and economy”. Overruling in a conversation in the Bombay Legislative Council on October 10, 1927, Dr. Ambedkar argued that the solution to the agrarian question "lies not in increasing the size of farms, but in having concentrated cultivation that is employing additional capital and more labour on the farms such as we have." Further on, he says: "The better method is to begin cooperative agriculture and to compel owner of little flooring to join in cultivation." Thus Ambedkar thought on public Finance and agriculture has vital relevance and still applicable in current situation of India. In command to improve output of agriculture sector, government is needed to take measures on the basis of Dr. Ambedkar’s consideration. In his work 'State and Minorities' he suggested to bring all the key and basic industries as well as agriculture and insurances beneath the manage of State monopoly. He also postulated that the State should divide the acquired agricultural land into farms of standard sizes and let these out to farmers without

any consideration of caste and creed. The worth of his conclusion is considerable exactly since his analysis was based on sound empirical and historical foundations. Key industries shall be own and run by the state. Basic but non-key industries shall be owned by the condition and run by the state or by corporation recognized by it. Agriculture shall be a state industry, and be organized by the state taking over all land and letting it out for cultivation in suitable standard sizes to residents of villages; these shall be cultivated as group farms by groups of families. He also stresses the need for industrialization so as to shift extra labour from agriculture to previous creative occupation, accompanied by large capital investments in agriculture to raise yields. He sees an extremely important role for the state in such transformation of agriculture and advocates the nationalization of land and the leasing out of land to groups of cultivators, who are to be confident to form cooperatives in order to promote agriculture. He was a believer in state socialism which he upheld as essential for the rapid industrialization of India.

Dr. Ambedkar as a Nation builder

He was out spoken about his ideas of nation building. He possessed great foresight and his warnings about the future of India ring so true today. In a speech before the constituent assembly he cautioned his fellow legislators against the use of non-constitutional methods of protest, such as civil disobedience and Satyagraha, because they were essentially an anarchic in nature. He rallied against the Indian tendency to engage in hero worship. He was afraid that the people of India would lay their liberation at the feet of someone they worshipped or entrust them with extraordinary limitless powers. He also underlined the importance of creating not just a political democracy, but also a social and economic one. His PhD thesis was inspired to set up for the Finance Commission of India and his works helped a lot in framing guidelines for the RBI Act 1934.He was one of the founders of Employment Exchanges in our country. He played a vital role in establishment of the National Power Grid System, Central Water Irrigation, Navigation Commission, Damodar valley project, Hirakud project and Sone river project.

Dr. Ambedkar as an architect to Indian constitution

Dr. Ambedkar's drafting of the Indian Constitution has facilitated the abolition of untouchability and the prohibition of all forms of discriminations based on sex, religion, caste etc. Owing to the entire exceptional offerings, Dr B.R. Ambedkar can be truly entitled as the Principal architect of the Indian Constitution. However, it is an undeniable truth that Dr Ambedkar's vision of the construction of a democratic social arrangement still remains unfulfilled. Various countries all over the world have followed the Indian Constitution.

Dr. Ambedkar had imprinted his mark of endowment and vision in drafting Indian Constitution. His statesman qualities can easily visible each and every article of Indian Constitution. Ambedkar preferred the

parliamentary system In England than the Presidential System in America. Dr. Ambedkar described the role of President as "He is the head of the state but not the executive. He represents to nation but does not rule the nation. He is the symbol of the nation. His place in the administration is that of a ceremonial device on a seal by which the nation's decisions are made known. The president of the Indian union will be generally bound by the advice of the Ministers. He can do nothing contrary to their advice nor can he do anything without their advice".

He strongly supported for federal system. He said "The Draft constitution is Federal Constitution is a much as it establishes what may be called Dual polity. This Dual polity under the proposed constitution will consist of the union at the centre and the states at the periphery each endowed with Sovereign powers to be exercised in the field assigned to them respectively by the constitution……. The draft constitution can be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances. In normal times, it is framed to work as a federal system. But in times of war it is so designed as to make it work as though it was a unitary system".

Dr. Ambedkar supported the minorities' rights that "It is wrong for the majority do deny the existence of minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognize the existence of the minorities to start with. It must also be such that it will enable majorities and minorities to merge somebody into one. The solution proposed by the constituent assembly is to be welcomed because it is a solution which serves this twofold purpose". On the criticisms of The Directive Principles of state of policy, Dr. Ambedkar clarified as "whoever captures power will not be free to do what he likes with it. In the exercise of it, he will have to respect these instruments of instructions which are called Directive Principles. He cannot ignore them. He may not have to answer for their breach in a court of Law. But he will certainly have to answer for them before the electorate at election time".

Dr. Ambedkar stated about **Article 32** that "It I was asked to name any particular article in this as the most important an article without which the constitution would be a nullity I would not refer to any other article except this one. It is the very soul of the constitution and heart of it". Dr. Ambedkar said about independent Election Commission that "the greatest safeguard for purity of elections, for fairness in elections, was to take away the matter from the hands of the executive authority and to hand it over to some independent authority". He remarked about the constitution as "It is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. Indeed, if I may so, if things go wrong under the new constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad constitution what we will have to say is that man is vile".

Conclusion

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar was a multifaceted personality. His public service started during the second decade of twentieth century. He belonged to the category of politician putting their service to humanity before themselves. Dr. Ambedkar's was a short life and yet a most extraordinary one. He rose up from dust, from being treated worse than an animal to becoming the father of the Indian Constitution. A genuine emancipator of Dalits, a great National leader and patriot, a great author, a great educationalist, a great political philosopher, a great religious guide and above all a great humanist without any parallel among his contemporary. All these facets of Ambedkar's personality had strong humanist underpinnings. Dr B.R.Ambedkar was in fact a designer of a nation and a universal leader instead of just a Dalit leader or leader of the backward classes. It's just because efforts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar we are pleased with the principles of social justice. Babasaheb is the individual, who with his efforts had build India in her early years. They fought for the independence of India and then strived to build India of their dreams. It is only regrettable that the press in the past as well as the contemporary has projected Ambedkar mainly as a great social rebel and a bitter critic of the Hindu religion. Critics of Dr. Ambedkar have ignored his basic humanistic instincts and strong humanitarian convictions behind his every act or speech throughout his life. Thus we conclude Dr. Ambedkar was one of the foremost makers of Modern India.

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