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Views of Ambedkar on Social Justice:

Ambedkar agreed with Bergbon's idea of justice which states, "Justice has always evoked ideas of equality, of proportion of 'compensation'. Equity signifies equality rules and regulations, right and righteousness are concerned with equality in value. If all men are equal, all men are of the same essence and the common essence entitles them to the same fundamental rights and to equal liberty" (quoted in Ambedkar, 1987). Ambedkar had also a very liberal concept of justice in the sense of its being grounded in human values. "Justice", for Ambedkar "is simply another name for liberty, equality and fraternity".

According to Ambedkar, political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it the social democracy which recognizes equality, liberty and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity but form a unity of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy (Ambedkar, 1994). Hence, for Ambedkar, democracy is an essential ingredient for attaining social justice.

To Ambedkar, liberty had a significant role to play in shaping human personality. It is grounded in expression of thought, belief, faith and worship; and a man with it becomes and grows rich when he expresses himself in various ways. It gives opportunities for art and literature. The hidden talents are expressed through liberty and a man can choose the best way to shape his destiny. To restrain absolute liberty, equality comes in picture. It knits men to men, groups to groups, and brings them in mutual ties, cooperation and social sympathy.

Citizens cannot live in crippled condition. Equality depends upon, acknowledges and gives effect to the consciousness of mutual obligations and mutual recognition of rights that bind the members of society together. Equality is the binding affair of the people. Fraternity is the in-depth feeling to provide an atmosphere wherein people could enjoy the values of liberty and equality.

For Ambedkar, "fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians (he wrote in reference to India which, however, can be generalized to socio-cultural contexts), all Indians being one people; It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life" (Ambedkar, 1994).

Thus, Ambedkar elucidated that these principles of trinity cannot be divorced from each other as one supplements and complements the other in the process of social justice.

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Ambedkar's concept of social justice means a mode of life to give every man his right place in society. Its precepts may be: to live honourably, to give respect to all, to injure no one, and to give every man his due without any artificial discrimination in mind and unnatural classification in society. The other precepts of social justice are: supremacy of constitutional rules, equality before law, grant of fundamental rights, performance of duties, adherence to legal and social obligations, and finally a staunch faith in the value of justice, liberty equality, fraternity and dignity of human personality.

The concept of justice, in Ambedkar's view, is a problem not merely of distributing the material abundance among the people but basically a mode of life based on mutual respect and regard, a feeling of fellowship as equal members of society. Hence, the measure of social justice is not material progress, but the abundance and proliferation of human values among the people (Jatava, 1998). Hence, his conception of justice is holistic and continuous process. He is more concerned with social transformation and development as it encompasses social justice to it.

Apart from the above theories, there are number of scholars who conceptualize the theories of the social justice. Hence, a brief description of their contribution is justifiable.

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According to Brunetto Latini, "Just as justice is an equal thing, so injustice is unequal; and thus he who wants to establish justice tries to make equal the things that are unequal" (as quoted in Sartori, 1965). Thus, he means justice by 'sameness'.

Hart conceptualized justice in relation to law and morality. In his own words: "justice constitutes not with individual conduct but with the ways in which classes of individuals are treated. It is this which gives justice its special relevance in the criticism of law and other public or social institutions. It is the most public and the most legal of the virtues.

But the principle of justice do not exhaust the idea of morality; and not all criticism of law made on moral grounds is made in the name of justice. Law may be condemned as morally bad simply because they require men to do particular actions which morally forbids individual to do, or

because they require men to abstain from doing those which are morally obligatory" (Hart, 1970).

About justice, he further explained "that individuals are entitled in respect of each other to a certain relative positions of equality or inequality. This is something to be respected in the vicis-situdes of social life when burdens or benefits fall to be distributed. It is also something to be

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restored when it is disturbed. Hence, justice is traditionally thought of as maintaining or restoring a balance or proportion, and it's leading precepts is often formulated as 'treat like cases alike', though we need to add, 'treat different cases differently".

Brecht talks of universality of human needs and so the universal term justice. He says: "the universal term justice responds to a universal human need of expression, not only in acquiescence with existing laws but also in criticizing them for lack of justice, and that this universal need relates to the feeling that has at least some elements in common. We have good cause for supposing, further, that these elements must be very important for human nature, since they are tied up with such passionate feeling" (Brecht, 1970).

For Messner, justice goes beyond the virtue of individual, as social order can exist only when there are rules of law and justice with objective and universal validity and independent of the subjective individual will… Justice, then, is a virtue whereby to fulfill the judicial obligations (Messner, 1965).

To David Hume, justice is not a 'natural virtue' but an 'artifice' for it arises from circumstances and necessities of mankind. Though the rules of justice may be artificial, yet they cannot be arbitrary, because the idea of justice is related to sympathy and public interest; it is morally approved and is based on human convention developed out of 'self-interest'.

According to Hume, "Justice establishes itself by a kind of convention or agreements; that is, by a sense of interest, supposed to be common to all, and where every single act is performed in expectation that others are to perform the like. Without such a convention, no one would have ever dreamed, that there was a virtue as justice, or would have been induced to conform his action to it" (Hume, 1978). 'Self-interest', as Hume observed, is the original notice to the establishment of justice; but sympathy with public interest is the source of moral approbation, which attends to that virtue.

All the above theories contributed something small, or big, positive or negative, this aspect or that aspect of social justice. However, some of the theories stated above seems to be outdated today for their inherent deficiencies. For instance, the theory of 'Hindu Social Order' believed in an official doctrine of 'social inequality (Hantal, 1998). It opposed to all that which constituted the essence of social justice (Ambedkar, 1987). In Ambedkar's view the Chaturvarna failed for the reason for which Plato's scheme proved wrong and superficial (Ambedkar, 1944).

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Similarly, the divine law of Hinduism which states, "Justice is an attribute of God …. Every act, every thought is weighed in the invisible but universal balance-scales of justice. The Day of Judgment is not in some remote future but here and now, and none can escape it. Divine laws cannot be evaded. They are not so much imposed from without as wrought into our nature" (Radhakrishnan, 1949 and 1957), is not acceptable in the modern world.

Aristotle, though one of the founding fathers of the rule of law justified social inequality and slavery, as he said: "The soil is to be till by slaves, and artisans are to be excluded from citizenship on the ground that virtue is impossible for men whose time is consumed in manual labor" (Sabine, 1973). Hence, his theory cannot be accepted too.

Similarly, no justice can be seen in Thrasymachusean who "upheld the interest of the strong and also justified inequality and violence – if they could protect the interest of the strong "(Jatava, 1998). As regards Nietzsche, Ambedkar observed that the social philosophy of Nietzsche "had become identified with will to power, violence, denial of spiritual values, superman and the sacrifice, servility and debasement of the common man" (Ambedkar, 1987). According to Jatava, "Nietzsche, like Manu, was an embodiment of social inequality and both of them upheld the interests of one class only, which was quite contradictory to the spirit of social justice." (Jatava, 1998).

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However, Marxism stands for the spirit of humanism. However, the method as well as objective outlined by it does not seem practicable and attainable in modern world – hence, at best remained as Utopia. It's 'praxis' in modified form in former USSR, China and other nations did not yield true justice. Its 'economic determinism' and alleging caste or religion as determinant of economic structure, and its call for violent proletariat revolution are more of a theory than a practical reality

– neither can be possible nor desirable. Despite such criticism, Marxism has been source of inspiration for scholars of social justice for its stand on humanism and social equity.

The Gandhian principle of social justice inherent in the idea of Sarvodaya Samaj is rejected by Ambedkar for three main reasons:

(i) That it is based on the division of labour which forms the cornerstone of Varnashram Dharma;

(ii) That it regards the role of Daridra Narayan (God's grace to weaker sections) as an important one for maintaining of justice;

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(iii) That the theory of 'trusteeship' has been highlighted to redress the economic ills of society, which is just like making the cat to look after the milk or to give a lamb under the guardianship of a wolf (Jatava, 1998).

More or less some weaknesses are seen in various theories of justice; some theories as discussed above are sectarian, anti-poor, whereas some other theories such as of Mills, Rawls, etc., are for human happiness and welfare of society but Ambedkar's view seems to be more comprehensive, for it goes beyond equality and liberty by adding fraternity which signifies spirit of brotherhoodness of mankind. Besides, he outlined methods to attain such which were practicable, as drafted in Constitution of India (Gore, 1997).

The crux of Ambedkar's concept of social justice are: the unity and equality of all human beings, the equal worth of men and women, the respect for the weak and the lowly, the regard for human rights, benevolence, mutual love, sympathy, tolerance, and charity towards fellow being, human treatment in all cases, the dignity of all citizens, the abolition of caste-distinctions, education and property for all, goodwill and gentleness (Jatava, 1998). In short, Ambedkar sought for social transformation through the establishment of social democracy in which equality, fraternity and liberty would prevail in each and every spheres of life of all members of society (Gore, 1997; Ram, 1996; Hantal, 1998).

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