



## STUDY ON Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR: A REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMER

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**Abstract:** Dr. B.R Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the word. Paul Baran, an eminent Marxist economist, had made a distinction in one of his essays between an "intellect worker" and an intellectual. The former, according to him, is one who uses his intellect for making a living whereas the latter is one who uses it for critical analysis and social transformation. Dr. Ambedkar fits Baran's definition of an intellectual very well. Dr. Ambedkar is also an outstanding example of what Antonio Gramsci called an organic intellectual, that is, one who represents and articulates the interests of an entire social class. Dr. Ambedkar – the determined fighter and a deep scholar, secured the highest academic honors from some of the most prestigious universities of the world. He made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. It is proved by a recently conducted survey by "History TV 18 and CNN IBN" in June 2012. „Who is the greatest Indian after Mahatma Gandhi? “is the question asked from the people of India. The contestants include, First PM Jawahar Lal Nehru, Singer Lata Mangeshkar, Industrialist J.R.D. Tata, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Indira Gandhi and Vallbhbbhai Patel etc. The final cumulative ranking was conducted following the three ways poll; ranking by jury (online and on ground), ranking by popular votes and ranking by market research. Finally, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar declared as winner. Historian Ramchandra Guha stated on the declaration of results "Dr. Ambedkar"s legacy has been distorted to suit particular interests. He was a great scholar, institution builder and economic theorist" "B.R. Ambedkar was a man of many parts—a scholar, a social reformer, a politician, a religious thinker and the moving spirit of the Indian constitution. He wrote prolifically over his nearly four decades in public life. Here, Mint offers a very brief glimpse into his astonishingly diverse oeuvre. These selections have been chosen with an eye on contemporary relevance, and hence do not cover what Ambedkar wrote on the more immediate issues of his time.

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### Introduction:

Bharatha Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, reverentially and most affectionately called 'Babasaheb Ambedkar' occupies a prominent place in the annals of India's social history. He determined as a fighter and a deep scholar has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He thought that "For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights." He liked the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity. The present paper is an attempt to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's contribution for social revolution in India. He has not only prepared the ground for a silent revolution, but has also played a key role in the drafting of the Constitution of India which has set the terms for the development of the world largest democracy. Dr. Ambedkar, as his last message cautioned the pseudo – champions of downtrodden; I

could carry on the caravan and if you could carry it forward alright? Otherwise keep it there where I put. don't pull it back'. Today, Dr. Ambedkar is loved by all those who love untouchables and hate untouchability.

The most important battles Ambedkar fought were for the rights of his people. The treatment given to untouchables angered him. He attacked Hindu society for what it had done to the untouchables, but also told social reformers from the upper castes that caste could not be annihilated unless the old religious texts themselves are questioned. If Ambedkar was critical of Hindu society, he was perhaps even more critical of Muslim society, especially its regressive politics and its treatment of women. "You are right in holding that Caste will cease to be an operative force only when inter-dining and inter-marriage have become matters of common course. You have located the source of the disease. But is your prescription the right prescription for the disease? Ask yourselves this question; Why is it that a large majority of Hindus do

not inter-dine and do not inter-marry? Why is it that your cause is not popular? There can be only one answer to this question and it is that inter-dining and inter-marriage are repugnant to the beliefs and dogmas which the Hindus regard as sacred. Caste is not a physical object like a wall of bricks or a line of barbed wire which prevents the Hindus from co-mingling and which has, therefore, to be pulled down. Caste is a notion, it is a state of the mind. The destruction of Caste does not therefore mean the destruction of a physical barrier. It means a notional change. Caste may be bad. Caste may lead to conduct so gross as to be called man's inhumanity to man. All the same, it must be recognized that the Hindus observe Caste not because they are inhuman or wrong-headed. They observe Caste because they are deeply religious. People are not wrong in observing Caste. In my view, what is wrong is their religion, which has inculcated this notion of Caste. If this is correct, then obviously the enemy, you must grapple with is not the people who observe Caste, but the Shastras which teach them this religion of Caste."

### THE ECONOMIST

Ambedkar was a trained economist with two PhD degrees. As in most other aspects of life, Ambedkar was an uncompromising modernist in economic matters. He believed that the industrialization of India was the best antidote to rural poverty. The first excerpt is from one of his first academic publications as an economist and the second is from the manifesto he drafted for the Independent Labour Party.

"In short, strange as it may seem, industrialisation of India is the soundest remedy for the agricultural problems of India. The cumulative effects of industrialisation, namely a lessening pressure (of surplus labour) and an increasing amount of capital and capital goods will forcibly create the economic necessity of enlarging the holding. Not only this, but industrialisation, by destroying the premium on land, will give rise to few occasions for its subdivision and fragmentation. Industrialisation is a natural and powerful remedy..."

—From *Small Holdings in India and their Remedies*, 1918

"The party believes that the fragmentation of holdings and the consequent poverty of the agriculturists are mainly due to the pressure of population on the land, and unless the pressure is relieved by draining off the excess population subsisting on land, fragmentation will continue, and the condition of the agriculturists will remain as poverty-stricken as it is today. In the opinion of the party, the principal means of helping the agriculturists and making agriculture more productive consists in the

industrialisation of the province. The party will, therefore, endeavour to rehabilitate old industries and promote such new industries as the natural resources of the provinces will permit... The party accepts the principle of state management and state ownership of industry, whenever it may become necessary in the interests of the people."

### THE POLITICAL THINKER

Ambedkar was a political liberal who believed in the values of liberty, equality and fraternity. But he also warned that political democracy would be at risk if the underlying society remains unequal or if Indians did not embrace what he described as constitutional morality.

"If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us."

The second thing we must do is to observe the caution which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions". There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered life-long services to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness. As has been well said by the Irish Patriot Daniel O'Connell, no man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty. This caution is far more necessary in the case of India than in the case of any other country. For in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

### Social Reform Works

#### 1. Struggle to achieve Dalit Rights:

Dr Ambedkar was the leader of the Mahad Satyagraha movement. This movement was a struggle

to secure basic human rights for the Dalit community. Through the Mahd movement, Ambedkar wanted to end social discrimination against Dalits. The movement started with the Dalits not being allowed to use water from the chowder tank in a place called Mahd. However, Ambedkar's relentless struggle made the Mahad Municipality pass a resolution in 1927 allowing all people, irrespective of their social caste, to use the water of the tank. He published five weekly papers Mook Nayak, Bahishkrit Bharat, Bahishkrit Bharat and Samta Janata to fight untouchability. In July 1924, Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha to fight the evils of untouchability. The Sabha started a free school for the young and the old and ran reading rooms and libraries.

## **2. Society based on Equality:**

He vehemently fought with the aim of reconstructing the society by uprooting the social evils of feudal inequality and caste system. He wanted a reformed society based on the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. He also wanted to free Indian society from the evils of the caste system.

## **3. Spreading Education:**

Ambedkar's educational goals were integrated with his social objectives. He realized that social emancipation could only be possible with education of the masses. The slogan 'Educate, Agitate, Organize' embodied the ideological basis of Ambedkar's movement for social reforms. Under the support of the People's Education Society established in 1945, many schools, colleges, hostels and other educational institutions were established to uplift the underprivileged.

## **4. Political Upliftment of the Underprivileged:**

Ambedkar succeeded in transforming a class movement into a revolutionary movement throughout India. During the British rule, he was one of the delegates at the Roundtable conference in London, where he demanded a separate electorate for the Dalit people. When the new constitution was framed in independent India, Ambedkar ensured as the chairman of the drafting committee that the welfare and development of the backward community in India were guaranteed. This introduced reservations for backward communities in various fields such as employment, education etc.

## **5. Land Reforms and Economic Reforms:**

Dr Ambedkar stressed the need for extensive land reforms. His philosophy of life centred around giving justice to the underprivileged, lifting the downtrodden, and providing a just society for all. He

believed that an unequal agricultural system was a hindrance to the development of society. He supported land reforms so that the agricultural system is equitable for all, particularly the landless.

He believed that the state has a very important role to play for the economic transformation of the state. As such he advocated in favour of nationalization of land and the leasing out of land to small groups of cultivators. These groups have to be encouraged to form cooperatives to promote agricultural activities. Agricultural development has to be accompanied by large capital investments to raise productivity.

He also realized the necessity of industrialization so that the surplus labour from agriculture could be moved to other productive livelihoods.

## **Conclusion**

Dr Ambedkar championed as a fighter for human rights not only for the Dalits but also for the unequal social system and oppressed class, which included workers, farmers and women. Ambedkar was an extraordinary social reformer, emancipator of the oppressed classes, scholar and educationist, and a true champion of human rights. Dr. Ambedkar advocated equal rights for all Indian citizens in the constitution. As the chairman of the drafting committee, he designed the constitution in such a way that all citizens are equal before the law. His ideology for the entire nation was: "Be Educated, Be Organized and Be Agitated."

## **Dr B R Ambedkar and Women Empowerment -**

Dr. Ambedkar – the determined fighter and a deep scholar has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He was first Indian to brake down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. The present paper is an attempt to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's view on women problems in pre and post independent India and its relevancy in present scenario. Dr. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started fierce propaganda against the Hindu social order and launched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose. Through its issues he put due stress on the gender equality and the need for education and exposed the problems of the depressed as well as women. The encouragement of Dr. Ambedkar to empower women to speak boldly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference in 1931. He strongly advocated for family planning measures for women in Bombay Legislative

Assembly. Dr. Babasaheb spent his life for the betterment of women even involved in bad practices and professionals like prostitutions. Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and devdasi system. Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly. He also insisted and evoked all the parliamentary members to help to pass the bill in parliament. Eventually, he resigned for the same. Thus his deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from his each sentence and word.

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