

Ambedkar's Vision of Social justice for Women

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Abstract

The article seeks to make a critical analysis of B.R Ambedkar's vision of social justice. It takes stock of Ambedkar's relevance in the upliftment of the women. Dr Ambedkar awakened the women and made them fight for their just rights. Dr Ambedkar was an original thinker who thought deeply over upliftment of the women of all religions. A real tribute to the great leader would be to continue with his efforts of empowering women and helping them to overcome the vicious cycle of cultural barrier, rather than merely offering flowers to the statue on his birth and death anniversaries. Let us accept the fact that Dr.B.R. Ambedkar has been victim of a process of reductionism. Mainstream media, academia and intelligentsia have played a dominant role in this process of reductionism. As a result he has been viewed and reviewed only as 'a Dalit leader'. Some progressive intellectuals have at most called him 'chief Architect of the Indian Constitution'. In turn his contributions in the spheres of understanding individual, caste, Hindu social order, problems of Hindu women, Indian minorities, nation and nation building etc. from an alternative perspective have been fully blacked out. Above all his ideas about social justice have also not caught the imagination of the mainstream academia and intelligentsia.

Keywords : *A Dalit leader, Chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Shasthas, Hindu code bill, Sanyas – Life stage of renunciation within the Hindu philosophy. Brahmins, Purdah*

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Meaning and Definition of Social Justice

Social justice being a multi-dimensional concept has been viewed by scholars of law, philosophy and political science differently. The term social justice is quite comprehensive. Social justice is a bundle of rights, it is balancing wheel between haves and have nots. It is great social value in providing a stable and in securing the unity of the country.

In general, social justice may be defined as ‘‘ the right of the weak, aged, destitute, poor, women, children and other under-privileged persons’’.

According to DIAS, justice is not something which can be captured in a formula once or for all, it is a process, complex and shifting balance between many factors. The tasks of justice are ‘‘the just allocation of advantages and disadvantages, preventing the abuse of power, preventing the abuse of liberty the just decision of disputes and adapting to change’’. Justice may be natural justice or distributive justice. Social justice is basically a term which provides sustenance to the rule of law. It has a wider connotation in the sense that it includes economic justice also. It aims in removing all kinds of inequalities and affording equal opportunities to all citizens in social as well as economic affairs. Thus the aim of social justice is remove all kinds of inequalities based upon Caste, race, sex, power, position, wealth and brings about distribution of social justice is a balance between social rights and social controls.

Ambedkar’s Vision of Social justice for Women

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, being a philanthropic, kind and generous social reformer was much moved with the pitiable and pathetic condition and low status of women in society and he was a torch bearer in the direction of social uplift of women generally and Hindu women specially. Ambedkar chooses his social reforms approach only after understanding the reality of the status of women.

Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the Hindu women are tied up with bondage of superstitions which they can till their death. They are also responsible for inculcating these wrong notions learnt by them through baseless traditions and preaching of the shastras in the budding mind of their off spring. Otherwise also the women in India have remained a matter of joy and a source of amusement at such she was used and misused by men guest to serve their evil ends. She has been used just like a machine for procreation. It has also been mentioned in Hindu Shastras that women is the ond slave of her father when she is young to her husband when she is middle aged and to her son when she is mother.

The reforms introduced by Dr. Ambedkar through ‘Hindu Code Bill’ have

been adhered to and large. He by codifying Hindu law in respect of marriage, divorce and succession, rationalized and restored the dignity to women. It is needless to say, the Bill was a part of social engineering via law, sharp criticism off this Bill in and out side parliament led many to beleief that it mignt nflict heavy damages on Hindu society. Even the president Dr. Rajendra Prasad got scared and issued a threat that he would withhold his assent even it had been passed by the parliament. Justice P.B. Gajendergadkar while congratulating Dr. Ambedkar for the role he had played in drafting and piloting the Bill said, If Dr. Ambedkar gives us Hindus our code, his achievement whould go down in history as a very eloquent piece of poetic justice indeed. The whole story code bill presents the determination of Dr. Ambedkar to bring about the changes in the society. He was the one who just not talked on things but really worked on them. His concern for women is unquestionable. It is not wrong to say he was a great feminist of his day. Because women's rights form a part of human rights and Babasaheb can rightly be termed as the champion of it.

Dr. Ambedkar says to the women education was denied by the Manu and he caused both an insult and injury to the women in India. It was injury because without any justification she was denied the right to acquire knowledge she was declared to be allowed to take to 'Sanyas' which was regarded as the path to attain the Brahmin. Not only she was denied the right to realize her spiritual potentiality by the Brahmins but she was also declared to be barren of any spiritual potentialities.

According to Ambedkar women were treated as mere tools to bear the bardens of the family, restricted to the role of bearing children and fulfilling duties of a wife or mother any. Division of labour is not in the year favor , as the result Indian women have lost dear identity they have to face discrimination on gender basis and because of this availablity of equal opportunity for remains are dream of them. Poverty , illiteracy lack od health and in equality of class of status and power lessness., degradness are associated with them. Weight of traditional attitude that regard them as physically , intellectually and socially , inferior to man subject them to male exploitation and unjustified division of labour. A society where women , i.e, the half of the population , enjoy a low status of women in Indian society is primarily due to the fact that they have no control over material and social resources . this is further compounded by lack of participation opportunities in the decision making process of the family.

Ambedkar impartially concentrates on Muslim women also.He starts with the reference to mother india which created an impression through out the world

that while hindus were groveling in the mud of social evils and conservative,the Muslims in india were free of them and as compared to the hindus,were progressive people.Babashaheb Ambedkar takes the help of census report and other data and proves Indian Muslims are equally harsh on their women;of course Muslim law has better provision for women.But no Muslim girl has the courage to exercise them;there is latitude in their matter of divorce.The wife cannot escape marraiage even if it's irksome,the husband can always do it without having to show any course.This destroys the sense of security which is fundamental for a happy life.The right of polygamy and concubine which the muslim law gives to its men worsens the plight of women.Ambedkar comments are sharp in saying "Purdah" deprives Muslim women of mental and moral nourishment .The segregation from the outer world makes them engage their minds in petty family quarrels which develop narrow out look.

In 1936, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar delivered a speech at Damodar Hall and addressed devadasis, Muralyas and jogathinis. He gives them a call to come out of their nasty occupation. Our society has been put to shame because of you. Women are respected in our society and every society honour's the women of character. Therefore you should forsake this dirty occupation, bring good names to yourself and your society.

Many Devadasis, Muralya's and jogathinis were impressed by his speech and approached him saying that they wished to come out of their occupations, their marriages were arranged. Ambedkar had a great visionary, he always thought far ahead his contemporaries, he rightly identified that the progress of the community is measured by progress of women. He said so in his address in the All India Depressed Classes Women's confrenece held at Nagapur on july 20,1942. He identifies that marriage is a liability and says " let each girl who marries stand up to her husband claim to be her husband's friend equal and refuse to be his slave. These words hold good even today, even after passage of six decades.

At present ,we find a number of women empowerment programmes,concern for women is show -up by all political parties, even though some time just lip service.Whatever is the issue Babasaheb Ambedkar had totality in his views and sixth sense,perhaps because he did not consider himself belonging to these religions.His arguments were without bias and always probed deep and deep in to the real problem center.His reasoning is fine in all this,whether it is the problems of hindus or muslims,women of the religion were just dice in their play.This is clearly presented by Ambedkar.

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