

Role of Dr. B R Ambedkar in Indian Woman Empowerment

Dr. Ajay Shankar Pandey

Professor, Department of History and H.O.D
Government T. R. S College, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India
ajayshankar.pandey5@gmail.com

Abstract: *Dr. Ambedkar, a dedicated warrior and a profound scholar, has made major contributions to society's pursuit of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. He was the first Indian to break down obstacles to women's growth in India. By codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other parts of Indian society, he created the groundwork for more tangible and earnest efforts. The purpose of this article is to illustrate Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues in pre- and post-independence India, as well as its relevance in the current situation. In 1920, Dr. Ambedkar launched his movement. He began ferocious propaganda against the Hindu social system, launching the journals Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927 to that end. Through its topics, he emphasised gender equality and the need of education, as well as the difficulties of the depressed and women. Dr. Ambedkar's support to enable women to speak fearlessly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a news conference in 1931. In the Bombay Legislative Assembly, he was an outspoken supporter of family planning legislation for women. Dr. Babasaheb dedicated his life to the welfare of women, even if they were involved in undesirable habits and professions such as prostitution. Ambedkar raised awareness among impoverished, uneducated women and motivated them to combat unfair and societal practises like as child marriage and the devadasi system. Dr. Ambedkar attempted to adequately include women's rights into India's political discourse and constitution. In assembly, he persisted on the Hindu Code bill, offering fundamental adjustments and revisions. He also pushed on and summoned all legislative members to assist in passing the bill in parliament. He eventually quit for the same reason. As a result, his genuine interest and compassion for the whole development of women are shown in every statement and word.*

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Hindu Code Bill, Perfect Equality, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was one of the world's most brilliant thinkers of the twentieth century. In one of his works, Paul Baran, a famous Marxist economist, distinguished between a "intellect worker" and an intellectual. According to him, the former uses his intelligence to make a living, whereas the latter uses it for critical analysis and social revolution. Dr. Ambedkar perfectly fulfils Baran's description of an intellectual. Dr. Ambedkar is also a prime example of what Antonio Gramsci referred to as an organic intellectual, or someone who represents and articulates the interests of an entire social class. Dr. Ambedkar, a tenacious warrior and a thorough scholar, received the highest academic accolades from some of the world's most famous colleges. He made major contributions to society's pursuit of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. It is supported by a recent study done in June 2012 by "History TV 18 and CNN IBN." The people of India have asked, "Who is the greatest Indian after Mahatma Gandhi?" Among the candidates are former Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, singer Lata Mangeshkar, industrialist J.R.D. Tata, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Indira Gandhi, and Vallbhobhai Patel, among others. The final cumulative ranking was determined using three polls: jury (online and on-the-ground), public vote, and market research. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was eventually pronounced the winner. On the announcement of the results, historian Ramchandra Guha commented, "Dr. Ambedkar's legacy has been perverted to suit special interests." He was a superb scholar, architect of institutions, and economic thinker." Prof. A. K. Sen has also stated, "Ambedkar is my economic father." He is a well-known advocate for the impoverished. He is deserving of more than he has received thus far. However, he was a highly controversial person in his native nation, despite the fact that this was not the case. His contribution to economics is outstanding, and he will be recognised for the rest of his life..."

Ambedkar was not just the creator of the Indian Constitution; he was also a brilliant liberation warrior, political leader, philosopher, thinker, economist, editor, social reformer, Buddhist revivalist, and the first Indian to tear down obstacles to women's development in India. By codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other parts of Indian society, he created the groundwork for more tangible and earnest efforts. He argued that women should be provided with all-around development, including social education, as well as their well-being and socio-cultural rights. He highlighted that all sections of Indian women must be given their fair share, and that it is critical to maintain and safeguard women's dignity and modesty (Shukla 2011). Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a firm believer in women-led movements. He also stated that if women from all walks of life are given confidence, they may be able to play an important part in social changes. They have played a significant and active role in eradicating societal evils. He urged that every married lady join as a friend in her husband's hobbies. But she must have the bravery to refuse slaves' lives. She should stand firm on the equality concept. If all of the women adhere to it, they will get genuine respect and their own identity (Gunjal 2012).

II. OBJECTIVES, METHODS AND MATERIALS

The purpose of this paper is to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues in pre- and post-independence India, as well as the relevance of his ideas in India's current political and social scenario. Secondary data was gathered from the internet, government records, newspapers, published papers, books, and speeches made in Parliament by Dr. Ambedkar, as well as different conferences and gatherings in pre- and post-independence India.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In 1920, Dr. Ambedkar launched his movement. "We shall see brighter days soon, and our development will be much expedited if male education is supported alongside female education," he said. ¹ He began ferocious propaganda against the Hindu social system, launching the journals *Mook Nayak* in 1920 and *Bahiskrit Bharat* in 1927 to that end. Through its topics, he emphasised gender equality and the need of education, as well as the difficulties of the depressed and women. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues, emphasising their right to education, equal treatment with men, property rights, and participation in the political process, mirrored the worldwide feminist demand. As J. S. Mill stated in *The Subjection of Women*, the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in and of itself, and is one of the major impediments to human development; and should be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no privilege or power on one side, nor disability on the other. Ambedkar holds similar views on work for women (More 2011). In January 1928, a women's organisation was established in Bombay, with Ramabai, Ambedkar's wife, serving as president. Five hundred women took part in the Kalram Temple Entry Satyagraha in Nasik in 1930, and many of them were detained alongside males and ill-treated in prisons. Dr. Ambedkar's support to enable women to speak fearlessly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a news conference in 1931. "It is preferable to die a hundred times than live a life full of disgrace," she added. We will make sacrifices, but we will win our rights." Ambedkar deserves credit for women's self-esteem and steely determination. Dr. Ambedkar believed in the power of women and their role in societal development. Three hundred women, along with their male counterparts, took part in the historic "Mahad Satyagraha" addressing another meeting of about 3000 women, he said, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women had achieved. Let every bride-to-be stand for her husband, claim to be his friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. I am confident that if you follow my advise, you will bring credit and glory to yourself." In the Bombay Legislative Assembly, he was an outspoken supporter of family planning legislation for women. As a Labour Minister on the Governor General's Executive Council in 1942, he introduced the Maternity Benefit Bill. He included various measures in the constitution to preserve women's welfare and civic rights. He proposed the Hindu Code Bill in parliament, highlighting concerns with women's property rights. The bill was met with considerable resistance from numerous political figures. In response, Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the government, citing his dissatisfaction with the parliament's rejection of women's rights. In addition, he emphasised Muslim women's difficulties. His secular viewpoint may be seen in his ideas on the "Purdah" (Veil) system, religious conversions, and legal rights for Muslim women. In summary, his views for the emancipation of all women are articulated with the same loyalty as his thoughts for the emancipation of the depressed class women. Ambedkar's emphasis was on reconstruction of the Hindu society based on equality rather than the social reforms initiated by Brahma Samaj or Arya Samaj because

their attempts were limited only to the upper strata of the society. His in-depth study of Smritis and Shastras, as well as his observations of upper caste reactions to the temple entrance movement, cemented his views on Hindu philosophy and culture. Inspired by Ambedkar, several women published on diverse issues, and Tulsibai Bansode founded the periodical "Chokhamela." This demonstrates how Ambedkar raised awareness among impoverished, uneducated women and motivated them to combat unfair and societal practices like child marriage and the devadasi system. "I fully believe in women's movements," Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar declared. If they are genuinely trusted, they have the potential to transform the current picture of society, which is quite depressing. They have previously played an important role in improving the status of poorer sections and courses." He frequently praised ladies for their hard work and sacrifices. While speaking to ladies at conferences, he could readily communicate with them as a homely person and discussion. In the following lines, he alluded to ladies. "Never wear clothing that undermines our personality and character." Wearing jewellery all over your body is not a good idea. It's not right to cut a hole in your nose and wear "nath." In this, he blasted all the negative customs, habits, and ways of living that made life tough and confusing, and, to their amazement, even illiterate ladies heeded his advice wholeheartedly. Dr. Babasaheb spent his life for the betterment of women even involved in bad practices and professions like prostitution. The greatest example of it was seen in Kamathipura. There was a person named David who was the mediator working in a brothel. He left his profession persuaded by the thoughts and teachings of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He evoked the entire prostitute to give up their profession and lead a life of honour. In the Manu Smriti, Manu not only shows contempt for women but goes on to degrade them as slaves, devoid of intellect; denies them the right of education and the property right, and forbids them from performing sacrifices. Being India's first Law Minister and chairman of the drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar thought it appropriate, rather his duty, to free women from the age-old thralldom by reforming the Hindu social laws created by Manu. He, therefore, took the initiative to draft and introduce the Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's rights in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. i.e., Article 14 - Equal rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex. Article 15(3) enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women. Article 39 - Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Article 42 - Human conditions of work and maternity relief. Article 51 (A) (C) - Fundamental duties to renounce practices, derogatory to the dignity of women. Article 46 - The state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of a weaker section of people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Article 47 - The state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on. Article 243D (3), 243T (3) & 243R (4) provides for the allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System. The Hindu Code Bill, the most formidable legislative measure of modern India, sought among other reforms, to put an end to a variety of marriage systems prevailing in India and legalize only monogamous marriages. The Code also sought to confer on women the right of property and adoption which had been denied by Manu. It put men and women on an equal level in all legal matters. Dr. Ambedkar said, "I should like to draw the attention of the house to one important fact. The great political philosopher Burke who wrote his great book against the French Revolution said that those who want to conserve must be ready to repair. And all I am asking this House is: If you want to maintain the Hindu system, Hindu culture, and Hindu society, do not hesitate to repair where repair is necessary. This bill asks for nothing more than to repair those parts of the Hindu system which have become dilapidated". In his letter of resignation dated 27 September 1951 to the Prime Minister, he wrote "For a long time I have been thinking of resigning my seat from the Cabinet. The only thing that had held me back from giving effect to my intention was the hope that it would be possible to give effect to the Hindu Code Bill before the life of the present Parliament came to an end. I even agreed to break up the bill and restricted it to Marriage and Divorce in the fond hope that at least this much of our labour may bear fruit. But even that part of Bill had been killed. I see no purpose in my continuing to be a Member of your Cabinet". The Hindu Code Bill was eventually divided into four Bills, and Parliament placed them on the Statute Book. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act of 1956, and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956 are the four acts that integrate the ideals and principles of Dr. Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill. They provide women independent status and the rights of adoption, succession, and property, which Manu absolutely denies. As a result, it is a cliché to claim that it is thanks to Dr. Ambedkar that a substantial portion of Hindu social law is now on par with the legal systems of sophisticated western countries (Ahir D.C. 1990).

IV. CONCLUSION

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru remarked in a condolence letter following Ambedkar's death in parliament, "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a symbol of resistance against the repressive elements of Hindu society." His vision of a society built on gender equality has yet to be fulfilled, thus his ideas are critical for the social reconstruction that favours women's empowerment. Dr. Babasaheb shared his thoughts on the current status of women's lives. He argued that women must be treated and regarded equally. In assembly, he persisted on the Hindu Code bill, offering fundamental adjustments and revisions. He also pushed on and summoned all legislative members to assist in passing the bill in parliament. He eventually quit for the same reason. Dr. Ambedkar's lessons and ideas are applicable not only to women but to all Indians today. Each statement and word express his great interest and thoughts for the whole development of women. We may learn about his sentiments and regard for women from his recent address in the Indian Parliament. He recalled an Irish Patriot Daniel O Connal, who said, "No man can be thankful at the cost of his honour, and no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity." And no nation can be thankful for the price he paid for his liberty." In his well-known book "Pakistan and the Partition of India," he stated his opinions on Muslim women and their Islamic practises, such as veiling, marriage, and so on. Under numerous religious traditions, Muslim women have been oppressed. Babasaheb held a humanistic viewpoint toward all women, regardless of religion, caste, or status. He constantly spoke out against all forms of injustice against women. 1. Dr. Ambedkar's words when studying in New York. 2. The 6th Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Lecture (AML) will be presented by renowned sociologist Dr. Sharmila Rege on "Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Thoughts on Women's Emancipation."

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ahir, D.C. (1990) "The Legacy of Dr. Ambedkar" B.R. Publishing corporation, New Delhi
- [2]. Ambedkar, B.R. (1987) "Women and Counter-Revolution" Riddles of Hindu Women" in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 3, Department of Education, Govt of Maharashtra.
- [3]. Arya, Sudha, (200) Women Gender Equality and the State, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi.
- [4]. D. Keer, 1987. Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission, Bombay.
- [5]. Gunjal V.R. 2012. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Women Empowerment, Social Work, Vol. XI (1), PP 84-85.
- [6]. Singariya M.R., 2013 "Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: As an Economist" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 2, Issue (3), pp 24-27. Online available www.ijhssi.org Volume 2 Issue 3 | March. 2013 | PP.24-2