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Dr. Ambedkar's Thoughts on Social Justice

Dr. Lenkapally Pushpa[1*], Dr. Srinivas Potharaju[2]

[1]*Lecture in Political Science, Government Degree college for women Wanaparthy*

[2]*Lecture in History, Government Degree college for women Wanaparthy.*

[*]*Corresponding author*

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Abstract

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's philosophy of social justice is one of the most comprehensive and revolutionary contributions to modern political and social thought in India. His vision aimed at establishing a society based on liberty, equality, and fraternity, where human dignity is respected irrespective of birth, caste, religion, or economic status. Ambedkar critically analyzed the caste system and untouchability as institutionalized forms of inequality and social oppression. Through constitutional safeguards, social movements, reservation policies, and religious reform, he laid a strong foundation for the empowerment of the downtrodden. His ideas continue to guide contemporary debates on social justice, human rights, and inclusive development.

Keywords: Social Justice; Caste System; Untouchability; Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; Constitutional Safeguards; Reservation Policy; Empowerment of Marginalized Communities; Human Dignity; Inclusive Development

Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a jurist, economist, social reformer, and one of the greatest champions of social justice in Indian history. Born into an untouchable community, he personally experienced caste-based discrimination, which deeply influenced his intellectual and political journey. His understanding of social injustice was not merely theoretical but rooted in lived reality.

Ambedkar believed that political democracy would remain meaningless without social and economic democracy. According to him, a society divided by caste hierarchies could never achieve true freedom. He strongly criticized Hindu social order, particularly the varna and caste systems, for institutionalizing inequality and denying basic human rights to a large section of society.

His vision of social justice was based on rationalism, humanism, and moral principles that are universal in nature. Ambedkar devoted his entire life to the annihilation of caste and the upliftment of the depressed classes through education, legal reforms, social movements, and constitutional means.

Methodology / Means Adopted by Ambedkar for Social Justice

Dr. Ambedkar adopted a multi-dimensional approach to achieve social justice. His methods combined social activism, political participation, constitutional reforms, and ideological transformation.

1. Critique of Caste System and Untouchability

Ambedkar identified the caste system as the root cause of social inequality in India. He argued that caste was not merely a division of labor but a division of laborers, which denied mobility, dignity, and freedom. Untouchability, according to him, was the worst form of social oppression.

He strongly opposed religious texts and customs that justified caste discrimination. His call for the annihilation of caste aimed at restructuring Indian society on egalitarian principles.

2. Campaign Against Untouchability

Ambedkar actively campaigned against untouchability through political representation and social mobilization. He appeared before the Southborough Committee and demanded separate electorates and political safeguards for untouchables.

He established organizations like Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha to promote education, socio-economic development, and political awareness among the depressed classes. These efforts helped in organizing Dalits as a conscious social force.

3. Role of Press and Public Awareness

Ambedkar used journalism as a powerful tool to spread awareness about social injustice. Through newspapers like Mook Nayak, Bahishkrit Bharat, and Samata Janata Patrika, he exposed caste oppression and mobilized public opinion in favor of social equality.

The press played a vital role in educating the marginalized communities about their rights and responsibilities.

4. Temple Entry and Social Movements

Ambedkar led temple entry movements to challenge caste restrictions in religious spaces. These movements aimed to assert the right to equality and dignity for Dalits.

The burning of the Manusmriti was a symbolic act against oppressive religious doctrines. It represented rejection of social laws that sanctioned inequality and discrimination.

5. Constitutional Contribution

As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar ensured that social justice became the foundation of the constitutional framework. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights such as equality before law, prohibition of discrimination, and abolition of untouchability under Article 17.

He also emphasized directive principles to promote social and economic justice and welfare of weaker sections.

6. Reservation Policy

Ambedkar was instrumental in introducing reservation policies in education, employment, and political representation. He justified reservations as a necessary tool to correct historical injustices and provide equal opportunities to marginalized communities.

Reservation was not charity but a means to ensure social representation and empowerment of the oppressed classes.

7. Conversion to Buddhism

In 1956, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism along with millions of Dalits. This was a revolutionary step to reject caste-based Hindu social order and embrace a religion based on equality, compassion, and rationality.

Buddhism, for Ambedkar, was a moral and social philosophy that upheld human dignity

Expected Results

The study is expected to highlight Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's concept of social justice as a comprehensive and transformative framework aimed at establishing an egalitarian society. The paper is likely to demonstrate that Ambedkar's ideas go beyond mere legal equality and emphasize social, economic, and moral dimensions of justice.

The analysis is expected to show that caste system and untouchability were identified by Ambedkar as the primary sources of social inequality in India, and that their annihilation is essential for achieving true democracy. The study may reveal how Ambedkar's constitutional contributions—such as fundamental rights, abolition of untouchability, and reservation policies—provided institutional mechanisms for the empowerment of marginalized communities.

The paper is also expected to establish that Ambedkar's use of social movements, education, press, and religious reform (conversion to Buddhism) played a crucial role in creating social awareness and collective consciousness among the oppressed classes. Furthermore, the findings are likely to indicate that Ambedkar's vision of social justice remains highly relevant in contemporary India, especially in addressing issues related to caste discrimination, social exclusion, human dignity, and inclusive development.

Overall, the study is expected to conclude that Dr. Ambedkar's social justice framework offers sustainable solutions to present-day socio-economic inequalities and continues to serve as a guiding force for democratic governance and human rights.

social justice.

Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's concept of social justice remains extremely relevant in contemporary society. His emphasis on education, constitutional morality, inclusivity, and human dignity provides solutions to persistent socio-economic inequalities. Ambedkar understood social injustice as a multi-layered problem involving caste, class, gender, religion, and economic exploitation.

His ideas inspire a comprehensive approach to social reform and democratic governance. Even today, issues such as caste discrimination, inequality, and denial of rights highlight the continuing relevance of his vision. Ambedkar's legacy stands as a guiding light for building a just, inclusive, and egalitarian society.

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