

The Relevance Of Dr. Ambedkar And His Ideas On Social Justice In History Of Modern India

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ABSTRACT

The extraordinary journey of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is examined in this chapter, along with his experiences, philosophy, and conception of social justice, as well as its historical underpinnings, salient features, and obstacles to its realisation. It looks at the social environment in which he was raised—a community split by the harsh caste system, where people were kept in strict hierarchies and faced prejudice because of their birth. Ambedkar endured systematic humiliation, social marginalisation, opportunity denial, and caste-based prejudices from a young age. But rather of giving in to these injustices, he turned his personal hardships into a lifelong quest to question the current quo and support the underprivileged.

Keywords:Social justice, community split, humiliation, underprivileged.

1. Introduction

Widely recognised as the creator of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a social reformer, legal scholar, and advocate for social justice. Ambedkar was born in 1891 into a Dalit household and endured severe social discrimination and persecution all of his life. Nonetheless, his hardships and experiences moulded his dedication to attaining social justice for underprivileged groups, especially the Dalits. With his unwavering quest for equality, dignity, and social change, B.R. Ambedkar, a titan in the history of social justice, continues to motivate future generations. Ambedkar, who was born into a culture that was firmly bound by untouchability and caste prejudice, became a ray of hope for India's underprivileged populations[1]. His life and contributions serve as a monument to the ability of tenacity, willpower, and intellectual prowess to confront the systemic socioeconomic injustices that have afflicted people for ages.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had a complex view of social justice that included social, political, legal, and economic aspects. He understood that resolving the structural injustices that supported discrimination and guaranteeing the equitable allocation of resources, opportunities, and privileges within society were necessary for achieving true social justice [2]. The ideas of equality, liberty, and dignity for every person—regardless of caste, creed, gender, or socioeconomic status—formed the foundation of his conception of social justice.

Ambedkar's unwavering support for the rights and empowerment of Dalits, India's most marginalised and oppressed communities, was one of his fundamental contributions to the fight for social justice. Among the many movements he led was the Temple Entry Movement, which aimed to end Dalits' exclusion from places of worship. Ambedkar was adamant that social equality and justice were fundamentally based on access to religious spaces, not only one's own beliefs[3].

In addition, Ambedkar's crucial contribution to the creation of the Indian Constitution is his most enduring legacy. He was instrumental in forming the constitutional framework of independent India as the Chairman of the Draughting Committee. Ambedkar's vision is reflected in the Constitution, which places a strong focus on social justice, affirmative action, and fundamental rights. It upholds equality, forbids discrimination, and grants historically under-represented groups—like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes—reservations in political representation, work, and education[4].

Dr. Ambedkar's conception of social justice went beyond politics and the law. He understood that education was a potent instrument for social advancement and self-determination. Ambedkar fought against educational discrimination and promoted universal education because he thought that knowledge might end oppression and enable people to confront social injustices [5].

Ambedkar's contributions have an influence that extends well beyond India. Global social justice movements have been impacted by his beliefs and teachings. A more comprehensive view of social justice has been made possible by his emphasis on the intersectionality of caste, class, gender, and other types of oppression. His dedication to social justice continues to motivate governments, academics, and activists around the world to confront injustices and strive for a more just society [6].

2. The notion of social justice, as well as its historical underpinnings and dimensions:

At the core of initiatives to build a just and equal society that protects the rights, dignity, and welfare of every person is the idea of social justice. Social justice, which has its roots in equality and fairness, aims to overcome the structural oppression, discrimination, and inequality that sustain social, economic, and political divides. This chapter examines the idea of social justice, including its historical underpinnings, important aspects, and difficulties in achieving it [7].

The origins of social justice can be found in ancient cultures, when the value of equality, justice, and compassion was emphasised in early philosophical and theological writings. The idea became well-known during the Enlightenment, when philosophers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke promoted equality and inherent rights for all people. Due to the stark differences between the rich elite and the working class, the Industrial Revolution and the socioeconomic changes it brought about further sparked conversations about the need for social justice [8].

Numerous facets of social justice are intended to address distinct facets of injustice and inequality. These aspects include corrective justice, which attempts to address past injustices and inequities; distributive justice, which emphasises equitable distribution of opportunities and resources; and retributive justice, which tries to hold people and institutions responsible for their deeds. Furthermore, social justice recognises the significance of representation, acknowledgement, and equal protection under the law and goes beyond material considerations to include cultural, political, and legal aspects [1-6].

3. Principles and Approaches to Social Justice:

The idea of social justice is based on a number of ideas. These include solidarity, which stresses group effort and support for under-represented groups; equality, which promotes equal treatment and opportunities; and equity, which guarantees that people have everything they need to prosper, regardless of where they come from. Social justice is approached from a variety of angles, from radical viewpoints that call for substantial structural reforms and challenge underlying power systems to liberal ones that emphasise equal opportunity. Ambedkar accomplished this in the methods listed below [2-7].

(i) Contesting the Caste System and Promoting Dalit Empowerment:

Ambedkar acknowledged the long-standing oppression that India's caste system was sustaining. He was a strong opponent of the caste system that denied people equal opportunity and confined them to inflexible positions. Ambedkar worked to upend the caste system and defend the rights and dignity of Dalits, who had previously been marginalised as "untouchables."

Ambedkar devoted his life to ensuring the social and political rights of Dalits and uplifting them. He advocated for Dalits' access to public areas, temples, and water sources and underlined the necessity of ending untouchability. Ambedkar thought that removing the obstacles separating Dalits from the rest of society was the only way to attain social justice [5,6].

(ii) Campaigning for Legal Reforms and Equality:

Ambedkar was a strong supporter of the idea that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their caste or social status. He pushed for the repeal of laws and discriminatory practices that sustained social inequality and for equal rights and protections under the law. His work made a substantial contribution to the Indian Constitution's inclusion of clauses that forbid discrimination and provide equality before the law.

Ambedkar's legal knowledge was essential in establishing social justice in India. He was the main drafter of the Indian Constitution and included clauses that safeguarded the rights of Dalits and other marginalised groups. In order to ensure equitable representation and opportunities, he supported the reservation system, which sets aside quotas for historically under-represented groups in government employment and educational institutions [7].

(iii) Women's rights ,Human rights and social reform movements:

Ambedkar promoted women's rights within the larger framework of social reform, acknowledging the interconnectedness of social justice issues. In addition to advocating for gender equality and fighting against child marriage, he was instrumental in the introduction of the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to provide women equal rights in relation to inheritance, marriage, and divorce.

Ambedkar's support of social justice was not limited to India. He promoted awareness of the rights of marginalised populations and actively participated in international forums. Since tribal people share a similar social standing as Scheduled Castes, he had noted that it is critical to address their socioeconomic and educational deficiencies by incorporating the appropriate provisions into the constitution and laws. Human rights movements and organisations around the world are still motivated by his unwavering efforts to

advance social justice. The fight against discrimination and social injustice in India was greatly aided by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to social justice. The social fabric of India was profoundly impacted by his unwavering pursuit of equality, legislative changes, and the empowerment of marginalised populations. People and social justice groups worldwide are still motivated by his legacy, which emphasises how crucial it is to struggle for a society that is more inclusive and just [7,8].

(iv) Emphasis on Education:

Ambedkar was adamant that empowerment and social change could be sparked by education. He underlined how crucial education is to improve marginalised groups and end the cycle of social inequality. Ambedkar himself was a highly educated person who obtained several degrees and rose to prominence as a Dalit inspiration and ray of hope.

4. Equality

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a strong supporter of the idea that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their socioeconomic background, gender, or caste. He battled for legal protections, equal rights, and equal chances. Because of his unwavering efforts, the Indian Constitution now has clauses that forbid discrimination and ensure equality before the law.

(i) The fight against discrimination based on caste and the constitutional inclusion of equality:

Ambedkar saw that India's caste structure inherently promoted inequality. He strongly rejected the idea of a caste-based hierarchy, in which people were born with a social standing that led to pervasive oppression and injustice. Ambedkar devoted his life to overthrowing the caste system and guaranteeing that everyone, regardless of caste, received the same treatment and opportunity.

Ambedkar was a key contributor to the Indian Constitution's draughting. He made certain that its provisions upheld the values of equality. The Constitution forbids discrimination on the grounds of caste, religion, race, gender, or place of birth and ensures equality before the law. Additionally, it offers affirmative action policies, including reservations, to support equal participation and elevate historically under-represented communities [3,4].

(ii) Reservation:

Ambedkar supported the reservation system, which allots quotas for socially and educationally underprivileged groups in legislatures, government employment, and educational institutions in an effort to rectify historical injustices. He felt that in order to close the socioeconomic divide brought up by centuries of discrimination and give marginalised communities equitable representation and opportunities, affirmative action was required [4].

(iii) Advocacy for Human Rights:

Ambedkar's support for equality was not limited to India. He promoted awareness of the rights of marginalised populations and actively participated in international forums. He inspired international movements for equality and social justice by highlighting the universality of human rights and fighting against all forms of injustice and prejudice [6].

5. Education :

Education is a potent instrument for social change and empowerment, according to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He promoted universal, free, and mandatory education, particularly for underprivileged groups. He believed that education will challenge the current social order, boost people's self-esteem, and uplift them. He was adamant that the cycle of tyranny and discrimination that marginalised populations in India had to endure could be broken via education. As one of the first Dalit people to pursue higher education, Ambedkar himself was a model student who obtained several degrees. Ambedkar was a prodigious student who received doctorates in economics from the London School of Economics and Columbia University [4-6]. He was known as a scholar for his work in political science, economics, and law. The following are some of his educational contributions:

(i) Empowerment and Self-Respect:

Ambedkar thought that by giving people opportunities for growth, knowledge, and skills, education empowered people. He saw education as a tool that helped underprivileged groups develop dignity, self-worth, and self-confidence. Education was viewed as a way for people to claim their proper position in society and escape the bonds of oppression.

(ii) Access and Equality:

Ambedkar placed a strong emphasis on everyone having equal access to education, regardless of socioeconomic background, gender, or caste. He opposed the widespread practice of denying Dalits and other

marginalised communities access to education. Since he understood that equal educational opportunities were crucial to building a just and equitable society, Ambedkar fervently supported free and compulsory education.

(iii) Reforming Education and Emphasising Social Upliftment:

Ambedkar had a major influence on India's educational reforms. He made sure that education was recognised as a fundamental right while serving as the chairman of the committee that drafted the Indian Constitution. According to him, education should not just focus on academic knowledge but also on nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and social consciousness.

In order to foster social advancement and economic freedom, Ambedkar emphasised the value of education. He supported changes to education that would provide students more chances to learn new skills, get a job, and start their own business. Ambedkar thought that people should be given the skills they need to become independent and advance the country through education [5-8].

(iv) Education's Function in Social Change and Educational Establishments:

Ambedkar believed that education could be used to combat backward societal mores and customs. He thought that societal injustices could be eliminated, attitudes could be changed, and biases could be dispelled via education. Ambedkar had a vision of an educated populace that would oppose prejudice and strive to establish a more equal and inclusive society.

Ambedkar saw the necessity for educational establishments that explicitly addressed the needs of underserved groups. To give Dalits and other underprivileged groups access to high-quality education, he founded the People's Education Society and several educational establishments. Through education, these schools sought to empower students so they might change their lives and make valuable contributions to society. Even today, people and educational institutions are motivated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's support of education as a force for social change. India's educational system and the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable society have been significantly impacted by his unwavering efforts to advance equal access to education, empower underprivileged groups, and encourage social transformation [2-6].

6. Economic Empowerment :

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar highlighted the value of economic empowerment as a strategy for uplifting underprivileged groups. To reduce poverty and achieve economic self-sufficiency, he promoted employment possibilities, credit availability, and land reforms. Ambedkar thought that in order for people to escape social and economic exploitation, they needed to become economically independent. "Agricultural growth and industrialisation could boost the Indian economy," he said. As India's main industry, he emphasised the importance of investing in agriculture [5,6]. He has made the following contributions and holds the following views on economic empowerment:

(i) Addressing Socioeconomic Disparities:

A major barrier to attaining social equality, according to Ambedkar, is socioeconomic inequality. He was aware that historical prejudice had left marginalised groups, such as the Dalits, with significant economic disadvantages. Ambedkar concentrated on resolving these inequalities by supporting laws that offered chances for financial independence.

(ii) Land Reforms:

In order to solve the problem of landlessness and give underprivileged groups economic stability, Ambedkar promoted land reforms. Access to land, in his opinion, would provide people with a means of subsistence, improve their financial security, and end the cycle of poverty. In order to guarantee an equitable allocation of resources, Ambedkar underlined the significance of redistributive land reforms.

(iii) Financial Inclusion, Credit Access and Employment Opportunities, and Credit Access:

Ambedkar understood how important it was for underprivileged populations to have access to credit and financial services. He supported laws that would help Dalits and other underprivileged people obtain credit and advance financial inclusion. Ambedkar thought that people could create enterprises, better their economic circumstances, and become self-sufficient if they had access to capital and financial resources.

Ambedkar stressed how crucial it is to give underprivileged groups access to work possibilities. He supported laws that would guarantee fair wages, eliminate caste-based discrimination in the workplace, and advance equal employment possibilities. Ambedkar thought that economic emancipation and the advancement of underprivileged populations depended on having access to respectable and lucrative work [4,7].

(iv) Entrepreneurship and Skill Development:

Ambedkar understood how business and skill-building might promote economic empowerment. He supported policies and initiatives that would foster entrepreneurship in underserved groups, offer assistance and training, and make it easier for them to access resources and markets. Ambedkar thought that

entrepreneurship may lead to economic independence and improve people's lives and communities as a whole [8].

(v) Cooperative Movements:

In order to achieve economic empowerment, Ambedkar highlighted the significance of cooperative movements. In order to combine their resources, gain access to markets, and profit from economic activity as a group, he urged underprivileged groups to establish cooperatives. According to Ambedkar, cooperatives may empower people by group action, encourage self-help, and strengthen economic solidarity [7-8].

(vi) Social Security and Welfare Measures:

In order to safeguard and assist underprivileged populations, Ambedkar promoted social security and welfare programs. In order to address the vulnerabilities faced by underprivileged populations, he underlined the necessity of social safety nets that include facilities for healthcare, education, and social support. Ambedkar thought that providing social support and a minimal level of life would help marginalised populations become more economically independent and empowered. Initiatives and policies targeted at lowering socioeconomic gaps and fostering inclusive economic growth are still motivated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's support of economic empowerment. His initiatives to combat landlessness, advance credit and job possibilities, support social security, and foster entrepreneurship have had a long-lasting effect on India's attempts to empower underprivileged groups economically [3-7].

Conclusion

A number of policy initiatives that support social justice, equality, education, and economic empowerment were made possible by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's work. For example, the reservation system gives historically under-represented communities reservations and affirmative action in government employment and educational institutions. It is a direct outcome of his work to give marginalised populations equitable chances and support. In India and around the world, his beliefs and deeds continue to motivate social reform groups and legislative efforts aimed at creating a more just and equal society. His efforts demonstrate the lasting impact of his vision for a society that places a high value on equality, social justice, education, and everyone's economic empowerment. In contrast to most other leaders, Ambedkar believed that in order to achieve the societal goal, it was critical to use other inputs outside of technology.

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