



BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR SOCIETY EFFORT – SOCIAL WORK POINT OF VIEW.

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Abstract

Social work is well established as an academic discipline. Once an integral part of sociology, this discipline has now developed into a distinct branch of study and a unique research method. Dr. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Indian Constitution Drafting Committee, has done many researches about the social movements and achievements in India from the perspective of Sociology. I will examine some of the movements led by that great man from the perspective of social work.

The concept of social work originated in the nineteenth century. After the success of industrial revolution new economic conditions were created. The living conditions of those who live in industrial areas have changed a lot. However, in the 1930s, the world-wide financial crisis caused humanity to face severe hardships. That situation is called 'Great Depression'. How is the person's financial situation in such situations? What kind of problems is the family system facing due to financial crisis? How is urban poverty? Social work etc. to investigate what is the solution to them. In 1931, Jane Addams, who founded Hull House in Chicago, received the Nobel Peace Prize, and social work gained prominence worldwide. Social work has developed into a scientific method of study in modern times. At first it was only a method of investigating the activities of charitable organizations and examining the successes or failures of individuals. But, after that social work became a science. It has evolved into a science that understands and analyses the economic and social activities of individuals, families, groups and small groups.

International Federation of Social Workers defined the social work in a comprehensive way. It says, "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social science, humanities and indigenous knowledge. Social work engages people and structures to address life changes and enhance well-being".

Canadian Association of Social Workers too conceived it in a similar way and it emphasized on individual and personal problems, poverty, unemployment and domestic violence.

Introduction

These two definitions are sufficient to examine the changes brought by Dr. Ambedkar in India. Accidentally, at the time when social work was being made a special branch of study, Dr. Ambedkar intensified the struggle on social problems in India. Therefore, I will examine the social service done by Dr. Ambedkar as an individual and as a leader of the downtrodden communities. Recognized as a leader of human and civil rights. He is also hailed as a liberator who fought to free people from class and caste exploitation. The principle of social justice is hailed as a principle enshrined in the Constitution. He has a special reputation as a person who respected the multiple cultures of India, studied social sciences in the world's top universities, and was a well-educated scholar of languages such as English, German, Sanskrit, French, and Latin. The United Nations decided to celebrate the birthday of such a great genius as Knowledge Day. Respecting that resolution, two hundred countries of the world are celebrating Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti as Knowledge Day.



Dr. Ambedkar was the first post graduate in India. He was the first intellectual to receive a doctorate in economics from the London School of Economics. At that time, there was no other Indian who got a doctorate degree from that university before him. He was awarded a doctorate by the London School of Economics for his research on the rupee problem in India. While receiving the Nobel Prize in Economics from India, Professor Amartya Sen declared that Dr. Ambedkar was his role model in economic matters.

Prof Kancha Ilaiah stated in an interview that United Nations has considered caste and its oppression. While answering to a question he says, well, firstly, India's credibility in the world is low, when it comes to caste problems. The United Nations has recognized caste and the World Bank has also expressed concern over caste and untouchability. So, a lot of international institutions have expressed concern about caste.

Review of literature

In 1915, Dr. Ambedkar presented a paper in the anthropology seminar on the birth of castes and their function in India. It is believed that it will help the researchers to understand the caste system. Gayle Omwith, Prof. G. Aloysius, Prof. Kanche Ailiah, sociologist Nicholas Durksa and Susan Bailey have praised Dr. Ambedkar's service to the academic field. World-renowned author Arundhatirai also wrote a lengthy preface to Ambedkar's book Abolition of Caste, presenting his methodology for understanding the social system of this country.

Let us see some aspects of Dr. Ambedkar's social theory. India is mainly built on the foundations of caste. The people of this country are divided into castes and tribes. The first varna system was formed according to Hindu Sanatana Dharma Shastras. In course of time the varna system evolved into the caste system. Varna and caste system is supported by orthodox scriptures. The hierarchical caste system continued for thousands of years without any changes. British rule brought some changes. But fundamentally there was no change in the caste system. Dharmashastras have bound all rights and privileges to Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishya Varnas. Right to education, right to own property, right to bear arms, right to rule were denied to Shudras, untouchables, tribals and women. The untouchables were ostracized and looked down upon by animals. Thousands of years passed without any civil and human rights for this community.

In this background, Dr. Ambedkar prepared to fulfil his duty. He formed the Depressed Castless Association and started fighting for the rights of the untouchables. He submitted memoranda when various commissions came to India to provide human rights and civil rights to the British rulers. He submitted memoranda to South Borough Commission in 1918, Manteng Chemsford Commission in 1919 and Simon Commission in 1927. Also, when the Round Table Conferences were held in 1930, he spoke as a representative of the oppressed classes. Moreover, for the first time in 1932, he succeeded in getting equal human rights and civil rights for untouchables along with other communities through Communal Award announced by Ramsay MacDonald. This is an extraordinary achievement. From the point of view of social work, this is a rare moment in which the untouchables were freed from slavery.

Dr. Ambedkar mainly accepts the principle of equality. His argument is that all men are equal. The priests, priests and scholars of many religions said that all are equal in the eyes of God, but they did not say that all the people in the society are equal. Dr. Ambedkar criticized that Yogis, Munus and Sants used their erudition and meditative power to protect the caste system. He cites saints like Kabir,



Ravidasu, Chokkamela and Tukaram to say that only those who grew up as Yogis and Munas from the downtrodden communities rejected the caste system. He declared Buddha, Kabir and Mahatma Phule as his gurus. He said that he is fighting for equality in India with their spirit.

Spirituality is indeed a personal thing. But, in India it is a collective problem. Sanatana dharma shastras, which say that God created the world, forbid untouchables from entering the temple. Asprushyu's spiritual life stopped outside the temples. Dr. Ambedkar said that this society could not have progressed without spiritual democracy. He started the temple entry movement of Asprushyus. For more than three months there was a struggle under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar to open the Kalaram Temple in Nashik to the untouchables.

He declared on that occasion that he was fighting to show the truth that the Asprussians did not want to go to the temples and worship God, but that they had the right to go to the temples. Also, he extended support to the people of the downtrodden communities who are struggling to use the Travancore Temple Road in Kerala.

At the Mahad conference, I quote from the blog 'AmebdkariteToday', Dr. Ambedkar said that untouchables do not have any human rights in Hinduism. He said that Hindus are not allowed to drink water from common wells and ponds at least. Dr. Ambedkar led the struggle to touch the water of the pond in Mahad town when the Aspirus were banned. On that occasion, upper caste Hindus attacked and injured the people of depressed communities who had come to Mahad town as a rally. Finally, he went down to the pond and continued the fight in the courts to touch the water and won. Why do we fight, he asked. It is not simply for drinking water; drinking the water will not give us very much. It is not even a matter of only of our human rights, though we fight to establish the right to drink water. But our goal is no less than that of the French Revolution.

This was fought for the reconstruction of society, for the eradication of the old society based on feudal inequality and the establishment of a new society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Similarly, we want to end the old inhuman caste society based on inequality and reconstruct the world, reconstruct society on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity (<https://www.ambedkaritetoday.com/2019/10/mahad-satyagraha-first-battle-of-dalit-liberation.html>).

Reconstruction of the social order on the equality principle and proclamation of human dignity is more important for him than any other things. He strived to achieve this goal. He continued his cognitive endeavours to make savarna caste people to realize the importance of social transformation from old order to new modern and egalitarian one but he could not succeeded. After his uncompromising struggle with Brahmanical leaders and Brahmanical social order, he realized that untouchables never claim the human rights and human dignity in hindu religion. He then decided to leave the Hindu religion out and decided to embrace another religion which assures equality and fraternity as core tents. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar announced to leave Hinduism in 1936. It was not in my hands that I was born a Hindu. But he declared that I will not die as a Hindu. He studied all religions for about 20 years and decided to embrace Buddhism. He asked the Asprussians to abandon Hinduism and embrace Buddhism. He called upon people to come to Buddhism for personal development, spiritual development and social transformation. He organized many meetings to spread awareness about conversion. Finally Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in 1956 with 5 lakh people. That is why



Buddhists recognize Ambedkar as a Bodhisattva. Still millions of people inspired by Dr. Ambedkar's call continue to embrace Buddhism.

Dr. Ambedkar believed in laws more than moral promises. He fought with the British rulers. At the same time, he worked as Labour Minister in their government. Saji Narayanan states, Dr Ambedkar took over the Labour portfolio as the Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1942. In a reception, he said in humility that the high office held no charm for him and that he would be the first to quit if his efforts as Labour Member were unsuccessful in improving the conditions of workers of the country. Regarding the Government's commitment to labour, Dr Ambedkar based his views on the recommendations of the Royal Commission, 1930 and the various Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Dr Ambedkar was the Champion of real tripartism in India. In 1942, he called the 4th Tripartite Indian Labour Conference (ILC) in New Delhi. Before that, only the Government representatives were there in the ILC. In his address, Dr Ambedkar said: "It is for the first time in the history of these labour conferences that the representatives of the employers and employees have been brought face to face within the ambit of a joint conference".

The objects of the ILC 1942 were the formulating of a procedure for the settlement of industrial disputes and the discussion of matters of all-India importance as between Labour and Capital. Joint discussions in the ILCs brought fundamental changes in the outlook of the Government, employers and employees on labour issues" (<https://www.news Bharati.com/Encyc/2021/4/15/Ambedkar-Labor-reforms.html>).

As a labour minister Dr. Ambedkar is responsible for many laws in that order. He made it a law that children and women should not be employed in particularly dangerous workplaces. Labour laws state that in case of accidents at workplaces, besides providing accident insurance facility, the employer of that company is liable. While the Labour Act of 1927 made strike a crime, Dr. Ambedkar argued that strike was a fundamental right of workers. Ambedkar proposed to give rest to the workers and organize special programs for their entertainment. Dr. Ambedkar laid the foundations for industrial development and development of the working class in independent India by making many labour laws.

Dr. Ambedkar understands society as a holistic system. He recognized the evolution of society. While he criticizes the anti-progressive ideology of the society, his ideas are person centred. While writing the Constitution of India, he carefully thought about the fundamental rights and responsibilities of individuals. Indian constitution is not community based. The Constitution has given all the rights to the individual. This change was made possible by the revolutionary ideas of Dr. Ambedkar.

We have never seen the changes brought by Dr. Ambedkar in the past. According to the 1911 census, only 9 percent of people were literate in India. In 1931 it doubled to 18 percent. By 1981, after the Constitution came into force, 35 percent of the country was literate. By 2021, 78 percent of people are literate in the country. This was possible only because of Ambedkar.

At the time of independence and while making the constitution a discourse was taking place among the common people that what should be the base for the new constitution? Privilege sections argued and opined that varnasram Dharma shall be the foundation to the new constitution and new India. Marginalized sections and minority classes did not buy that argument and proposed a new constitution based on the values of equality, fraternity, liberty and justice in social, political and economic spheres.



Should the right to study be based on caste? If the constitution had been made according to the laws that decide whether or not, there would not have been so many educated people. But, according to the constitution written by Dr. Ambedkar, everyone has the right to study, so about 80 percent people became literate. All castes entered the education sector. A large number of good intellectuals and thinkers have emerged from lower castes and they are making knowledge field comprehensive. These sons of Dr. Ambedkar are producing wide varieties of literature on various subjects.

Prof. Kancha Ilaiah says, “once the Dalits got education, particularly from some of the good central universities, we were the first generation after Ambedkar died. So we basically got on par with the Brahmins, which was a good thing, which led to a number of books and journals being produced popularizing Ambedkar” (<https://www.newslaundry.com/2016/04/15/buddha-ambedkar-will-remain>).

Prof Kancha Ilaiah’s statement proves that the transformation in education sector is possible only by Dr. Ambedkar’s relentless efforts.

Methods

The Babasaheb Ambedkar Society employs various methodologies to achieve its objectives of promoting education, cultural heritage, and advocacy for marginalized communities in India. Some of the key methodologies include:

Education and Training Programs: The society runs various educational and vocational training programs for marginalized communities, with a focus on providing access to quality education and employment opportunities. These programs include schools, colleges, coaching classes, and skill development programs.

Cultural Preservation and Promotion: The society promotes and preserves the cultural heritage of marginalized communities through initiatives such as the publication of literature, the organization of cultural festivals and events, and the establishment of museums and archives.

Advocacy and Activism: The society is involved in campaigns and activism for the rights of marginalized communities, including challenging caste-based discrimination and violence. The society uses various methods such as protests, lobbying, and legal action to advocate for social justice.

Research and Publications: The society conducts research and publishes literature on issues related to social justice and human rights, with a focus on the experiences of marginalized communities. These publications help to raise awareness and generate discourse on these issues.

Collaboration and Partnerships: The society collaborates with other organizations, both in India and abroad, to achieve its objectives. These partnerships help to leverage resources, expertise, and networks to increase the impact of the society's efforts.

Overall, the Babasaheb Ambedkar Society employs a multi-faceted approach to achieve its objectives, combining education, culture, advocacy, research, and collaboration to promote social justice and equality for marginalized communities in India.

Conclusion

Economic democracy was possible to some extent due to his idea of having special reservations in the employment sector. Parliamentary democracy flourished in the country due to universal adult suffrage. He proposed a balance and co-ordination between the Union Government and the State Governments



by determining the rights of the States so that national integrity and integration continued. Everyone agrees that Dr. Ambedkar's vision is the reason for the multi-cultural society to continue as one nation. When viewed from the perspective of social work, Dr. Ambedkar stands at the forefront of the greatest leaders who have had a profound impact on the social, political and economic sectors of India. Hence, he is hailed as the creator of modern India, Babasaheb Ambedkar.