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## DR.B.R. AMBEDKAR: CONTRIBUTION TO INDIAN CONSTITUTION: ITS RELEVANT TO THE CONTEMPORARY CIVIL SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar occupies a unique position in the modern Indian social and political ideology. The uniqueness of his ideology lay in the fact that he visualized a path through a maze of mystical and speculative theories, and the beliefs of the Hindu scriptures that dominated the Indian scene. He disliked the concept of an Almighty Power, the metaphysical spiritual monism of the Hindu scriptures, the immortality of the soul and transmigration; instead, his ideology upheld rationalism and the liberation of Man. Ambedkar was the builder of modern India. He fought relentlessly to build a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He endeavored to build a new social order, based on social emancipation and economic prosperity. He was a pragmatist to the core. He believed that in the absence of economic and social justice, political freedom would not bring out social solidarity. He held that the first step towards the attainment of social solidarity and nation-building was the liquidation of the four-fold classification of Varnas as advocated in the Hindu scriptures. He upheld the rights of man and constitutional remedies for enforcing them. He cherished the goal of an ideal democracy and just society. Dr. Ambedkar ideology is meant to promote social change by eradicating all types of exploitation and oppression.

**Keywords:** Spiritualism, Social Solidarity, Eradicating Social Values, Equal Society, Rationalistic Views, Socialistic Realisation.

### Introduction

**What are we having this liberty for? We are having this liberty in order to reform our social system, which is full of inequality, discrimination and other things, which conflict with our fundamental rights.**

**B. R. Ambedkar**

Dr. Ambedkar (1891-1956) played varied roles in the Indian public life. Starting as a leader of the Untouchables, he rose to be a great nation-builder. From a practicing lawyer, he elevated himself to the enviable position of the principal architect of India's Constitution. The main contributions of Dr. Ambedkar in nation building were:

- (i) the liberation of the untouchables;
- (ii) the drafting of the Constitution of India; and
- (iii) the revival of Buddhism in the land of its origin.

Dr. Ambedkar was an iconoclast who did not hesitate to criticize ruthlessly the beliefs, customs and ideas of Hinduism that led to the creation of the Varna system and graded inequalities in the society. He was equally a crusader for the forgotten rights of the Untouchables, and to achieve them he carried out a long and determined struggle. He fought valiantly for achieving human rights for the depressed classes and then for political rights with reservation in legislature together with share in the administration. He had undertaken the task of removing untouchability and establishing equality earnestly. He said: 'This is a struggle in order to raise ourselves; hence we are bound to undertake it, so as to remove the obstacles to our progress. We all know how at every turn; untouchability muddies and soils our whole existence.' He further stated: 'Untouchability is not a single matter; it is the matter of all our poverty and lowliness and it has brought us to the abject state we are in today. If we want to raise ourselves out of it, we must undertake this task. We cannot be saved in any other way. It is a task not for our benefit alone; it is also for the benefit of the nation. He believed that there could be no real social revolution without ending untouchability. But this social revolution, he held, should be accomplished peacefully. He said to his opponents; 'Please do not oppose us. Put away the orthodox scriptures. Follow justice. And we assure you that we shall carry out our programme peacefully. Dr. Ambedkar thus brought determination to assert the rights of the untouchables. He refused to be treated any longer as lower than animals, or even to be patronized by sanctimonious political bosses, climbers and bounders. He resolved to assert their rights as Indians to enter all walks of life, to advance in every possible direction, to carve out their own destiny to fight for social, educational and economic equality with higher castes. And in this prolonged battle for the rights of the untouchables, despite all sorts of humiliations and indignities, Dr. Ambedkar emerged out successfully. This was one of his foremost contributions in nation building.



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## 2 Dr.B.R. Ambedkar Indian Constitution

Ambedkar was the principal architect in the drafting of the Indian Constitution. The framing of the Constitution was a gigantic task in which he displayed his wisdom, skill and authority in an amazing way that surprised his critics and adversaries. Many of the members of the Constituent Assembly, including its President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had showered praises upon Dr. Ambedkar for completing a highly difficult task in a meticulous way. Even his critics in the Con-Assembly, one of them was Jaspat Rai Kapur, had to admit: 'I had started with a prejudice against Dr. Ambedkar for I had felt very sore many years ago when Mahatma Gandhi was undergoing fast against grant of separate electorates to the Scheduled Castes and I had read in the newspapers the news that when he had been invited to see Mahatma Gandhi to discuss the question, he once said that for a day or two he was not free because he had to attend to some professional engagements. I felt very sorry then. I do not know how far it is correct. But even if it was so the great work that he has done during these years (in the Constituent Assembly) has washed away that particular sin or any other sins which he may have committed. I have developed an admiration and also affection for Dr. Ambedkar for the very useful work and the very patriotic work which he has done. His very first speech in this Assembly had dispelled all my doubts and fears in relation to him and today I may say that I consider him to be one of the best patriots of this country. I have always found him to bring to bear upon the subject a very constructive approach. In fact, Dr. Ambedkar's work in the Constituent Assembly was acclaimed the greatest patriotic and nation building service to the country. A thoroughly upright person and a man with a keen sense, a proud and irreconcilable heart, learning, Dr. Ambedkar approached the whole matter of the framing of India Constitution in the right spirit, full or' co-operation and friendliness. He put a profound impress upon India's Constitution. In its framing 'moral vision, political skill, legal acumen: were all brought together' by him. On the whole, "his speeches were invariably characterized by a bold and forthright approach. On the question of a strong Centre With plenary powers and the amplitude of Fundamental Rights his unequivocal support was very helpful.

## 3 Views on Buddhism and Rationalisation

The greatest service that Dr. Ambedkar did is the revival of Buddhism in the land of its origin. He dug up Buddhism from the grave where it had been lying buried for well over 2000 years and gave it new life and strength. He brought the message of Buddha to the downtrodden masses. He was in a sense the greatest revivalist of Buddhism in India. He was disillusioned with Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. He regarded them as dogmatic and sectarian in outlook. He considered that Buddhism could save mankind from destruction ruin. He was not only the interpreter of Buddha's message, but he raised that message from the abysmal dens and lived up to it in his life. All in all, he was a true prophet of the revival of Buddhism in modern India. In a broadcast in May 1956, Dr. Ambedkar said: 'I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches Prajna (understanding as against superstition and supematuralism), Karuna (love) and Samata (equality). He preferred Buddha in comparison to Marx, because the former alone could provide liberty, equality and fraternity. Marx emphasized equality, but failed to provide liberty and fraternity. Ambedkar discarded the infallibility of the Vedas and the Vedantic tradition which was based on graded inequality. He repudiated the Hindu scriptures and the Varna system, He wrote: 'Hinduism is a senile old body which suffered in all its joints from old age and disease and holds no hope for the suffering humanity much less for the downtrodden masses of India for whose appalling poverty and miserable condition it is directly responsible. In the modern Indian social tradition, Ambedkar was first and supreme in the development of socio-political ideology rooted in rationality. He was young in his soul and never lost the boy's insatiable curiosity. To great curiosity, Ambedkar allied great faith in reason. He believed that life and the world were rational and that the laws formulated by the government should be based on rationality.

Ambedkar's faith in reason and rationality is unshakeable. He says that all rational rules should replace the supernatural. Consciousness is created by reason. Reason is the only means of knowing reality. Theology and morality should be based on reason. Rational men ought to be free to pursue their interests, and customs that have been erected to block their path should be altered or destroyed so as to permit them greater liberty. Morality should be founded not on theology, but on rationality, that is, the changing needs and aspirations of society; and not any unchanging revelation or dogma, should determine the good. The orthodox scriptures, metaphysics, theology and supernatural sanctions should be swept away as they are antagonistic to reasons. In Ambedkar, reason is triumphant. He discards Vedas, scriptures and theology, and evolves a new ideology of reason. Like Descartes, he is confident of the power of reason. He exalts rationality and believes that social order should be guided by it.

## 4 Views on Human Confen and Society

Ambedkar's concept of man and society is an important aspect in sphere of national building. He discarded the Vedic concept of man and society which was based on Karma, Varanas, God and the transmigration of soul. He believed that the Vedic concept was based on inequality, social oppression, caste system and economic exploitation. Similarly, he rejected the hedonism of Charvaka; and the extremes of total non-violence, Karmas, mukti and asceticism as contained in Jainism. In contrast to Charvaka and Jainism, Ambedkar was attracted towards the Buddhist concept of man and society as it pleaded moderation, humanism, love and friendship. He saw in Buddhism a new hope for man, new democratic element and new social order. Ambedkar did not like the Christian and



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Islamic concepts of man and society because they advocated theism. He was a sworn enemy of theism. He saw man a different context of social situation wherein the oppressed man had to face and fight against the fundamentalists belonging to the theistic religions. He found man all alone, neither soul nor God helped him, and thus, his concept of man had a humanistic connotation, quite different from the concept of Hinduism Jainism, Islam and Christianity. The medieval concept of man and despite some genuine efforts of saints and sects to abolish untouchability, was broadly theistic. Ambedkar did not like to leave man at the mercy of God. He wanted that the downtrodden must rise and stand himself for his own emancipation by his own efforts. He wanted that the man must free himself from the bondage of theism. Even the Gandhian concept of man and society did not find favour in Ambedkar's ideology. He believed that though Gandhi condemned untouchability, his ideology was not free from divine social mechanism and Varnasharama Dharma. He regarded the Gandhian concept as a replica of Varnas and caste mechanism. Ambedkar firmly held the view that man was not created by any supernatural power. Man himself is the creator of his own social being including the resultant virtues and evils. Man is the creator, reformer and also rebellious by nature. He exists, because he creates, reforms and rebels against what he wishes to uproot. Man does so with the sense of justice and utility. The revealing aspect of the Ambedkar thoughts is that the matters, directly related to God and his creation, soul and its transmigration, reincarnation and its redeeming dose, citadel of heavenly abode, Karma and its effects on the next life, moksha (salvation) and its union with Brahma (Supreme Being), miracles of the divine spirits, pre-determined fate of human beings, etc., do not find place in Ambedkar's ideology and approach to the problems of man and society. For these ideas and beliefs in no way the lot and quality of life of oppressed and the downtrodden. Man is himself responsible for what he is, and it is only man, who can solve the problems and remove the hardships by his own efforts. Inspired by his humanistic rationalistic and pragmatic culture. Ambedkar thus broke with the past and inaugurated a new concept of man and society in the context of the Indian situation.

### 5 On Society and Social Justice

Ambedkar's vision of a just society and his concept of social justice building. His just society is a casteless society based on the principles of social justice. Ambedkar developed his vision of a just society after dissecting the existing nature of Indian social order. He rejected the basic principles of Hindu social order which was based on graded inequality, fixity of occupations and caste-status derived from birth. He upheld a fundamental change in the rigidity of caste structure and suggested its total annihilation. In his well-known work 'Annihilation of Caste', he provided a picture of just or ideal society. He wrote: 'An ideal society should be mobile, should be full of channels for conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts. In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared. There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words, there should be social endosmosis. Ambedkar's just society is based upon two fundamental principles. The first is that the individual is an end in himself and that the aim and object of society is the growth of the individual and the development of his personality. The second essential principle is that the terms of associated life between members of society must be regarded by consideration founded on liberty, equality and fraternity. Social Justice means a complete change in the fundamental notions of life. It means a complete revolution in our look and in attitude towards men and things. It means a new and vibrant life for all. But such a new life cannot enter a body that is dead. His reference was to Hindu society which was an antique and out-dated society. He, therefore, argued: 'But a new life cannot enter a body that is dead. New life can enter only in a new body. The old body must die before a new body can come into existence and a new life can enter into it. To put it simply, the old must cease to be operative before the new can begin to enliven and to pulsate. This is what I meant when I said you must discard the authority of the Shastras and destroy the religion of the Shastras. Ambedkar thus favoured social change; and social change and social justice are synonyms.

### 6 Social Humanism and Democracy

Dr. Ambedkar's adherence to humanism and his attachment to the poor and the downtrodden do indicate that Ambedkar was a great nation -builder. The main principles of Ambedkar's social humanism are: (i) equality among human beings; (ii) every human being as an end himself; (iii) right of every human being to social, economic, political and religious freedom; (iv) to make every human being free from want and fear; (v) to maintain liberty, equality, fraternity, and to strive to secure redemption of man by man, of class by class, and of nation by nation; (vi) to stand for a democratic society under a parliamentary system of government; (vii) to believe in non-violence as an instrument of social change and adopt peaceful and persuasive methods to avoid class conflicts and the possibility of civil war; (viii) to avoid any 'ism' or any theory or dogma in its extreme aspect; (ix) need for spiritual discipline; and (x) firm foundation of universal love, equality and human brotherhood that the Buddha taught. Ambedkar's social humanism contains the central tenets of his social and political ideology. Ambedkar regarded democracy as top dressing on an Indian soil which is essential in democratic. He was thus aware of the difficulties and challenges that the Indian democracy would likely to face in future. He believed that democracy should be established in India not merely in form, but also in fact. The social and economic revolution could be ushered in India through constitutional means. The beauty in Ambedkar's ideology was that he cojoined the three dimensions of democracy. These three dimensions are political democracy, economic and social democracy. He said that a mere political democracy is not enough. It must be accompanied by economic and social democracy. Inequalities and exploitation in economic life are injurious



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to the health of political democracy. He also emphasized that social democracy must be established because our social life is a diseased "one where all sorts of graded inequalities and degradation are rampant. The contradictions inherent in social life must be eliminated. In short, what Ambedkar pleaded was that the semblance of political democracy was not enough; it has to be strengthened by the pillars of economic and social democracy. Social democracy is a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. His social democracy also forms an important part of social justice. Social Democracy and social ideology of social justice are capable to put an end to the life on contraindications in India.

### 7 Ideas reflected on Human Freedom

Ambedkar's ideology is a wide-ranging one which throws cross-beams of light on the big social and political issues of human freedom, the grounds of rights and the means of their fulfillments, the basis of democracy, the individual and society, and the need of a new social order based on social justice. To millions of the depressed and downtrodden, his ideology is a glimmer of hope, because Ambedkar demolished, rather mercilessly, the infallibility of the Vedas and Varna system as they advocated inequalities and status by birth. His ideology aims towards the creation of political, economic and social democracy on the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice - in social, economic and political matters. The vision of his ideology is to establish a just, coherent and ideal society, free from exploitation and oppression, and pursuing the goal of fellow-feeling and brotherhood. the removal of social restraints imposed by caste-ridden antique society and the e relentless march into social justice are the key features of Ambedkar's nation-building. Ambedkar is often characterized as a 'social rebel'. His ideology, therefore, is a revolt against the most glaring inequalities existing in the Hindu society, and the ghastly extent to which they were practised by the caste Hindus. Casteism and the segregation of the untouchables that had continued for centuries are at variance with the ideology of Ambedkar. To the untouchables, Ambedkar's ideology of social justice promised paradise on earth; to others it promised equality of opportunity; but to a limited section of caste Hindus, who did not relish it; it put them between the devil and the deep blue sea. Whatever may be the criticism of Ambedkar's ideology, it is the representative of the age. Political ideology, like any other kind of thought, is fully understood only by relating it to the context of time, place and circumstances in which it occurred. Ambedkar's ideology is 'representative' of the age in the sense that he tried to remove the rotten garbage of the centuries that had piled up in the Hindu society. Instead of castes and classes and status by birth, Ambedkar in his ideology gives a pre\_ eminent place to Man. Man alone occupies the most central or dominant place in his ideology. Based on democratic values, social justice and fraternity, Ambedkar's ideology is monumental, especially the result of his years of devotional work. The purpose of the State to Ambedkar appears to be the same as to John Stuart v1ill, who 'laid stress upon the idea that very individual should aim to promote the general happiness. Social well-being was the end of Government, the fostering of virtue and intelligence was the test of its success.

### 8 Conclusion

Ambedkar's ideology sought to unite the vast country with its great diversity, many languages and creeds within a common bond of the constitutional justice on the great ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice. He showed an uncompromising respect for human dignity, an unquestioning commitment to equality and non-discrimination, and an abiding concern for the poor and the week. The ultimate aim of his ideology is the creation of a just social orde4 Ambedkar was a pragmatic thinker. His pragmatic ideology - connected with real situations, practical problems and difficulties - was based on vision and action. He did not like the clever dodges of politicians or the tricks of the trade. He grasped the principles of State and politics only by the harder route of learning, conflict and experiencing humiliations. He was indeed a savant, possessing great knowledge and ability. He did not like the slick, simple motion or the short-circuit answer to meet the problems of the day. Such short-circuit methods or ideas, he regarded, as least fruitful and most frustratingly inadequate in practice. All in all, his pragmatic ideology was sensible and realistic. His wonderful intellectual subtlety, distinction and creativeness are visible in the field of pragmatic ideology.

His ideology, in short, is a wide-ranging one. It is an ideology of liberation. It is pragmatic and sensible. It is representative of the age. It is loaded in favour of Man. It is free from speculative theories. Its aim is the creation of a just social order. It is saturated with the principles of social justice. It is very strong in reason and rationality. It has exercised a remarkable influence on the framing of Indian Constitution. Its influence on the shaping of events has been tremendous. It is difficult to refute the relevance of his ideology in the Indian context. It is an ideology of vision and action, and each element nourishes the other. Above all his ideology is meant for nation-building.



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