



THE HINDU CODE BILL AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - VIEWS OF DR. B.R AMBEDKAR

¹Dr. Marri Prema Jyothi and ²Kesarapu Govik

¹Forest Section Officer Huzoor Nagar Range, Suryapet District, Telangana, India

²Department of Sociology, University College of Arts & Social Sciences Osmania University, Hyderabad

ABSTRACT:

Dr. B.R Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the world. Dr. Ambedkar, the determined fighter and a deep scholar, made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. He is true celebrated champion of the underprivileged. He deserves more than what he has achieved today. However he was highly controversial figure in his home country, though it was not the reality. Ambedkar was not only the father of Indian Constitution; he was a great freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, economist, editor, social reformer, revivalist of Buddhism and was first Indian to break down the barriers in the path of advancement of women in India. 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.

KEY WORDS: Philosopher, Thinker, Economist, Editor, Constitution, Privilege, Power, Politicians, Opportunity, Humanitarianism, Social Justice, Hindu Code Bill

INTRODUCTION:

Dr. Ambedkar laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. He stated that women should be given all round development more importantly social education, their well being and socio-cultural rights. He emphasized that each and every section of Indian women be given their due share and it is a must to maintain and protect dignity and modesty of women. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar always believed in movements led by women. He also added that if the women from all walks of life are taken in to confidence, they may play a significant role in the social reforms. They have played very massive and active role to eradicate the social abuses. He insisted that she must show the courage to deny the life of slaves. She should insist on the principle of equality. If all the women follow it, they will get the real respect and their own identity.

OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ The perception of Ambedkar regarding women empowerment
- ❖ Introducing of Hindu Code Bill for women empowerment
- ❖ The relevancy of his ideas in present political and social scenario



FINDINGS:

Ambedkar's perception on women's position, emphasizing their right to education, equal treatment with men, right to property and involvement in the political process were derived from the concept of subjection of women, that is the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong in itself and one of the chief hindrance to human development; and ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no privilege or power on the one side, nor disability on the other.

Dr Ambedkar believed in the strength of women and their role in the process of social reforms. He believed in Irish Patriot Daniel O' Connell's words, 'No man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity. And no nation can be grateful at the cost of his liberty'. The historic 'Mahad Satyagraha' witnessed participation of three hundred women along with their male counterparts. Addressing another meeting of about 3000 women, he said, 'I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women had achieved. Let every girl who marries stand by her husband, claim to be her husband's friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. I am sure if you follow this advice, you will bring honour and glory to yourselves.' He strongly advocated for family planning measures for women in Bombay Legislative Assembly.

In 1942, being a Labour Minister of Executive Council of Governor General, he introduced a Maternity Benefit Bill. He provided several provisions in the constitution for protecting the welfare and civil rights of women. He introduced the Hindu Code Bill in the Parliament and highlighted the issues about women's property right. The bill received strong opposition from many political leaders. In turn, Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet expressing his discontent over non acceptance of woman's right by the parliament. There was significant opposition from various conservative Hindu politicians, organizations and devotees; they saw themselves unjustly singled out as the sole religious community whose laws were to be reformed. Thus, the Hindu Code Bill is important not merely in terms of its legal provisions or implementation of the Acts, but also in terms of its impact in the realm of gender consciousness in society. In short, along with the depressed class women, his thoughts for emancipation of all the women are expressed with same allegiance.

Ambedkar's emphasis was on reconstruction of the Hindu society on the basis of equality rather than the social reforms, because their attempts were limited only to the upper strata of the society. His in depth study of Smritis and Shashtras and his experience from the response of upper castes during the temple entry movement crystallized his conclusions on Hindu philosophy and society. He always honored women for their work and hardships.

Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and devdasi system. Ambedkar strongly believed in the movements run by women and advocated that if they are truly taken in to confidence, they may change the present miserable picture of society. He said, 'in past, they have played a significant role in improving the condition of weaker section and classes' and can do better now also if given the opportunities.

He condemned all the bad traditions, habits, bad practices and professions like prostitution and ways of life which made a woman's life difficult and complex. It is interesting to note that, even the illiterate women followed his advice from the bottom of their heart.

Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India through the following Articles.

- 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 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 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. He asked those who argued against the Bill, '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'. The Hindu Code Bill was later split in to four Bills, and the same were put on the Statue Book by Parliament as follows:

- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956
- The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956
- The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956

CONCLUSIONS:

The four enactments incorporate the ideas and principles of Hindu Code Bill formulated by Dr Ambedkar. They give independent status to women and endow them with the right of adoption, succession and property, so completely denied by Manu. Therefore, it is truism to say that it is due to Dr. Ambedkar that a large part of the Hindu social law is now on par with the legal system prevailing in advanced western countries.

His dream of society, based on gender equality is yet to be realized and therefore his thoughts are important for the social reconstruction that favours women empowerment. Dr. Babasaheb expressed his views on the state of life of all women. He stated that women must be treated equally and given equal prestige. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly.

He expressed his views about Muslim women and their religious traditions, about wearing veil, their marriages and so on. Muslim women were suppressed under various religious traditions. Towards all the women, irrespective of their religion, castes and class, Babasaheb had a particular humanitarianism view. He frequently raised his voice against all sorts of injustice towards women.

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.



Cover Page



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
ISSN:2277-7881(Print); IMPACT FACTOR :10.16(2026); IC VALUE:5.16; ISI VALUE:2.286
Peer-Peer Reviewed, Refereed & Open Access International Journal - As per UGC Norms
(Fulfilled Suggests Parameters of UGC by IJMER)
Volume:15, Issue:6(1), June 2026
Scopus Review ID: A2B96D3ACF3FEA2A
Article Received: Reviewed: Accepted
Publisher: Sucharitha Publication, India
Online Copy of Article Publication Available: www.ijmer.in

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)