



## Dr. Ambedkar : Women and Social Democracy

*In the era of Globalization, liberalization and privatization, the concept of Social justice has assumed a greater significance. Many Multi-National Companies (MNC) by insisting for merit have discarded the concept of social justice. All MNC's should be made to work with in the Constitutional frame work so as to ensure social justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women in India. For this the state should make various rules, regulations and procedures. Otherwise, the concept of social justice remains only on paper not in practical. The fundamental meaning of this concept of "Social Justice" is to bring a just society. The main objective of this concept is to uplift the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the society and pull them to the main stream of the society.*

**DR. VANITA GANDOTRA KHANJO**

“Measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved”

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

“A woman is the full circle within her is the power to create, nurture and transform”

- Diane Mariechild

In ancient India, women enjoyed a very high position but gradually their position degenerated into merely objects of pleasure meant to serve certain purpose. They lost their individual identity and even their basic human right. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society end nation, and to gain 'power'. According to the Country Report of Government of India, “Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one; of power”. But, from time immemorial, the women in this land of ours were treated as a sort of thing. Her placing in the society was not at par with other human beings. She has no rights. She cannot move nor does anything at her will. In Hindu Shastras, she has been branded just like animals or some Objects of enjoyment. From the verses of Ramayana as written by Tulsi Das, Dhol, ganwar, shudra, pashu, naari - Ye sab tadan ke adhikari”, In 'Manusmriti' the ancient Hindu Code-book, the status granted to women is quite visible and she was put to the lowest rug of humanity as she was treated at par with the animals and slave by the proprietors of Hindu Dharma. Such was the placement earmarked to our mothers, sisters and even great grandmothers that humanity was ashamed of. That is why Dr. Ambedkar, the father and architect of Indian Constitution,

was of the firm opinion that until and unless, we defy the Hindu Dharma-Shastras, nothing much can be changed.

The core of political thinking of Ambedkar is contained in two of his statements : (1) “The rights are protected not by law but by social and moral conscience of society”, and (2) “a democratic form of government presupposes a democratic form of society”. For him, society preceded politics and it is therefore unsurprising why Dr. Ambedkar found himself at odds with the Nationalists of the Indian National Congress on more than one occasions. Hence, in 1932, despite the fierce opposition of Gandhiji regarding the British proposal of a separate electorate for untouchables, for the latter feared that such an arrangement would divide the Hindu community, Ambedkar held steadfast his own position that political equality cannot be achieved unless socially backward groups or the “depressed classes” are not given an equal footing in the political arena.

The operations of caste both at the systemic level and at the functioning of patriarchy, the growing caste or class divide in feminist political discourse makes Ambedkar's view on women's oppression, social democracy, caste and Hindu social order and philosophy, significant to modern Indian feminist thinking. Although Ambedkar proved, himself to be a genius and was known as a great thinker, philosopher, revolutionary, jurist par excellence, prolific writer, social activist and critic and strode like a colossus in the Indian sociopolitical scene unto his death, his thoughts never received adequate attention in the generality of Indian society just because he was born as an untouchable. However, the contemporary social realities warrant close examination of the wide range of his topics, the width of his vision, the depth of his analysis, and the rationality of his outlook and there essential humanity of his suggestions

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for practical action. Hence, for Indian women's movement Ambedkar provides a powerful source of inspiration to formulate a feminist political agenda which simultaneously addresses the issues of class, caste and gender in the contemporary sociopolitical set up, which still keeps conservative and reactionary values in many respects, particularly on gender relations. The writings and Speeches of Ambedkar show what values India should develop and how they would modernize its social and political institutions. Ambedkar saw women as the victims of the oppressive, caste-based and rigid hierarchical social system

According to Ambedkar, the society must be based on reason, and not on atrocious traditions of caste system. He found education, intercaste marriage and interdine as methods, which may eliminate caste and patriarchy, maintained through endogamy.

In 1918, Ambedkar demanded separate electorate and reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in proportion to their population. After fifty years of the working of the Indian Constitution, the Indian women's demand for political reservation and the lower status of other disadvantage sections proves that his theory is correct. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started fierce propaganda against the Hindu social order and lunched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahishkrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose.

His exposure to the west has influenced his perception on feminist issues. it was a time when first wave feminism had been coming to an end with the achievement of franchise rights for women in Britain in 1918, and America in 1920 and Ambedkar's perception of the women question, emphasizing their right to education, equal treatment with men, right to property and involvement in the political process resembled the global feminist demands. It is well known that Ambedkar has the habit to working for more than eighteen hours a day without any difficulty. His reading habit helped him to understand the feminist development in different cultures and countries around the world.

After returning to India he devoted his life fully to work for the depressed classes including women. He was firmly committed to the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity. In Ambedkar's movement launched from 1920 onward, women actively participated and acquired the confidence to voice their issues on various platforms. Venbai Bhatkar and Renubai work for the socio-political equality of depressed people and promoting their economic interests.

The concept of social justice, like law, changes. It evolves itself into progressively new patterns and expands its frontiers and assumes new dimensions. Social justice has significance in the context of Indian society which is divided into Castes and Communities and they create walls and barriers of exclusiveness on the basis of superiority and inferiority such inequalities pose serious threat to Indian democracy. The concept of social justice takes within its sweep the objective of removing inequalities and affording equal opportunities to all citizens in social, economic and political affairs.

Social justice is an application of the concept of distributive justice to the wealth, assets, privileges and

advantages that accumulate within a society or state because the essence of justice is the attainment of the common goods as distinguished from the goods of individuals even of the majority. There have been two major conceptions of social justice one embodying the nation of merit and desert, the other those of needs and equality. The first conception involves ending of hereditary privileges and an open society in which people have the chance to display their desert. It is expressed in equality of opportunity and careers open to talents. The second conception implies that goods should be allocated according in each person's varied needs. As it aims to make people materially equal, it entails an idea if equality.

Social justice in India is the product of social injustice our Caste system and social structure is the fountain head for social injustice. It is unfortunate that even sixty years after independence social justice is still a distant dream not within the reach of the masses. The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women under the traditional Hindu Caste hierarchy had suffered for centuries without education and opportunities for advancement in life. Social justice is compensatory justice to offset the accumulated disabilities suffered by these historically disadvantaged sections of society and absorb them educationally and occupationally in the mainstream of national life. If opportunities are not given to develop their neglected talents there will be social imbalance and tension resulting in anarchy and disobedience to the rule of law.

According to Utilitarian, social justice is being one of the dimensions of justice which stands for fraternity; with a view to create such human social conditions which ensure free and fair development of all human beings. In fact the term may require a preferential treatment for certain sections of the population, who has been deprived of certain values for ages, with a view to bring them on equal footing other section of the population.

Ambedkar is also one of the proponents of social justice in modern India. According to Ambedkar, the term "social justice" is based upon equality, liberty and fraternity of all human beings. The aim of social justice is to remove all kinds of inequalities based upon Caste, race, sex, power, Position, 10 Friedman W. "Legal Theory" 5th Edn, Universal Law Pub, Delhi, 2002, P.338 11 Krishna Iyar "B.R. Ambedkar Centenary, Social Justice and the Undone vast Justice" B.R Pub. Delhi, 1991, P.141. 12 Merunandan K.B, Naveed Ahemed, "An Introduction to the Constitution of India" Merugu Pub. Bangalore, 2006 Dr. Ambedkar's Vision on Social Justice and wealth is that social justice brings equal distribution of the social, political and economic resources of the community. Ambedkar was the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He was fully aware of the pattern and problems of the Indian society. The aspirations of the different sections of the society and their conflicting interests. He tried to achieve social justice and social democracy in terms of one man-one value. He treated social justice as a true basis for patriotism and nationalism. According to Dr. Ambedkar the root cause of social injustice to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is the Caste

system in Hindu society. He observed, Castes are enclosed units and it is their conspiracy with clear conscience that compels the ex-communicated to make themselves into a Caste. The logic of their obdurate circumstance in merciless and it is in obedience to its force that some unfortunate groups find themselves closed out with the result that now groups by a mechanical law are constantly being converted into Castes in a widening multiplicity.

Dr. Ambedkar's social vision is reflective in his own words. As an economic system permits exploitation without obligation untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation, but it is also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation. That is because there is no independent public opinion to condemn it and there is no impartial machinery of administration to restrain it, there is no check from the police or the judiciary for the simple reasons that they are all down from the Hindus, and take side of exploiters. To the Ambedkar real democracy was a social democracy. According to him, it is essential to realize that political democracy cannot succeed where there is no social and economic democracy. He pleaded the realization of economic and social democracy in India, for political democracy was unreal preceded by economic and social democracy.

Dr. Ambedkar said, "We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society, One of these equality is on the social plane. We have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which means elevation for some and degradation for others."

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, being a philanthropic, kind and princely social reformer was much moved with the pitiable and pathetic condition and low status of women in society and he was a torch bearer in the direction of social uplift of women generally and Hindu women specially. Ambedkar chooses his social reform approach only after understanding the reality of the status of women. Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the Hindu women are tied up with bandage of superstitions which they can till their death. They are also responsible for inculcating these wrong notions learnt by them through baseless traditions and preaching of the shastras in the budding mind of their off spring. Otherwise also the women in India have remained a matter of joy and a source of amusement at such she was used and misused by men guest to serve their evil ends. She has been used just like a machine for procreation.

Under the Constitution of India Social justice is the concept of distribution of benefits to the people of the society. It concerns such matters as the regulation of wages and profits, the protections of person's right through the legal system and allocation of housing, medicine and other welfare benefits. Aristotle described distributive justice as distribution of honors or money or the other thing that fall to be divided among those who have a share in the Constitution. In every country Constitution is the fundamental and recognized source of social justice Constitution formulates the social justice in definite ways, these ways are status of individual, wants, satisfaction, wealth, education and job etc. these requirements are essential benefits for the full and

dignified development of human beings.

### **Conclusion :**

In the era of Globalization, liberalization and privatization, the concept of Social justice has assumed a greater significance. Many Multi-National Companies (MNC) by insisting for merit have discarded the concept of social justice. All MNC's should be made to work with in the Constitutional frame work so as to ensure social justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and women in India. For this the state should make various rules, regulations and procedures. Otherwise, the concept of social justice remains only on paper not in practical. The fundamental meaning of this concept of "Social Justice" is to bring a just society. The main objective of this concept is to uplift the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the society and pull them to the main stream of the society. This concept also prevents unjust enrichment at the cost of the weaker sections. So far as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar vision of 'Social Justice' is concerned, he is real earnest, sacrificed his whole life for the amelioration of the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the society. He strongly fought against the prevalent Caste system and Gender discrimination in the society and ventured to secure social justice to these sections of the society. His struggle for social justice could be visualized in the ideals and philosophy of the Indian Constitution. Thus the Constitutional ethos of the social revolution running through the 'preamble', fundamental Rights and the directive principles expressly emphasize the establishment of an egalitarian social order and based on human values of justice, Social, economic and political, equality of status and of opportunity and fraternity assuring human dignity. Thus Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar created a social revolution by awaking the women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and breaking all social values based on Hindu Social System.

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