EXAMINING SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION: B. R. AMBEDKAR'S NARRATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN INDIA

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Abstract: Social discrimination became a part of life for the lower caste people in the caste-ridden Indian social order. Especially the scheduled caste communities, with the practice of untouchability by the mainstream population of Indian society, face social discrimination in every aspect of their life, even denying them their basic human rights. The discriminatory practices at the socio-cultural level have been extended to economic activities. This has further dehumanized the downtrodden people and subjected them to various types of exploitation due to caste-based occupational distribution in the name of religion. No area of Indian life is free from caste principles, and the basic fabric of society has been designed so that caste is connected to all social institutions, including family, marriage, property inheritance, community life, religion, polity, culture, and economy. Looking into the plight of the poor and downtrodden and undergoing himself the effects of this uncodified, discriminatory social policy, Ambedkar has attempted to establish a new social order and a new Indian society in post-independent India, grounded in the democratic principles of Liberty, Equality, Justice, and Fraternity. This paper attempts to understand Ambedkar's vision of a social order grounded in democratic values in Indian society, drawing on secondary sources. Now his conception of a new society is under severe attack from the caste protagonist, who seeks to renew efforts to restore the old caste-based social order by replacing the democratic principles advanced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Introduction

Notwithstanding the simultaneity and commonality of sources of its genesis and growth among the entire populace of the Indian sub-continent, it is conjecturally premised to have originated along with the origin of humans in this part of the world. Such a premise rests on the divinity of the original religious texts and other disciplinary sources. It does not support the logical verification of the available documents, compiled at varying times and places. On the contrary, the institution of caste is a repository of people from different social groups. It was conferred with another suggestive characteristic of untouchability: not a single member of a group or category of society, but the whole group or class of people, becomes a victim of social condemnation, disapproval, and ritual rejection. Predominantly, the practice of inhumane behavior is laid in the name of untouchability. So here, it becomes important to understand the substantial logical origins of the thesis of caste and the doctrine of the caste system in Indian society, with different perspectives, and to provide a concrete basis for universal ideas. Ambedkar tried to interpret Hindu religious texts, which are constructed on graded inequality, purity, and pollution. These are policies of exclusion, meaning the rejection, expulsion, or boycott of a person's permanent membership in a caste system. Another major idea in this paper concerns intermarriage, surplus men, and surplus women, and it also highlights Ambedkar's views on the occupational relationship or division of labor. His new society has a clear idea of what constitutes a universally acceptable society. Explored by Ambedkar and other social scientists, the major issues of this harmful caste institution are addressed, and they try to prevent this constructed Hindu social order and the disorder of Indian Hindu society. This paper also focuses on how this intellectual person seeks to eliminate the harmful patterns

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of superiority and inferiority, inequality, depression, oppression, exclusion, and marginalization within the Hindu social structure and the Indian social system, and how they provided a structure for a future, equal, welfare, and developed Indian society.

I. B. R. Ambedkar on Social Welfare in India

Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-956) studied the Indian social order. He dedicated his entire life to uplifting marginalized sections of society and also made significant contributions to nation-building. In his study, Ambedkar found many irrational practices in Indian society, basically the discrimination and inequality of some downtrodden groups. Mainly, he tried to understand the issues of gender, family, community, caste, color, religion, and region of Indian society. His lifelong struggle to eradicate these socially constructed problems is a remarkable contribution to Indian society. He rejects society's discriminatory structure and seeks to establish universal social orders. In general, Indian society functions according to the old social order, based on Varna vyavastha, or caste, which is divine and enshrined in the Vedas. The Varna, or four Varna, or Chaturvarnya, originated in the Rig Veda Ninetieth Hymn of the Tenth Mandala, known as the Purusha Sukta, in the Indo-Aryan society. It is claimed that the origin of the Universe is. It says that the creation of the Brahmana was his mouth, the Rajanya was made his arms; the being called the Vaishya, "he was his thighs; the Shudras sprang from his feet" (Ambedkar, 1947, p. 22). These texts divided society into four castes based on birth and the division of work. Brahmins are the highest in rank, and Shudras are the lowest in this caste structure. Brahmins enjoyed their superiority, and they did respectable occupations, but Shudras were dominated and engaged in menial work because of their lower rank in this caste position. The Hindu social order considered only the hazardous and stigmatized occupations for Shudras. In the realm of domination in society, the Shudras have faced denial of freedom in occupations and automatically lost their human capacity under the Hindu social order. Hindu society has created untouchability and exploitation in the name of religion. They formed a hierarchy of inequality, exploitation, domination, marginalization, and exclusion based on their caste and these ranks. Ambedkar himself faced many problems at every step of his life.

II. Rejection of an Old Social Order and Establishment of a Welfare Policy

Ambedkar was against the orthodoxy and caste rigidity of Indian society. After careful evaluation of the Hindu social order, he deconstructed it, thereby excluding certain collectivities of Indian society and leaving them dominated by others for centuries. Moreover, for his reformist ideas, he faced severe criticism from the mainstream, caste-ridden Indian society. He has attempted to reconstruct a new social order based on democratic values. (Ram, 2009, p. 72) He has dedicated his whole life to the eradication of caste-based discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion. He attacked the Hindu social order, or varna vyabasta, and deconstructed the harmful Hindu religious practices, norms, customs, cultures, and values. He wanted to establish an egalitarian society.

III. Buddhism: Way of Social Emancipation of Indian Society

In an egalitarian society, Ambedkar deconstructed Hindu law, texts, and Smriti. Publicly, he burned the Hindu religious text Manusmriti on 25 December 1927. Furthermore, after that, he converted to the worldwide, equal-opportunity-based religion, Buddhism, on 14 October 1946 at Deekshaboomi, Nagpur. Ambedkar also declared that "unfortunately, I was born a Hindu,

but I assure you that I will not die as a Hindu, at the Yeola conference on 13 October 1935. In Buddhist philosophy, there is equality for all, but this is not seen in other religions. There are no rules for graded inequality. However, in Brahminism, inequality, hierarchy, and brutal punishment of lower-caste people are the official doctrine. Ambedkar opposed that root and branch. He annihilated the caste system and embraced Buddhist philosophy. After that, he wrote a book named *Buddha and His Dhamma*, which was published in 1957. His vision of Dhamma comprises seven principles: 1) Nibana (Nirvana); 2) Kamma (The Instrument of Moral Order); 3) Anicca (Impermanence); 4) Anatta (No-Soul Doctrine); 5) Paticca Samuppada (Causation); 6) Prajna and Karuna (Wisdom and Compassion), and 7) Buddha's social message. Ambedkar was mostly influenced by Buddha's three major principles: "prajna or understanding that would lead to the rejection of superstition and supernaturalism, *Karuna* or love, and *samata* or equality". This is a central principle for a man: to live in society for a good and happy life. Neither God nor soul can save society. Once it is realized that Buddhism is a social gospel, its revival would be an everlasting event (Keer, 2016). Nowadays, men and women are enjoying equality in the "Navayana and many women who consider themselves Ambedkarite Buddhists organize their communities and their families according to the principles of Ambedkarite Buddhism and believe in the egalitarianism of this religion, which frees them from the oppression and inequality of caste Hinduism. A protestant Buddhism was Ambedkar's final legacy to women." (Vajpeyi, 2016, pp. 5-9)

VI. Ambedkar on the Hindu Code Bill for Welfare of Society

On 11th April 1947, as the law minister, Ambedkar proposed the Hindu Code Bill in parliament. That bill was formulated to advance women's rights and empowerment. That bill was based on opposing the established irrational, harmful, and unnecessary practices of the Hindu social structure and order. Hindus always marry within their own caste groups; intermarriage is not allowed among Hindus, so Ambedkar formulated the Hindu Code Bill for the eradication of these root causes of women's inequality within the caste and religion. It is focused on restructuring society through universal laws for all genders and caste categories. The bill was formulated in opposition to patriarchal laws, beliefs, and practices. It aims to achieve equality across all social categories. The bill opposed the polygamous forms of marriage among the Hindus. This bill also proposed "the property rights of women, divorce for women, inheritance, practices like widow remarriage, dowry, child marriage, birth control, abortion, freedom to choose whom you want to marry, and so on." Ambedkar designed the Hindu Code Bill to be rational and modern, promoting the well-being of women beyond caste categories. Nevertheless, the Hindu Code Bill could not be passed in parliament due to opposition from many conservative and radical Hindu social orders. In 1951, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru withdrew the bill, and Ambedkar resigned as Law Minister over this issue. After that, in 1955-56, four bills on Hindu marriage, succession, minority, and guardianship were introduced. Ambedkar always placed importance on social as well as political equality. He made greater efforts to eradicate Indian social, political, and economic inequalities.

The Indian radical Hindu social order is unable to extend beyond caste and gender categories. The Hindu social order is based on tradition, irrationality, and inequality. So, Ambedkar, during the formation of the Indian Constitution, focused more on equality between men and women. He tried to include all women's categories, and he drafted the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution, Article 14, defines equal rights and opportunities in the social, political, and economic spheres. *Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds* of sex and gender. *Article 15 (3) permits* affirmative discrimination in favor of women. *Article 39 states that women and men have equal access to adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for* equal work. *Article 42* states that it shall provide maternity relief and humane working conditions. *Article 46*: The state provides special attention and care to the educational and economic interests of weaker sections.

Article 47 states that the state shall improve public health, and it is the state's duty to provide a standard of living and raise the nutritional level for the good health and sound health of citizens. In the interest of women's welfare and the end of their battering, Ambedkar formulated many protective laws and acts. The abolition of *the Sati Act of 987, which was a custom of the* Hindu religion. In the practice of Hinduism, women. "Dowry prohibition *Act, 1961,* the *Family court Act-1984*, *Protection of Human right act, 1923*, *the Maternity Benefit Act-1961*, *Immoral traffic (Prevention) Act-1956, The Child Marriage restraint Act, 1929", The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, The Legal Practitioners (women) Act, 1923, Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and National Commission for Women Act, 1990.*

VII. Ambedkar's Thoughts on Upliftment of Marginalized Sections

The Hindu social order is unable to focus on women's freedom, empowerment, emancipation, education, and their social, political, and economic rights. According to Simone De Beauvoir, "Women are made, they are not born." "Women are made for only the home." They should not be self -dependent. A woman's whole life should depend on a man. In general, women live their whole life under the control of their father, brother, husband, and son. The Hindu social order is one of the major causes of the condition of women's deprivation in Indian society. Because the Indian social structure is completely based on the Manusmriti law, like the caste hierarchy system, marriage rituals, sati partha, child marriage, pardha partha, and exploitation of many crimes related to women, like rape and domestic violence, emerged through the Manusmriti. On July 20th, 1942, the All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference was held at Nagpur. In the second session, Ambedkar explained that women need an organization to protect their rights and to raise their voices against their various social, political, and economic issues. Ambedkar also said, "I know women are more capable than men." He claimed that he was aware of women's capacity to build an advanced, empowered society. Additionally, they have the power to reduce social ills. Because women are valued and have equal access to power in society as men, they can alter their exploitative social status. He placed a strong emphasis on education to help women develop holistically. He is more concerned with women's independence, growth, and empowerment.

Another instance was when Ambedkar spoke to a group of ladies in Bombay on November 24, 1951, according to Narake. Ambedkar stated at this conference that the Hindu Code Bill would enhance women's status and grant them additional rights and opportunities. He added that it would provide people with opportunities for fairness, equal participation, and the exercise of their rights. However, given that the Hindu Code Bill is essential for improving the status of women or empowering them, I am not sure why some Congressmen and other political figures are opposed to it. According to Ambedkar, this measure empowers the Constitution to empower women. On Wednesday, January 11, 1950, Ambedkar spoke about the Hindu Code Bill in the Siddhartha College Student Parliament, stating that "The Hindu Code Bill" is an accurate step toward a general code. Through constitutional law, justice will be served to the entire community. Through it, women can realize their social, political, economic, and legal rights and dignity with justice, including the rights to property, adoption, marriage, and divorce, among others. Ambedkar advocated equality from the beginning and sought to ensure that women had the same rights and opportunities in Indian culture. He therefore drafted a Hindu Code Bill and fought to secure its approval by Parliament. This legislation is not just for Dalit women. The Constitution applies to all Indian women. In terms of justice, this is advantageous for women across all castes and social classes.

On December 26, 1950, Ambedkar, while addressing a rally of 50,000 people under the auspices of the Belgaum District branch of the Scheduled Castes Federation, stated that "I drafted the Bill in conformity with the dictates of the Smritis, which allow several rights to women. The Bill was aimed solely at removing legal obstacles to women's social advancement. On wealth depends independence, and a woman must be very particular to retain her wealth and rights, to help retain her freedom." It means that Ambedkar was a fervent proponent of women's rights and the rule of law. He desired for women to overcome their societal disadvantages. Traditional laws likewise guaranteed their freedom in the social, political, and economic arenas. As a result, he drafted the Hindu Code Bill to defend women's constitutional rights and the rule of law, giving them a sense of freedom and empowerment. The Kolhapur Women's Organization held a program on December 25, 1952. During this program, Ambedkar asserted that Indian women leaders had little interest in advancing women's social status. In this speech, he also referenced Indian women leaders who spoke out against the Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly and other public settings.

He claimed that the Hindu Code Bill was not just for Dalit women. It is for ladies from all classes and castes. Bringing about women's freedom, rights, and justice in society is essential. It is advantageous for exploited women since it gives them access to their legal rights and status confidence. To empower women, legislation is necessary. Through it, women will experience greater legal security, a sense of constitutional authority for self-reliance, and a sense of belonging in society. He claimed that the Hindu Code Bill was not just for Dalit women. It is for ladies from all classes and castes. Bringing about women's freedom, rights, and justice in society is essential. It is advantageous for exploited women since it gives them access to their legal rights and status confidence. To empower women, legislation is necessary. Through it, women will experience greater legal security, a sense of constitutional authority for self-reliance, and a sense of belonging in society. However, some of the leaders opposed it. Because they did not want women to leave the house, they gained social freedom and empowerment. One may argue that Ambedkar was deeply concerned with the liberation of women, their empowerment through their legal rights, and justice. As a result, he inspired the public through his writing and lectures. He inspired individuals to pursue education in many locations. He told the populace that education is a tool for reducing social discrimination. It may be said that Ambedkar was extremely concerned about the importance of education for the liberation and advancement of Indian society (Narake, 2003).

The Hindu Code Bill serves as the foundation for equality and justice for women of all classes and castes. Ambedkar was aware of the social, political, and economic issues that women faced in Indian society. So, after joining the committee that drafted the constitution, he passed the Hindu Code Bill, which granted women the same rights as men, including the right to vote, own property, obtain a divorce, adopt a child, participate in politics, and receive preference in employment. He created a measure for women's empowerment in the Hindu Code because he believed in equality. According to Ambedkar, there was no law passed by the Indian Parliament comparable to the Hindu Code Bill; it was the best social reform in Indian history. This bill is required to reform Hindu culture; hence, it must lessen inequality and exploitation across castes, classes, and genders. These issues are the root causes of Hindu society. However, some people are introducing bills in the assembly based on economic issues, which mock the constitution and build on dung heaps (Ambedkar, 1995, p. 1326). This means that the Hindu Code Bill must be passed to improve social issues and structures in India and to provide women with the rights and fairness they deserve. However, a few political figures opposed the Hindu Code Bill and sought to block its passage. They opposed women's property rights. However, Ambedkar, a law minister, explained the significance and details of the Hindu Code Bill. He used the Hindu Code Bill to discuss the major theme of equal rights for women regarding property, marriage, divorce, and adoption. This bill would also apply to women from every caste and social status (Rao, 2003, pp. 211-216). Ambedkar's concern for women's fundamental rights to equality, liberty, and justice is reflected in the Hindu Code Bill (Zelliot, 2007). According to Zelliot, Ambedkar's actions and thoughts were always geared towards promoting

justice and equality in society. He witnessed caste, class, and gender-based discrimination against women and other marginalized groups. He struggled against social inequality.

He understood that the primary route to women's social, political, and economic emancipation is via education. He then made an effort to give women in society a place to be ignored and powerless. He urged women to pursue education so they could fight for their rights, justice, and self-respect in society during the 1942 caste federation meeting and women's convention. He urged women to dress modestly, pursue education, and educate their offspring while speaking out against child marriage, slavery, and other forms of exploitation.

Ambedkar allegedly wished to empower women through constitutional law. Through the Hindu Code Bill, he therefore gave legal protection in the Indian Constitution. A significant step towards the liberation and empowerment of women. This gave women of all castes and classes social, political, economic, and legal rights. This means that with this measure, women could secure their rights, justice, and respect. They could alter their exploitative social situation. This Hindu Shastra gave rise to the legal exploitation of women and caste in Indian society. Additionally, there has been an increase in socially harmful behaviors such as sati, intra-caste marriage, child marriage, parda partha, dev dasi partha, and women trafficking.

Ambedkar was consistently aware of the social, political, and economic issues facing Indian women. He believed that the caste and gender systems upheld the Brahminical idea. He continued, saying that Manu forbade women to be independent of men for the duration of their lives. Ambedkar aimed to destroy the oppressive customs and social mores of India and instill self-respect and dignity in women and the downtrodden. Ambedkar was concerned with the emancipation of women and the marginalized. As a result, he advocated education, emphasized it, and coined the phrase “Educate, organize, and agitate” to inspire society (Makwana, 2004, pp. 160-169). Ambedkar, according to Jatava, desired that women have equal status and rights. In society, there are equal opportunities and freedoms. Ambedkar had a vision for an equal, just, and advanced society in India. He desired a social restructuring (Jatava, 2001, pp. 86-96). According to Langayan, Ambedkar believed that women held a low status in Indian society. Manusmurti contains rules that are antithetical to women's independence, empowerment, and human decency. According to Langayan, Ambedkar believed that women held a low status in Indian society. Manusmurti contains rules that are antithetical to women's independence, empowerment, and human decency. He disagreed with the conventional beliefs held by women in society. He believed that women's lack of advancement was due to conventional, conservative values. He advocated making education for women mandatory so they could challenge society's old, conservative customs and ideals (Langayan, 1010, pp. 91-95, 137-141). Ambedkar's educational theory was founded on democratic principles, as is well known. According to Padma Velaskar, “when you give girls education, you will light lamps of self-respect.” Making our women the second wheel of our chariot of progress and providing them with access to education is necessary if the underprivileged communities are to advance and achieve equality with the socially advanced. Ambedkar believed that education is the best and most direct route to achieving not only self-respect, decency, and humanity, but also our intended goal, she claims. Additionally, it is critical to address the concepts of servility, freedom, and independence (Velaskar, 2012, pp. 245-271). Ambedkar was aware of the social, political, and economic issues in society—and examined the exploitation of women and other marginalized groups. They are socially and legally invisible. Because they are a crucial part of society, they need their own space and fair treatment.

Conclusion

One of contemporary India's greatest educators, thinkers, philosophers, legislators, and social reformers was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar spent his entire life in the effort to free the oppressed people of India from the caste system and gender inequity that is a product of the Hindu social order, as well as from their lifelong servitude to these institutions and the traditional conservative laws. Ambedkar created the framework for gradually changing Indian society, as well as for social consciousness and gender fairness. Ambedkar fought tirelessly throughout his life to transform Indian society in accordance with egalitarian, humane, and democratic principles. He was a crusader for women who understood the issues and factors contributing to their underprivileged status in Indian society. He raised numerous issues affecting women in meetings, councils, conferences, and the public eye. Through law, the traditional and exploitative social structure that is built on prejudice and inequality can be changed.

Until the end of his life, he worked to rebuild society on the principles of justice, equality, and fraternity. Get rid of the cruel customs that religion has imposed on women. He discovered the link between caste exploitation and the exploitation of women, so he concentrated on dismantling the caste system through education. He advocated for the empowerment of women and the underprivileged throughout his life by writing in the magazines and newspapers "Mooknayak, Bahiskrit Bhart, Parbudha Bharat, and Janta" and raising concerns about social, economic, and political discrimination. In all of his work and lectures, he emphasized the importance of education and empowerment for women and other marginalized groups. Through his motto "educate, organize, and agitate," which embodies Ambedkar's vision of social, political, and economic independence, liberation, and empowerment for society, we may understand his beliefs about education. Ambedkar hoped that education and knowledge among the oppressed lower castes, especially women, would pave the way for social welfare in Indian society and provide a means to combat social inequality.

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