

## **B.R AMBEDKAR: THE INDEFATIGABLE CRUSADER OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Babasaheb has been a top-notch multifaceted persona of India who has august contribution in the upliftment of socially and economically impoverished classes as he was one of the foremost protectors of Human Rights in the world. Babasaheb was begotten on April 14, 1891 in a town near Indore city of Madhya Pradesh. He joined Columbia University in USA after being certified from Elphinstone College, Bombay in 1912, where he was awarded Ph.D. Later he procured a graduated in Economics from the London School of Economics. On October 14, 1956, B.R. Ambedkar espoused Buddhism. Being born in a deprived backward family, he spent all his life combatting anti tactics of Hindu's compartmentalization of the Indian society into the four Varnas namely the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. He persisted his campaign to battle for social revolution until his last breath on December 16, 1956. He was appraised with the highest civilian award 'Bharat Ratna' in 1990.

Babasaheb was lionized everywhere after his contribution in every component of India and endeavour to re-orient the Indian society on the most unbiased, even-handed and philanthropic foundation. Ambedkar's dynamic life and wonderful persona and awe-inspiring qualities deserve to be included in the history of humanity and India's independence history. He was the first politician to devote all his life for the alleviation of oppressed and downtrodden people in the society especially the weaker sections, the Dalits and the untouchables for the reason of which he was celebrated as 'messiah' amongst the Dalit community.

In the Round Table Conference, which was commenced by King George V on 12th November, 1930 B.R. Ambedkar mentioned the deliberate plight of the depressed classes and their standpoint on political matters by describing the distinction of the Indian society into 3 main-

fold classification- Hindus, Muslims and impoverished classes. He was of the viewpoint that India will be independent in true sense only if the three sections of the society have their own representatives elected for taking part in the working of the government. Thus, he juxtaposed the concept of division of the society on the basis of caste and class and included SC/ST in marginalized section owing to their social and economic conditions.

Gandhiji did not confirm with the viewpoint of Ambedkar as he was of the opinion that joint electorate through universal franchise for depressed class would be a safer option than the separate electorate as the demand for creating a different political entity for the depressed classes would lead to riots or violence hampering the growth of Indian society. The ultimate purpose of setting the First Round Table Conference was not fertile.

Ambedkar was one amongst those colossal figures of Indian leaders who were battling for the dignity of Dalits Community. Despite his foreign education, he had to suffer from the humiliation due to his low caste. In 1924, he founded Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha to elevate the Dalits. He started disseminating awareness to combat for the annihilation of Dalit discrimination. That's why, he is treated as revolutionary for the human right of Dalit community. B.R. Ambedkar was a staunch defender of women's emancipation. He inculcate Varna system for subjugation of women and he also felt that Manu smriti is sole reason for Hindu women downfall by not allowing widow re-marriage.

The text for the draft of the Constitution prepared by Babasaheb provided protection and constitutional benefit for extensive civil rights for individual liberty, like special rights provided to women and children, freedom of religion, scrapping untouchability, right against exploitation, trafficking and child labour which finds its relevance in Part III of our Constitution in the articles: 15(2), 23, and 24 which stipulates individual rights as well as citizen's rights against the state.

It was due to the consistent efforts of Dr Ambedkar that Art 17 was enumerated in the constitution which provides for abolition of untouchability thereby proscribing its practice in any form and anyone who violates the provisions of Art 17 shall be culpable under the eye of law. Acts like: the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act<sup>1</sup> and the Civil Rights Protection

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<sup>1</sup> Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989

Act<sup>2</sup> led to the improvement of plight of the disadvantaged section of society leading to larger strength of voters from the oppressed sections to participate in the working of the administrative system of the nation and better educational and economic opportunity.

Ambedkar's philosophical thinking was to place 'people of the country' at the centre of focus as his goal was to establish parliamentary democracy which has its focus on justice, liberty, equality and brotherhood. Another outstanding contribution by B.R Ambedkar was the inclusion of Art 32 in the constitution which he justly termed as the 'heart and soul of the constitution' as it gives the citizens of India the right against infringement of their fundamental rights and freedoms. Art<sup>3</sup> 32 adds a rudimentary element to the administration of the democratic nation like India by giving the potentiality to the apex court of the country to examine, hold up the validity of or invalidate the judgements and decisions of lower courts through the review process in order to ensure that no person is denied justice.

The notion of socio-economic justice, which was visualised by Babasaheb, is manifested in DPSP<sup>4</sup>'s (which are mandatory guidelines for the state to observe howe4ver not enforceable) under articles: 39(a), 39(d), 39(e), 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47 and 48 of Part IV of our Constitution. Ambedkar worked tirelessly towards spreading awareness regarding the need of education among the oppressed and under-privileged classes as education is the only means to curb discrimination. He recommended the idea of espousal of uniform civil code to bring reform in Indian society so as to reduce the conflict of interests.

One of the main motive of Ambedkar's life was alleviation of the persecuted and subjugated class from the position of servitude to that of equal state of parity in socio-economic and political status with that of majority class for which he tried to implement the reservation policy or rather the 'right to representation' which is notably visible in the Constitution under Article 15(4), 16(4), 30 and Schedule V and VI dealing with protection and upliftment of rights of SC's and ST's by way of providing them opportunities of growth in areas of education and public employment. He was in favour of positive discrimination as he wished for overall representation of the oppressed section in public services without compromising on the quality of administration.

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<sup>2</sup> Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955

<sup>3</sup> Art= article

<sup>4</sup> DPSP= Directive Principles of State Policy.

Babasaheb favoured the upliftment of the status of women and Dalit's community. His forward-looking perspective in his discussion with respect to the maternity benefits and childbirth criticality shows his vigorous and tireless efforts towards women's rights and dignity as he was a strong believer of women's reproductive freedom. Ambedkar, in 1927, while addressing the crowd of more than 3000 women said that according to him the progress of the community is proportional to the degree of women's progress. He held that education is the sole tool for the liberation of women in true sense. His predominant effort was to liberate Indian women from unreasonable social and religious ties and to provide them with equal share of rights necessary for their growth like trainings, inheritance rights and more importantly their personal choice to file to divorce thereby breaking the age-old patriarchal customs followed in the Indian society. He introduced the trailblazing provisions of restitution of conjugal rights and judicial separation which now find its place in sec<sup>5</sup> 9 and 10 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 respectively.

Dr Ambedkar is credited as the labour leader as was the foremost person to bring reforms for securing the rights of labourers in India. Amongst his various efforts, a few of them are: reducing the working hours of the workers from 14 hrs to 8 hrs per day; introduction of schemes like Employees State Insurance (ESI) and workmen's compensation to provide medical care and assistance to workers in any case of medical emergencies and recommendation of laws for female workers such as non-discrimination in terms of payment irrespective of sex, female employees entitled to maternity benefits, re-instatement of prohibition on employment of females in underground mining of coal, women labour welfare funds etc.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Dr Ambedkar was an erudite person, a notable chancellor, a liberalist, a logician, annalist, anthropologist, a statistician, constitutionalist and also a change-maker .His fervent efforts in empowering women, demand for separate electorates for the underprivileged class, promoting education as a means to eradicate discrimination, providing political safeguards for untouchables and his constant efforts for all-round development of the disadvantaged groups in India ; were remarkable. Babasaheb was greatly influenced by western concepts like equality, liberty and fraternity. He was ingenious and insightful as for the matters concerning

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<sup>5</sup> Sec = section

human rights and worked vigorously all his life to safeguard the basic interests of all irrespective of class, caste, sex or religion. It was only due to his efforts that various provisions and laws have been framed and incorporated in the constitution and acts have been passed by the Parliament which has great relevance even today in the lives of all citizens of India.

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