

# **A STUDY OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPINIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN INDIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's name is written in golden letters in the history of India as a creator of social justice. He was not only the man of age and builder of the constitution but is the founder of a new social order for the betterment of the downtrodden. He shaped a refined casteless society on the principle of democracy. He spent his whole life to uplift the poor, exploited untouchables and troubled classes. Hence, this chapter attempts to examine the social justice visualized by him. Before analyzing deeply the contribution of B.R.Ambedkar to the development of 'Social Justice' to the modern society of India it is essential to explain the concept of 'Social Justice'. The term social justice was coined by the Jesuit lunge Taparelh in the 1840's based on the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. It is being used indiscriminately not only by naive politicians and activists, but also by some traditionalists, shrewd statesmen, a few legal luminaries and sophisticated intellectuals. Let us first understand the terms "society and the „Indian society". Society is a system whereby people live together in organized communities. It is evident from this statement that society refers a larger gathering of people and community is a smaller gathering of people. Social system is the concept that refers both to a complex of interdependencies between parts, components and processes that involves discernible regularities of relationship. This is because any regularity of relationship can be more adequately understood if the whole complex of multiple interdependencies of which it forms part is taken into account.

A second subsystem is the social system, which is generated by the process of interaction among individual units and its distinctive properties are consequences and conditions of the specific modes of interrelationship obtaining among the living organisms which constitute its limits.

**KEYWORDS:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Opinions, Social Justice System, India, principle of democracy, Social system

## INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of a well ordered society, of a State is to establish and maintain justice within its borders; Philosophers have defined the word 'justice'. The Greek philosopher Cicero has said that —Justice is an intrinsic good. Plato describes —Justice is the virtue of the soul. It is good because it is indispensable. Aristotle asserts Justice is virtue implying a relation to others, it promotes the interest of another, whether he be a ruler or simply a fellow citizen. From the statement motioned above it is obvious that justice is related with wisdom, benevolence, virtue and the interest of the whole society, especially the interest of the weak. Hence, the idea of justice is all inclusive. The nature of justice is really complex because of its multidimensional base. It is a process, a complex and shifting balance between many factors. It is a moral order. It has always evoked ideas of equality. Rules and regulations, right and righteousness are concerned with equality in values. It also means protection of legal rights. Taking into consideration of these aspects B.R.Ambedkar precisely made it clear that justice is simply another name of liberty, equality and fraternity. The tasks of justice are the just allocation of advantages and disadvantages, preventing the abuse of liberty, the just decision of disputes and adapting to change. In administering the justice, there are three types in it. They are natural justice, distributive justice and corrective justice. Natural justice refers to the rules and procedure to be followed by a person or body with duty of adjudicating upon disputes between the rights of others such as requiring such person to act fairly, in good faith, without bias and in a judicial temper after providing opportunity to be heard. Distributive justice is based on the principle of equals. The corrective justice seeks to restore equality where it has been distributed because of some kind of wrong doing. Social justice is a form of justice. It means what is socially just. It varies with time and space. It is a dynamic term which provides sustenance to the 'rule of law' It helps in the establishment of just social structure by removing social and economic inequality

with the help of law on the one hand and ensures freedom for optimal personality development of the individual on the other. It also tries to remove the structural inequalities and to equalize by providing special opportunities to the weaker and vulnerable section of society.

## **SOCIAL SYSTEM**

The term „Society“ is used of different contexts to identify the gatherings of various people. Indian society is one of such usages. It means the people of India. Similarly it is often used to refer the people who are following a particular religion. Hindu society, Christian society and Muslim society are such usages. Hinduism is the major religion of India. Nearly 85% of Indians are the followers of Hinduism. It has survived through the ages of history. Its historic records date back to over four thousand years. It had reached a stage of civilization which had continued its unbroken course until the present day. Further, it has stood the stress and strain of more than four or five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience. The Hindu society is a myth. Professor G.S. Ghurye outlines the features of the Hindu society as: (i) Segmental divisions of society, (ii) Hierarchy, (iii) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, (iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections (v) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and (vi) Restrictions on marriage. The structural basis of Hindu society is caste. Caste is not merely a principle of social division, but a comprehensive system of life dealing with food, marriage, education, association and worship. It divides the society as higher class and lower class and thereby destroys the principle of equality among the followers of Hindu religion. B.R.Ambedkar was a teacher, a learned scholar, constitution and law specialist, a social reformer and has so many aspects of life before he entered to the public life. As he a thinker did not come before the public. It is reality that he was high class thinker and he thought deeply over the different problems and gave his valuable thoughts over Indian social system has been expressed. Among the many problems of our country, India still faces the problem of caste discrimination a system which has devalued the human dignity of the Untouchables. As a result, they have remained socially degraded, economically impoverished and excluded from educational and cultural opportunities. B.R.Ambedkar being rationalist thinker questioned the traditional social order of the Hindu society in order to build a just and egalitarian society. His ideas, ideals and philosophy revolved around the welfare of humans to be achieved through social and political means. He fought against social and political injustice. During the relief work among the victims

of the Gujarat earthquake in was an eyeopener to the researcher. Wherever the village is situated, the researcher has visited; he could feel a strong sense of the traditional caste system being practiced. In each village the so called “Untouchables” were pushed to the outskirts of the village and were treated inhumanly. It was a great shock for him. The researcher hopes his work on this topic would extend his knowledge of B.R.Ambedkar’s understanding of the caste system and the struggles faced by him and his community. In his dissertation, he attempt to reflect upon some aspects of his struggle to liberate the Untouchables from their bondage. The sources used are some of the original Writings and sayings of B.R.Ambedkar, studies done on B.R.Ambedkar, and information gathered from the books and journals on caste system and untouchability. Given the scope of the paper, it would hardly seem possible to attempt an in-depth analysis of B.R.Ambedkar’s undertakings.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Plato defined social justice as, —the principle of a society consisting of different types of men who have combined the impulse of their need for one another and their concentration on their combination in one society and their concentration on their separate functions, have made a whole which is perfect because it is the product of image of the whole of the human mind. In modern times the term social justice was first used in 1840 by a Sicilian priest, called Luigi Taparelli d’ Azeglio. However, Antonio Rasmini Serbasti gave the term prominence in his work, La constitution Civile Secodo La Giurtizia Sociale in the year 1848. Further, in a series of articles beginning with —Justice as Fairness. John Rawls propounded a contractualist theory of Justice as it applies to institutions and practices. It is based on the notions of fairness and reciprocity. Rawls believed that his theory of justice is an improvement over utilitarian accounts of justice as maximum welfare.

The term social justice was actually a foreign to India particularly drawn from United States of America, am it was much influenced by Americans when B.R.Ambedkar was studied at Columbia University. He has learnt what social justice was meant in Americans society, The third president of America, Thomas Jefferson who was hailed as the high priest of democracy, during his second election speech declared that he had participation in the presidential election

with promised in his own words. He had swarms upon the alter of god, to raise extent hostility against any form of tyranny over the mind of man.

Social Justice being a multi-dimensional concept has been viewed by scholars of law, philosophy and political science differently. The term social justice is quite comprehensive. Social Justice is a bundle of rights, it is balancing wheel between haves and have not's. It is a great social value in providing a stable society and in securing the unity of the country. In general, Social Justice may be defined as —the right of the weak, aged, destitute, poor, women, children and other under-privileged persons. According to, Justice is not something which can be captured in a formula once or for all, it is a process, complex and shifting balance between many factors.<sup>8</sup> The tasks of justice are —The just allocation of advantages and disadvantages, preventing the abuse of power, preventing the abuse of liberty the just decision of disputes and adapting to change.<sup>9</sup> Justice may be natural Justice or distributive justice. Social justice is basically a term which provides sustenance to the rule of law. It has a wider connotation in the sense that it includes economic justice also.<sup>10</sup> It aims in removing all kinds of inequalities and affording equal opportunities to all citizens in social as well as economic affairs. thus the aim of social justice is remove all kinds of inequalities based upon Caste, race, sex, power, position, wealth and brings about equal distribution of the social justice is a balance between social rights and social controls.

## **INDIAN SOCIETY**

Let us first understand the term“ society and the „Indian society“. Society is a system whereby people live together in organized communities. It is evident from this statement that society refers a larger gathering of people and community is a smaller gathering of people. Social system is the concept that refers both to a complex of interdependencies between parts, components and processes that involves discernible regularities of relationship. This is because any regularity of relationship can be more adequately understood if the whole complex of multiple inter dependencies of which it forms part is taken into account.<sup>24</sup>A second subsystem is the social system, which is generated by the process of interaction among individual units and its distinctive properties are consequences and conditions of the specific modes of interrelationship obtaining among the living organisms which constitute its limits. The term „Society“ is used of different contexts to identify the gatherings of various people. Indian society is one of such usages. It means the

people of India. Similarly it is often used to refer the people who are following a particular religion. The Hindu society, the Christian society and Muslim society are such usages. Hinduism is the major religion of India. Nearly 85% of Indians are the followers of Hinduism. It has survived through the ages of history. Its historic records date back to over four thousand years. It had reached a stage of civilization which had continued its unbroken course until the present day. Further, it has stood the stress and strain of more than four or five millenniums of spiritual thought and experience the Hindu society is a myth. Professor Ghurye outlines the features of the Hindu society as:

(i) Segmental divisions of society, (ii) Hierarchy, (iii) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, (iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections (v) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and (vi) Restrictions on marriage. The structural basis of Hindu society is caste. Caste is not merely a principle of social division, but a comprehensive system of life dealing with food, marriage, education, association and worship. It divides the society as higher class and lower class and thereby destroys the principle of equality among the followers of Hindu religion. Further, the Hindu society is dogmatic, rigid and inflexible. Hence, evils have been cropping in it instead of good.

It is quite natural the birth of a social reform movement whenever the society is sick. Social movements dead usually with a class of social phenomena. Social movement can always be considered as an organized effort on the part of a section of the population, involving collective mobilization based as an ideology, to bring about changes either partial or total in the very social system. It can also be stated that the social movement is the cult of a social process consisting of inter related social activities, interactions and events. Social movement is also connected with social and cultural changes. The character of a social movement as an instrument of social change naturally takes the form of challenge, protest, confrontation, aggression and revolt. Thus, social movements based on protest bring about qualitative changes in the traditional structure of social relationships. A significant feature of the social history of India during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was a spate of social reform movements which took place all over India. To mention a few, social movements such as the BrahmoSamaj, the Prarthanasamaj, the Satya Shodlaksamaj and the Arya Samaj movements. Social reformers wanted the higher and the lower castes to have equal rights in law, education, politics, and in

every other sphere. The facts mentioned above revealed that the social change was indeed becoming a reality in the Hindu society. The social reform measures were getting momentum in the early years of the twentieth century. As a result of the political and social movements, B.R.Ambedkar was emerging a new leader In India on behalf of oppressed classes during the third decade of this century. Before exploring in detail his social ideology it is essential for this study to explain the facts which forced B.R.Ambedkar to involve himself in the cause of downtrodden people.

### **SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY**

B.R.Ambedkar proved himself to be one of the great intellectuals of India. Eleandor Zelliott has written about him. “The influence of these years education in foreign countries seems to have been, the development of pragmatism and self-confidence, faith in education and a deep belief in flexible Parliamentary democracy. Curiously enough, any sort of doctrinaire socialism left no mark on him and he had no alliance with European political groups. He seems to have returned with the idea that India must evolve its own form of Parliamentary democracy and its own cure for its problem of inequality”.

It is evident from this remark that B.R.Ambedkar had evolved his own social ideology suited to his country. B.R.Ambedkar was deeply influenced by Buddha, Kabir and JyotibaPhule. Buddha and Kabir shaped his philosophical conviction of human equality. JyotibaPhule, a social reformer taught him to fight against higher caste supremacy and elevation of the masses through education and economic upliftment. B.R.Ambedkar visualized an ideal society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. He determined to fight against the caste system of the Hindu society. He gave precedence to social change over political independence. His mission became to oppose the orthodoxical social arrangement and fight for political rights of the untouchables. Both society and politics became his area of operation. He added that without the total social upliftment of the neglected and downtrodden the political freedom would be quite meaningless and useless. His fore thought about the social reform reveals that he was a great visionary. B.R.Ambedkar was a defender of social reform movement. Wisdom, wit, culture, humanism, reason, rationality, hatred of inequality, injustice and superstitions all these were harmoniously blended in his personality. It was his belief which was strengthened on the basis of evidence available in religious

scriptures. He thought that discrimination had been deliberately made a part of religion to facilitate exploitation of people by those Bramanic elements to place them at the top rank of the social order.

### **SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF INDIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM**

In fact B.R.Ambedkar's ideal of society was based on liberty, equality and fraternity. His education made his vision broad that paved the way for liberating his community from social slavery of the rigid Hindu caste system. He adopted the principle of dynamism. According to him there is nothing fixed, nothing eternal, nothing sanatan. Thus, everything is changing and change is the law of life for individuals as well as for society. B.R.Ambedkar was against the Brahminic tradition which perpetuated the domination of the upper castes over the backward people. He felt that the upper caste people had spread their brand of religion so that they could continue their hold over the various structures of the social system and monopolize all the benefits. According to him, there was an upper class bias in Hindu religion. As a result, Hindu religion defended only the backward classes. The low born people of Hind society were subjected to different kinds of cruelty and humiliation and these degrading acts had the support of various religious sanctions. Society is not an organism. It is based on human attitudes and fellow-feelings. According to him men do not become a society by living in physical proximity any more than man ceases to be a member of his society by living so many miles away from other men. Similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts is not enough to constitute men into society. Things may be passed physically from one to another like bricks. In the same way, habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts of one group may be taken over by another group and there may thus appear similarity between the two. He shared this view with his Professor John Dewey who observed: "Society is the process of associating in such ways that experience, ideas, emotions; values are transmitted and made common. It is evident from this statement that there should be smooth communication for a meaningful and egalitarian society. B.R.Ambedkar acquired deep knowledge in every field of human activity to become a founder of his own independent ideology. He was trained as a social scientist and analyst of repute. He emphasized social conscience which was regarded by him as the only safeguard of all rights. Social progress and social stability depended on equality as per his beliefs and values. Stability is necessary but not at the cost of change where change was imperative. Adjustment is wanted but not at the cost



of social justice. He denounced caste tyranny. His campaign was to establish equal status for all in the spheres of religious, social, economic and political activity of the society, giving opportunities to everyone to progress. As a socialist B.R.Ambedkar advocated the necessity of rooting out ideas of „highness“ and „lowness“ inculcating among Indians a sense of self elevation through self-help, self, respect and self-knowledge based on righteous conduct. For B.R.Ambedkar social reform was, however, paramount and senior in priority even to economic reform, He pointed out; “If socialists are not being content with the mouthing of phrases, if they wish to make socialism a definite reality social system then they must recognize that the problem of social freeform is fundamental and that for them there is no escape from it. Unless they do so, they cannot achieve their revolution. They will be compelled to take account of social system after revolution, if not before revolution”.

### **B.R.AMBEDKAR WORKED FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

He strongly advocated democratization of priestly profession to be opened for all. As a true nationalist, B.R.Ambedkar worked for social integration in India. He believed in the annihilation of the caste system in any form and wanted to rid our society of this curse. As he had experienced miseries from Hindu society, his perception of freedom was different, from other leaders, including Gandhi and Jinnah. He pursued his independent line of thought and action during freedom movement, particularly with regard to ameliorative measures for the betterment of the depressed classes and untouchables. As a courageous leader B.R.Ambedkar was a great champion of human rights. He thought against all kind of injustice and exploitation. On account of revolutionary movement India witnessed the oppressed classes walking in the streets demanding human rights. His contribution for the betterment and progress of women is also unique. At the All India Depressed classes Women’s conference held at Nagpur on July 20, 1942, he emphasized that there could not be progress of a nation without the progress of women. He spoke that „I am a great believer in women’s organization. I know that they can do a lot to improve the condition of the society if they are convinced. In the eradication of social evils with they have rendered great services. Being independent India’s first law Minister B.R.Ambedkar felt it his duty to improve the condition of women who like Shudras had earned the wrath of Manu, the so called god of Hindus. Consequently, he attempted to liberalize and codify the Hindu law. However, the reactionary forces foiled his attempt and he resigned from central

cabinet in 1951. The proposed Hindu civil code Bill included abolition of the doctrine of rights by birth, absolute right over property given to women, provision for inter caste marriage and divorce. B.R.Ambedkar did not believe in fixed norms for any society. Supremacy of reason was a cardinal principle of his social philosophy. He believed that the Hindu is not free to follow his reason. The theory of prayschitta also follows the spirit of compromise and an obstacle in the applications of reason. He realized that the social institutions of the Hindus could not be properly understood and reformed without referring to the sacred heart of the Hindus. Hence, he tried to smash the stigma of traditionalism, religious orthodoxy and superstition.

### **EMANCIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES**

B.R.Ambedkar was the chairman of the Indian Constitution Drafting Committee. Out of his earnest efforts and sensible arguments favorable laws were enshrined in the Constitution to protect the Scheduled Castes. In the Constitution of free India all the Indian citizens have been guaranteed political and social equalities. The builders of Constitution gave more importance to social justice than to economic and political justice. The Constitution taken some important decisions to root out the difference created by the caste system of the country. According to it there is a provision of 15 percent reservation to Scheduled Castes and 7 ½ percent to Scheduled Tribes. 22.5 percent reservations have been given to them not only in Government services, admissions in educational institutions but also in State Assemblies and the country's parliament seats. Fundamental rights and directive principles are enshrined in the Indian Constitution to achieve the noble goal of equality. Fundamental rights represent the limit of the State's actions whereas directive principles are obligations and duties of the State government and social government. Article 14 of the Constitution makes all are equal before law. Articles 15 and 16 are the instruments to achieve social justice for economically, educationally, and socially downtrodden people. Untouchability has been abolished under Article 17 of the constitution. Thus the Indian Constitution gives ample opportunities and legal support to the present men and movements for social justice.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY SOCIAL SYSTEM**

As earlier referred to, "Justice", for B.R.Ambedkar, "is simply another name for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." This forms the corner-stone of B.R.Ambedkar's concept of Social

Justice. It upholds the dignity of human personality. As the chief architect of India's Constitution, he got it shaped clearly on the values of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and dignity of man. These ideals of social justice denote brotherly relations of a citizen with every other citizen in our society; and it abhors caste-barriers between man and man; and demands respect for all citizens from everyone. The spirit of social justice here gives significant place to mutual regard and responsibility in social life. Though India got political freedom and established political democracy; yet as B.R.Ambedkar observed that, the Indians must not be content with mere political democracy. "We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes Liberty, Equality and Fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy," To B.R.Ambedkar, liberty been playing a significant role to shaping human personality. It is grounded in freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, and with it, man becomes and grows rich. The philosophy of Social Humanism takes social justice as a whole system, a broad system in itself, which encompasses all other aspects of justice. If the common interest, or common good, is the main criteria of social justice, the social justice forms a broad spectrum by itself. A social system rarely exists in isolation. All other aspects of justice operate in relation to a social system. When some members of a society pursue conflicting aims, the oppressive measures maim and kill the spirit of common interest, then arises the need of justice, a social system with its various resources tries to ensure justice to all. To be more precise, if we take the entire Indian society as a composite system, we have then to look at it as a social system in its oneness. There is no doubt that India has different castes and communities, yet we have one Constitution which considers India to be a united whole. Hence all Indians form one social system comprising of all citizens, whether they are Hindus, Buddhists, Janis, Sikhs, Muslims, or the Christians. This is the cornerstone of social unity and justice in all its ramifications with reference to India's, Constitution.

## **CONCLUSION**

B.R.Ambedkar had evolved his own social ideology suited to his country. According to him society is based on human attitudes and fellow feelings. He emerged as a social revolutionary

man in the history of India. He promoted an ideal society where equality remains constantly. The Caste System of Hinduism is the world's largest surviving social hierarchy. Therefore B.R.Ambedkar made a deep study on 'caste system'. He wanted to abolish this evil system. He visualized an ideal society in which every individual can develop his or her personality and seek happiness. He looked upon law as a vital means for social change or social engineering. A civilized society is based on the principles of liberty and equality. Liberty means freedom from captivity, imprisonment and slavery or despotic control. Struggle for liberty is always based on the philosophy of equality. Liberty is a force behind social change. The voice of the oppressed tries to re-establish human values lost in the society. The relative liberty between the individual and society is regulated by the laws of the state, conventions of the society and moral principles of the individuals. The words 'liberty', 'freedom' and 'rights are relatively applied in political as well as social contexts". Equality refers the same in quantity, quality, size and rank for one thing or a person. Equality is a prescriptive term. In application equality has certain limitations. Liberty and equality are human rights which do not emanate from very different sources, B.R.Ambedkar was influenced by Rousseau who made popular the words liberty and equality. B.R.Ambedkar wanted to create a society where liberty and equality prevail forever. The term 'Social Justice was coined in 1840's by a Jesuit Father. It is very often used by all in twentieth century. The word justice is defined by many on different contexts. According to B.R.Ambedkar's Justice is simply another name of liberty, equality and fraternity. Justice is classified into natural justice, distributive justice and corrective justice. Social justice a form of justice is which provides sustenance to the rule of law. Its objective is to remove man made inequalities and to provide equal opportunities to all citizens in various types of political, economic and social activities. B.R.Ambedkar's concept of Social Justice emanated from the social situation of India wherein the depressed classes were the victims of social injustice and discrimination. His vision of new social order is based on liberty, equality and community. His theory on social justice differs from Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhiji. He wanted to abolish caste system by non-violence. B.R.Ambedkar's contribution to emancipation and development of scheduled castes, raising the status of women and betterment in the conditions of labour was great in the diction of Social Justice. B.R.Ambedkar's Social Ideology is based on humanism. He wanted to create a new society by law and democracy instead of war and agitation.

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