



DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICIES IN MODERN INDIA

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Abstract:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution and a visionary social reformer, advocated for social justice as a fundamental right for every citizen. His ideas deeply rooted in the principles of equality and empowerment, continue to shape modern India. This research delves into the profound impact of Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to social justice policies in contemporary Indian society. By employing a comprehensive analysis of historical documents, legislative records, and writing, books etc. the study explores the evolution of policies aimed at uplifting marginalized communities. It evaluates the effectiveness of affirmative action measures, educational reforms, and legal interventions initiated by Ambedkar. Through a nuanced examination, this study provides valuable insights into the enduring legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social justice ideals, shedding light on their transformative influence on modern India and offering recommendations for future policy enhancements to ensure a more equitable society.

Keywords: Fundamental Right, Equality, Marginalized Communities, Educational Reforms...

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, often hailed as the "Architect of India's Constitution," was a pioneering social reformer, jurist, and political leader who played a seminal role in shaping the democratic foundation of independent India. Born into a Dalit family in 1891, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar overcame immense social and economic challenges to become one of the most influential figures in Indian history. Before Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts towards social justice and social reformation in India, there were several individuals and movements that laid the groundwork for addressing social issues and discrimination. It's important to recognize that the struggle for social justice is a complex and ongoing process, involving contributions from various reformers and social activists. Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) Often regarded as the "Father of the Indian Renaissance," played a crucial role in

challenging social evils like Sati and advocating for social reforms. He emphasized the need for education, rational thinking, and the abolition of regressive practices. A key figure in the Bengal Renaissance and a social reformer] Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–1891) who worked towards the upliftment of women and the promotion of widow remarriage. He contributed significantly to the improvement of education and the removal of discriminatory practices against widows. Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) primarily known as a spiritual leader, also addressed social issues. He emphasized the importance of education for the masses and the eradication of social inequalities. He spoke against caste-based discrimination and untouchability. An Irish social reformer, Annie Besant (1847–1933) played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and Indian self-

rule. She actively supported the Theosophical Society and worked towards the eradication of social evils. Another social reformer Dayananda Saraswati (1824–1883) the Founder of the Arya Samaj, worked towards the promotion of social and religious reforms. He advocated for the abolition of untouchability, the promotion of education, and the rejection of idol worship. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915) advocated social and economic reforms in India. He emphasized the importance of education and social responsibility, advocating for a more inclusive and just society. These reformers, among others, laid the foundation for social justice and reformation in India. Their efforts paved the way for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who would later play a pivotal role in drafting the Indian Constitution and advocating for the rights of marginalized communities. The struggle for social justice has been a collective effort, with various individuals contributing to the transformation of Indian society.

Amongst all social revolutionary Jyotirao Phule had a different way of thinking about the caste system and religion in India. He believed that the traditional social system, which divided people based on caste and gender, was not fair. According to him, this system, known as the caste-varna system, exploited women and couldn't lead to a fair and equal society. So, he wanted to change this traditional way of life and create a new, modern society with better values. To bring about this change, Phule started the Satyashodhak Samaj. Ambedkar have recognized Phule as his Guru. The leader like Chhatrapati Shahu, tried to help by introducing reservation policies and building hostels and schools in his state. On one side, reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade, Agarkar, and Jambhekar stressed the importance of social reform over political independence. They thought that social discrimination in India needed to be addressed first for people to unite against the British. Like Phule, Dr. B.R.

Ambedkar analysed Indian society, focusing on elements like caste, Varna, and dharma. He believed in social and political reform, emphasizing the need to uplift marginalized sections of society like women, backward castes, labourers, working women, and farmers. His contributions were crucial in the process of building a modern nation, where representation is based on inclusion. Even after India gained independence, the need for social reform continued. It was essential for nation-building and maintaining social harmony. His efforts were significant in uplifting sections of society that faced backwardness due to social, economic, gender, regional, and racial reasons. His contributions were a vital part of the ongoing process of building an inclusive and modern nation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar The Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee: he played crucial roles in the framing of the Indian Constitution, shaping the foundation of the world's largest democracy. The Constituent Assembly of India was established to draft the Constitution of India, which would serve as the guiding document for independent India. Ambedkar's contribution to the framing of the Indian Constitution is monumental. As the chairman of the drafting committee, he steered the Constituent Assembly through complex debates and negotiations, amalgamating diverse social, cultural, and political perspectives into a cohesive legal framework. His deep understanding of social injustices and his vision for an egalitarian society were pivotal in crafting the Constitution's provisions that safeguarded fundamental rights, social justice, and equality before the law.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's view on caste and varna: a prominent social reformer, jurist, and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, he had a critical and transformative perspective on the caste system and varna in India. His views were shaped by his own experiences as a member of the Dalit community, formerly known as "untouchables," who faced severe

discrimination within the traditional social order. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a strong advocate for the annihilation of the caste system, which he considered a social evil that perpetuated inequality and discrimination. In his famous speech titled "Annihilation of Caste," he argued for the need to eradicate caste divisions to establish a just and egalitarian society. He rejected the varna system, which classifies society into four main categories (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras) based on occupation. He criticized the inherent hierarchical nature of the varna system, asserting that it legitimized the oppression of certain groups. He viewed caste not merely as a division of labour, as suggested by the proponents of varna, but as a deep-rooted social division based on birth. He argued that the caste system denied social, economic, and political opportunities to those considered lower in the hierarchy.

Reservation Policy and Conversion:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar dedicated his life to the emancipation of Dalits, advocating for their rights and social upliftment. He believed that caste-based discrimination could only be eradicated through education, political empowerment, and constitutional safeguards. He Ambedkar initially supported the idea of separate electorates for Dalits to ensure their political representation. However, this proposition faced opposition from various quarters, including Gandhi. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar represented the Dalit community at the Round Table Conferences. He emphasized the need for constitutional safeguards to protect the rights of the untouchables and secure their political representation. In response to concerns about the potential division of Hindu society due to separate electorates, Gandhi and Ambedkar negotiated the Poona Pact in 1932. This agreement led to reserved seats for Dalits within the general electorate, ensuring political representation without the creation of separate electorates. The Round Table Conferences were a

series of meetings held in London between 1930 and 1932 to discuss constitutional reforms in British India. The second Round Table Conference (1931) witnessed the participation of M.K Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, providing a platform for discussions on issues such as untouchability.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a key architect of the reservation policy in India, which aimed to provide affirmative action for marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in education, employment, and political representation. He saw reservations as a necessary tool to address historical injustices and promote social equality. One of the key principles that he championed was social equality. His efforts led to the inclusion of affirmative action measures in the Constitution, providing reserved seats for Scheduled Castes (Dalits), Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in educational institutions and government jobs. These provisions were aimed at uplifting historically marginalized communities and ensuring their participation in the nation's progress.

Disillusioned with the discriminatory aspects of Hinduism, he embraced Buddhism in 1956 along with a significant number of his followers during the mass conversion ceremony at Nagpur. He saw conversion as a means to escape the oppressive caste system and sought to establish a more egalitarian and compassionate society. In summary, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar vehemently opposed the caste system and varna hierarchy, advocating for the annihilation of caste divisions and working towards the social, economic, and political empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits. His views continue to influence discussions on social justice and equality in contemporary India. Frustrated with the limitations of the caste system and the Hindu social order, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956, along with a significant number of his followers. This conversion was seen as a symbolic rejection of

untouchability and an assertion of a more egalitarian faith.

Philosophy of Directive Principles of State Policy:

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) in the Indian Constitution are a set of guidelines or principles given to the government to be kept in mind while framing laws and policies. These principles, outlined in Part IV of the Constitution (Article 36 to 51), are not legally enforceable by the courts but serve as a moral and political obligation for the government to strive towards achieving a just and equitable society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, one of the key architects of the Indian Constitution, shared his views on the DPSP during the constitutional debates.

Social and Economic Justice: The DPSP emphasize the goal of securing social and economic justice for all citizens. They call for reducing inequalities in income and standard of life and ensuring that wealth is not concentrated in a few hands.

Welfare State Concept: The DPSP envision India as a welfare state committed to the welfare of its citizens. The state is expected to provide social and economic rights, including education, health, and employment, to ensure a decent standard of living for all.

Gandhian Principles: Some DPSP draw inspiration from the Gandhian philosophy, advocating for the decentralization of power, rural development, and cottage industries to promote economic self-sufficiency at the grassroots level.

Protection of Weaker Sections: DPSP includes provisions for the protection of the interests of marginalized and vulnerable sections of society, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Views on DPSP and Constitutional Debate:

Balancing Fundamental Rights and DPSP: he emphasized the need to strike a balance between Fundamental Rights (Part III of the Constitution) and

DPSP. While Fundamental Rights provide individuals with certain freedoms, DPSP guide the state to work towards the collective welfare of the society.

Social Transformation: Dr. Ambedkar believed that the DPSP played a crucial role in achieving social and economic transformation. He saw them as instruments for the state to address historical injustices, uplift the weaker sections, and bridge the socio-economic gap.

Primacy of Fundamental Rights: Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged the significance of Fundamental Rights, considering them as justiciable and legally enforceable. He saw them as essential for protecting individual liberties and preventing the tyranny of the state.

Importance of Education: he laid special emphasis on education as a means to empower individuals and promote social justice. He believed that education would play a vital role in breaking the shackles of caste-based discrimination and uplifting marginalized communities.

Constitutional Morality: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar highlighted the importance of constitutional morality and statesmanship in implementing both Fundamental Rights and DPSP. He envisioned a constitutional framework where the government would work in harmony with these principles to ensure justice for all. In the constitutional debates, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar played a key role in shaping the philosophy of the DPSP, envisioning them as instruments for social justice and transformation. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to governance that would safeguard individual liberties while actively working towards the welfare of the entire society, particularly the marginalized sections. The DPSP, guided by these principles, contribute to the overall vision of a just and egalitarian society in the Indian Constitution.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to labour and labour law:

Labour Welfare and Social Justice: he was deeply committed to the principles of social justice. He

recognized the exploitation and discrimination faced by labourers, especially those from marginalized communities, and sought to address these issues through legal provisions.

Factories Act, 1948: As the first Law Minister of independent India, Dr. Ambedkar played a crucial role in the formulation of the Factories Act, 1948. This legislation aimed to regulate the working conditions in factories and ensure the health and safety of workers.

Payment of Wages Act, 1936: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar actively participated in the formulation of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936. This legislation ensures the timely and full payment of wages to workers and provides a mechanism for the resolution of wage-related disputes.

Trade Union and Industrial Disputes Legislation: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was instrumental in the development of laws related to trade unions and industrial disputes. These laws provide workers with the right to form unions, collectively bargain, and address disputes with employers through legal mechanisms.

Labour Investigation Commission: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar headed the Labour Investigation Commission in the early 1940s. The commission focused on examining labor-related issues and recommending measures for the improvement of working conditions, wages, and social security.

Social Security Measures: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar advocated for social security measures for workers, including insurance schemes and other benefits to provide financial support during times of illness, disability, or unemployment.

Right to Strike: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar supported the recognition of the right to strike as a means for workers to voice their concerns and negotiate with employers. He believed that this right was essential for balancing the power dynamics between labour and management.

Protection of Vulnerable Workers: his contributions also focused on protecting vulnerable categories of

workers, including those in hazardous occupations. The laws he influenced aimed at improving their working conditions and ensuring their well-being.

Equal Pay for Equal Work: he advocated for the principle of equal pay for equal work, emphasizing that all workers, regardless of gender, should receive fair and equal compensation for similar work. His contributions to labour and labour law were aligned with his broader vision of social justice and equality. His efforts laid the foundation for a legal framework that seeks to protect the rights and well-being of workers, promoting a more just and equitable society. Many of the principles and laws he championed continue to shape India's labour landscape today.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that education was the most potent tool for social transformation. He himself earned doctorates from prestigious universities like Columbia University in the United States and the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom. His legacy reverberates not only in the legal and political spheres but also in the hearts of millions of Indians. His ideas of social justice, equality, and individual rights continue to inspire movements advocating for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized. His life and work stand as a testament to the power of education, determination, and the unwavering commitment to social change, making him a revered figure not just in India but also globally, as an icon of social justice and human rights.

However, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision was not limited to personal accomplishments. His intellectual prowess was coupled with immense empathy, driving him to tirelessly champion the cause of the oppressed. He vociferously challenged the regressive caste system, advocating for the annihilation of caste-based prejudices. Through his writings, speeches, and political activism, he ignited a social revolution, compelling society to confront its deeply entrenched biases and prejudices.

Women's rights: Furthermore, his progressive ideas extended to women's rights. He advocated for gender equality and was instrumental in the formulation of laws that granted women equal rights in matters of marriage and inheritance. His relentless pursuit of social reforms, even in the face of adversity, earned him the respect of millions and laid the foundation for a more inclusive, egalitarian society. His legacy endures as a guiding light for social reformers worldwide. His life and work inspire generations to challenge injustice, fight for equality, and strive for a society where every individual is afforded dignity and respect. He remains not only a symbol of hope for the marginalized but also a beacon of enlightenment for humanity, reminding us of the transformative power of visionary thinking and unwavering determination. He worked towards securing equal rights for women in matters of marriage and inheritance, challenging the prevailing patriarchal norms. His efforts were reflected in the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed at providing legal safeguards for women's rights.

Educational Reforms: Recognizing education as a powerful tool for social upliftment, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar stressed the importance of educational reforms. He believed that education could empower individuals to break free from the chains of social discrimination. He advocated for free and compulsory education for all, ensuring that access to knowledge was not restricted by one's social background.

Political Representation: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar emphasized the need for political representation for the marginalized communities. He argued that political power was essential to bring about social change and advocated for reserved seats in legislative bodies, ensuring that the voices of the oppressed were heard in the democratic process.

Dismantling Untouchability: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar actively campaigned against untouchability, a practice that relegated certain communities to the fringes of

society. He encouraged social and inter-caste interactions, aiming to break down the barriers of untouchability and promote social harmony. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's tireless efforts and advocacy for social justice were instrumental in shaping the social, political, and legal landscape of India. His vision of social justice as a fundamental right for every citizen continues to inspire movements for equality and inclusivity, serving as a guiding principle for building a just and equitable society.

Influence on Judiciary and Policy-making: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision significantly influences the judiciary and policy-making in India. Courts often refer to his speeches and writings while delivering judgments related to social justice issues. Policymakers continue to draw upon his ideas when formulating policies related to marginalized communities, ensuring that his principles remain a guiding force in the governance of the country.

Global Influence: Beyond India, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas have inspired social justice movements globally. His emphasis on human rights, equality, and social justice resonates with movements fighting against discrimination and inequality worldwide. His legacy serves as a beacon for those advocating for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized on an international scale.

In assessing the relevance of these policies in the evolving socio-cultural landscape of India, it becomes evident that while significant progress has been made, challenges persist. The socio-cultural fabric of India continues to be complex, with the coexistence of progressive attitudes and deeply entrenched regressive beliefs. Affirmative action measures remain crucial to address historical injustices and promote representation in various sectors. However, periodic assessment and recalibration are essential to ensure their continued effectiveness. Educational reforms have had a transformative impact, yet the quality of education and

access to it remain uneven, especially in rural areas. Ongoing efforts are necessary to bridge these gaps, ensuring education's role as a catalyst for social mobility. Legal interventions, particularly those related to women's rights and social justice, have paved the way for significant societal changes. However, the implementation and enforcement of these laws demand continued vigilance and education to create awareness among the masses.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas and contribution is highly relevant in the contemporary socio-cultural landscape of India. They form the bedrock of social justice initiatives and continue to inspire new reforms. While challenges persist, the evolving discourse and awareness within society offer hope. To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of these policies, it is crucial to address the challenges systematically, promote education and awareness, and foster a societal shift towards inclusivity and equality.

In conclusion, the impact of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contribution towards social justice policies of modern India is both profound and enduring. His visionary initiatives, grounded in the principles of equality, empowerment, and inclusivity, have significantly shaped the nation's trajectory. Through affirmative action measures, educational reforms, legal interventions, and his relentless advocacy for the marginalized, he laid the foundation for a more just and equitable society. These policies have not only uplifted millions from the clutches of historical discrimination but have also inspired subsequent generations to challenge social norms and advocate for their rights. In contemporary India, the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideals, it is evident in the increased representation of marginalized communities in various sectors, the advancements in education, and the empowerment of women. However, challenges persist, requiring continued efforts to bridge socio-economic disparities and dismantle deeply rooted prejudices. Dr.

B.R. Ambedkar's efforts for social justice serve as a beacon, reminding us of the ongoing struggle for a truly inclusive society. As India evolves, these policies remain pivotal, urging policymakers, scholars, and citizens alike to uphold the values of social justice, ensuring that the nation continues to progress toward a future where every citizen enjoys equal rights, opportunities, and dignity.

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