

## **BABASAHEB DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL UPLIFTMENT OF THE DEPRESSED SECTIONS IN INDIA**

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**Abstract:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a great thinker, academician, philosopher, lawyer, and renowned intellectual who took up leadership for the upliftment of the depressed, underprivileged and marginalized classes in society, securing human rights through various movements in social, educational, economic, and political realms. Dr. Ambedkar's comprehensive efforts spanned social, economic, political, educational, intellectual, women's rights, religious, and labor movements, highlighting his dedication to addressing the challenges faced by these communities. It also underscores his role as a scholar, activist, and architect of the Indian Constitution, emphasizing his principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice. Furthermore, it discusses the root cause of inequalities in India as caste-based, with Dr. Ambedkar identifying Brahmanism and Capitalism as enemies of humanity. His significant contributions to economic thought, including land reforms, industrialization, and the role of the state in economic planning and development, are highlighted. Additionally, the paper emphasizes his emphasis on the importance of education in empowering marginalized communities and his efforts to secure equal status for women in Indian society. Furthermore, it outlines his legal activism, proposals for legal reforms, and his memorandum to the Constituent Assembly, which aimed at establishing social democracy and state socialism. His unwavering commitment to advocating for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized communities through legal means is also highlighted, along with his struggle for separate electorate and the Hindu Code Bill for the protection and development of Hindu women. The paper concludes with a call for further research into the economic conditions of these communities, their political ideologies, and the governmental and organizational efforts to enhance their self-employment opportunities and overall progress.

**Keywords:** Depressed, Human rights, social reforms, educational upliftment, economic reconstruction, political movements

The concept of human rights encompasses the inalienable fundamental rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of distinctions such as race, color, gender, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status (UNHR, 2018). It has evolved over centuries, influenced by various philosophical, religious, and legal traditions.

One foundational theory behind human rights is the natural law theory, which suggests that certain rights are inherent to human nature and can be discerned through reason or divine revelation. According to this perspective, human rights are not created by governments or societies but are instead discovered or recognized as universal principles.

Human rights can be classified into three categories: first generation, second

generation, and third generation rights. First-generation rights include civil and political liberties such as the right to life and political participation. Second-generation rights comprise social, economic, and cultural rights including the right to subsistence. Third-generation rights encompass environmental and development-oriented rights such as solidarity and the right to a clean environment with development (Rao, 2006: 901-906; Cornescu, 2009: 11).

Another prominent theory is the social contract theory, proposed by thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. According to this theory, individuals in a society agree to relinquish certain freedoms in exchange for the protection of their remaining rights by a governing authority. Human rights, therefore, are viewed as part of this social contract, shielding individuals from arbitrary interference by the state or others.

In the realm of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, stands as a milestone document. It outlines a broad spectrum of rights, encompassing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that are considered inherent to all human beings. The UDHR serves as a foundation for subsequent human rights treaties and conventions.

Human rights discourse also encompasses theories of justice, including utilitarianism and egalitarianism. Utilitarianism, associated with philosophers like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, prioritizes maximizing overall happiness or well-being. From this viewpoint, human rights are valuable to the extent that they contribute to the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Egalitarianism, on the other hand, stresses the equal moral worth of all individuals and advocates for the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Human rights, within an egalitarian framework, ensure that everyone has access to basic necessities and opportunities for self-fulfillment.

However, the realization of human rights faces numerous challenges, including political repression, discrimination, poverty, conflict, and cultural relativism. Cultural relativism argues that human rights should be understood within the context of specific cultural norms and values, raising questions about the universality of rights across different societies.

Despite these challenges, the promotion and protection of human rights remain central to international efforts to achieve peace, justice, and development. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activists, governments, and international organizations play crucial roles in advocating for human rights, monitoring violations, and holding perpetrators accountable.

In conclusion, human rights constitute not only a legal framework but also a moral and philosophical concept rooted in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Theories of natural law, social contract, justice, and cultural relativism

provide different perspectives on the foundation and implementation of human rights, highlighting the complexity and ongoing debate surrounding this critical issue.

### **Babasaheb's Human Rights Movement**

Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emerges as the paramount champion of human rights in India throughout the 20th century. From his earliest years, he bore the brunt of untouchability, a burden imposed by his birth into a caste relegated to the lowest rung of the social ladder. He was the first untouchable student who pursued higher education from abroad. He was a person with high intellect and was trained under the then distinguished scholars like John Dewey, Charles Beard and R. A. Seligman (Sirswal, 2011). He was an impeccable leader, who took up the leadership to light the lamp of enlightenment and to uplift the depressed sections of the society. With his immense reading and clarity of thoughts and arguments, he countered the oppressive and discriminatory caste-based practices. He led the struggles of untouchables for securing them human rights of drinking water from public tanks; for separate electorates to the depressed classes. He organized first Independent Labour Party and later the Scheduled Castes Federation. He became the Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1942; and later became the Law Member of the first cabinet of the Independent India. He was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly of India and became known as the "Architect of the Constitution". The range of Ambedkar's struggle for securing human dignity is very vast. He had to start from the Right to be Human to attain highest humane level. Dr. Ambedkar's ideas, writings and outlook could well be characterized as belonging to that trend of thought called Social Humanism. He developed a socio-ethical philosophy and steadfastly stood for human dignity and freedom, socio-economic justice, material prosperity and spiritual discipline. His name will glitter forever in the firmament of world history not only as a great social philosopher but also as a great revolutionary who dedicated his entire life for the amelioration of the teeming millions of the underdogs (Satya Pal, 2012: 1). Equality and non-discrimination are clearly at the core of his conceptual framework of human rights. His life itself stands as a testimony to this ideal of securing human dignity to all. He avouched the mission of his life by proclaiming that "For the protection of human rights several great men have immolated themselves at the altar of duty. Better to die in the prime of youth for a great cause than to live like an oak and do nothing." {Keer, 1954 (1971): 91}. He waged a valiant struggle against the "diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity" –the Brahmanical system to make the subhuman and servile majority regain their human personality through social, economic, political and cultural emancipation. He declared that "Our battle is for Freedom. Our battle is not for few economic and political gains. Our battle is for the reclamation of Human Personality which was suppressed and

mutilated...”. (Ibid.)

It was this systemic discrimination that ignited within him a fervent determination to lead a crusade against caste-based oppression, endured by the Dalit community, and to advocate for the establishment of a society founded on egalitarian principles. Dr. Ambedkar, a luminary figure, was not only an emancipator and a scholar but also an extraordinary social reformer, tirelessly striving for the realization of human rights for all. Ambedkar was the ‘Man of the Hour’ in the words of Dhananjay Keer, the first bio-grapher (Keer, 1954 ). Ambedkar is one of the world’s greatest defender and philosopher of human rights. He was a true visionary, contributing to a global evolution of this idea, to the legal enshrinement of rights, and to this day, he continued to inspire human rights defenders. .

Since 1920 till his death in 1956, in the span of about four decades Ambedkar went through various phases.,when he actively became a part of the public platform. He had constantly been on the forefront of the movement to eradicate birth-based oppression where the basic amenities like education, housing choices are restricted for the benefit of the few. He projected the suffering of these depressed classes from his life history as well as from the dalit literature, giving illustrations of their abhorrence, hatred, negligence and exploitation due to their so called impure vocations. He strived to secure rights for the depressed classes and fought for their liberation.

Shreekrishna and Gadkar (2018: 4-9) in the paper delves into the Indian social system’s challenges, particularly Brahmanism and the caste and class systems, and explores Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s perspective on human rights. It highlights the incorporation of an elaborate. Declaration of Human Rights in India’s Constitution and the country’s efforts to protect and promote human rights. The paper discusses the concept, classification, and generations of human rights, emphasizing India’s Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy as supportive of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It points out the root cause of inequalities in India as caste-based, with Dr. Ambedkar identifying Brahmanism and Capitalism as enemies of humanity. It also outlines Dr. Ambedkar’s perception of human rights, highlighting his principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice, and his approach towards human rights, advocating for special protections and positive discrimination for the upliftment of the oppressed classes.

Furthermore, this paper delves into the methods and approaches suggested by Dr. Ambedkar to achieve human rights, including strategies for social/educational development, gender, religious & cultural development, political empowerment, and economic progress. It emphasizes the importance of kinship among like-minded communities, protests against discriminatory institutions, and the adoption of self-respect as a way of life. Additionally, it discusses strategies such as positive discrimination, mass media involvement, conversion to Buddhism, and state socialism for economic development. The paper also underlines Dr. Ambedkar’s

vision of building a strong, cohesive nation based on principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and the role of Dalit movements and organizations in advocating for a just and egalitarian society, while networking with other leaders and organizations to reconstruct the societal values and principles.

Human rights as a discipline did not emerge from Dr Ambedkar. Instead, it developed gradually and reflected in his speeches, memorandums, and movements etc and caught its speed and strength. He conceived these ideas deriving from the magnificent historical philosophers and pragmatists like Lord Buddha, Kabir and Mahatma Jotirao Phule whom he also considered as his great Gurus or teachers. None of these revolutionary philosophers belonged to the community to which Dr B. R. Ambedkar belonged. His noble ideas were also due to the process of socialization from the family which taught respect to others and follow Kabir the great saint. There was also the enormous impact of a book on Lord Buddha gifted by a teacher in his school education. This reflects that the search for noble and humanistic ideas and approaches for the liberation of people from their age-old sufferings and discriminations by Dr Ambedkar was not ethnocentric as several Brahmanical privileged sections of the society propagate and confine him to Dalits. Many people still call him a Dalit leader though his ultimate goal and objectives as per his first conference of depressed Castes held in 1927 were to achieve manhood or universal humanity and brotherhood (Ambedkar, 1990). Very interestingly several likeminded upper castes were also the backbone of Dr Ambedkar movements. Even some of them took the responsibility of running the organization and weekly paper such as Janata weekly (Zelliot, 1996).

In conclusion, the document portrays Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's perspective, also known as Ambedkarism, as a living force in India, emphasizing its alignment with universal principles of human rights, leading to the country's secured, civilized, and moral development. It highlights the movements and struggles led by Dalits, reflecting their commitment to principles and their efforts to reconstruct society based on values and principles dear to all. The document also emphasizes the significance of kinship among like-minded communities, the role of various strategies to achieve human rights, and the imperative nature of building a strong, egalitarian society based on principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar.

### **Social Movements**

Dr. Ambedkar launched numerous movements. One of the memorable struggles of the Dalits was the Vaikkom Satyagraha in Travancore in Maharashtra, which asserted the right of the Dalits to worship in Hindu temples without hindrance. Another very significant movement was Mahad March, which Ambedkar organized the Dalit rally to assert their legal right to take water from the Chowdar water tank (Ambedkar, 1990).

Dr. Ambedkar led another temple entry movement at the Kalaram temple at Nasik in Maharashtra State in 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1930 to establish the rights of untouchables. Finally the doors of the temple were opened to the untouchables on 13 October 1935.

He campaigned the Dalit movement, which aimed at eradicating caste-based discrimination for their social, economic, and political empowerment. ensuring social, economic, and political rights for them. Caste-based discrimination is the most complex human rights issue facing India today. The UN human rights system has extensively addressed situations of caste discrimination, including through mandates and processes concerning racial discrimination. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) defines racial discrimination as: Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (Ketkar, 1990: 22).

### **Intellectual Movements**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a towering figure in India's intellectual and social landscape, and his contributions to the discourse on social justice and equality through through his prolific writing and speeches on a wide range of topics and activism. He launched a movement against dalit discrimination by creating public opinion through his writings in several periodicals such as *Mook Nayak*, *Vahishkrit Bharat*, and *Equality and Janta*, which he started for the protection of dalit rights (ShyamLal and Saxena, 1998: 254). A constant refrain in his writings is his call for 'liberty, equality and fraternity'.

One of Dr. Ambedkar's most seminal works is "Annihilation of Caste". Originally conceived as a speech for the annual conference of the *Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal* (Society for the Abolition of Caste). The text is a powerful critique of the caste system in India and is one of his most influential writings as a call for its abolition. In this text, he challenges the Hindu caste hierarchy and advocates for a more egalitarian society based on merit and individual achievement and on principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Through platforms like *Mook Nayak*, *Vahishkrit Bharat*, and *Equality and Janta*, he galvanized public opinion, raising awareness about the plight of Dalits and demanding their social and political inclusion.

In essence, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's intellectual movements were characterized by a relentless pursuit of social justice, equality, and dignity for all. His writings and activism continue to serve as a beacon of hope for marginalized communities, reminding us of the imperative to challenge injustice and strive for a more just and humane world.

### **Economic Movements**

Dr. Ambedkar made significant contributions to economic thought, particularly through his ideas on the importance of land reforms, industrialization, and the role of the state in economic planning and development. He advocated for economic policies that would uplift the poor and marginalized sections of society.

Dr. Ambedkar had made in-depth study of Indian Agriculture, wrote research articles, organised seminars and conferences in order to solve the problems of agriculture and farmers, also led farmer's movement. His thoughts on agriculture are found in his article "Small Holdings in Indian and Their Remedies" (1917) and also in "Status and Minorities" (1947). The abolition of "Khoti" system (1949) 'Mahar Vatan' (1959) and introduction of the Bombay Money Lenders' Bill (1938) stand out as distinct success stories of Dr. Ambedkar's movement. In some parts of Konkan region of Maharashtra, 'Khots' (like Zaminders) had rights to land, which were cultivated by farmers from whom the Khots would collect revenue, a part of which was shared with the government. This was called the Khoti system and it subjected the vast majority of rural farmers to oppression and exploitation.

Dr. Ambedkar initiated a movement against this system on 14th April 1929 in an Agricultural Conference in Chiplun of Ratnagiri District. In 1936, he founded independent labour party and its manifesto gave high priority to the abolition of the 'Khoti' system. On 17 September 1937, a historic bill for abolition of the Khoti system was introduced by Ambedkar in Bombay Legislative Council. After a long struggle the Khoti system was abolished in 1949.

He argued that industrialization and agricultural growth could enhance the Indian economy. He stressed investment in agriculture as the primary industry of India. He mentioned that holdings of lands by few people is an acute problem of Indian agriculture which has various disadvantages, like difficulties in cultivation and utilization and resources, increasing cost, low productivity, inadequate income and low standard of living. According to Ambedkar productivity of agriculture is related to not only with the size of holdings of land but also with other factors such as capital, labour and other inputs. Therefore, if capital or labour etc. is not available in adequate quantity and quality, then even a large size land can become unproductive. On the other hand small size land become productive if these resources are available in plenty. With this thought the 'Land Ceiling Act' is passed after Independence. He also mentioned about the slavery and exploitation of labour bounded under caste system is extremely bad for economic development and fought for its abolition. His other suggestion for solving agriculture problem are collective farming, economic holding of land or equal distribution of land, large scale industrialization, provision of credit, water, seeds and fertilizers by the government, cultivation of waste land by allotting waste land to landless labour, minimum wages to labours, control and regulation of private lenders of loan to farmers.



### **Political Movements**

Dr. Ambedkar fought for the rights of workers and peasants and believed in the importance of political representation for marginalized communities as a means to secure their rights and interests. In August, 1936 he founded a new political party – The Independent Labour Party (ILP) of India, on the eve of General Election of 1937. Later, in April, 1942 he formed the All India Scheduled Castes Federation as an All-India Political Party to fight for the Scheduled Castes' interests, in order to provide a platform for Dalits to assert their political rights and participate in the democratic process. On September, 1956 he announced the establishment of the Republican Party of India, by dismissing the 'Scheduled Castes Federation', but before the formation of the party, he died on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1956.

He took up the cause of tenants (from both the dalit Mahars and the caste Hindu Kunbis) in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. With the support of radicals then in the Congress Socialist Party, the Independent Labour Party organized a huge march of 20,000 peasants to Mumbai in 1938, the largest pre-independence peasant mobilization in the region. In the same year, Ambedkar joined with the Communists to organize a strike of Mumbai textile workers in protest against a bill about to be introduced by the British Government to curbe labor strikes. Dr. Ambedkar took the lead in condemning the bill in the assembly and argued that the right to strike was simply another name for the right to freedom of assembly (Majumder and Singh, 1997: 159-165).

### **Educational Movements**

Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of education in empowering marginalized communities. He had recognized education as the major tool of the discriminated masses to stand up and claim their rights. He advocated for the annihilation of the caste system and worked towards the empowerment of Dalits through education. Dr. Ambedkar's last words emphasized: 'Educate, Organize and Agitate' were the base of education would provide rationale, strength and the perseverance which distinguishes between truth and cultured opinions. His speeches many a times mention the transformative nature of education, which he would have imbibed from the diverse range of academic learning he had in country and on abroad. His philosophical determinants have not been cherished by academicians of the country nor has his liberation ideas for the depressed classes discussed on a national platform by the upper castes. He wrote on various issues but the textbook, but academia of India have ignored his thoughts and guidance. He founded the People's Education Society to promote education among Dalits and other disadvantaged groups.

Jyotiba Phule was a practical man with a profound philosophical background. The Indian educationists of his period and after were deeply impressed by the richness and originality of Phule's thoughts. His educational ideas and principles



especially in the field of women's education and universal, free and compulsory primary education are most relevant in modern Indian society as elsewhere. His thoughts and ideas were revolutionary. He was the first Indian educationist whose pragmatic views on education were honoured by the British rulers in India. He is rightly called Mahatma. He was the forerunner of Dr. Ambedkar as far as education of the down-trodden is concerned. For this reason, Dr. Ambedkar considered Mahatma Phule his "Guru" (mentor). The submission by Phule to Hunter Commission in the year 1921 is a document of immense importance in the history of educational reforms in India. The document contains ideas such as free and compulsory education to all now enshrined in the Constitution of India.

### **Women Rights Movements**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar fought for human rights equally for both men and women. His life and work for the creation of a just and gender-neutral world. He was first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He was a strong advocate for women's rights and gender equality. His approach to women's right is exclusively different from other social reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi who tried to reform the Hindu society of certain outdated customs and practices without questioning the hierarchical social order. He campaigned against social practices like child marriage and advocated for women's education and empowerment. He played a key role in including provisions for gender equality in the Indian Constitution. His goal was to make a society based on social justice. To secure this goal, Ambedkar has given equal status to women on par with men by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution. To him, sexual discrimination should be root out from the society and everybody should get equal opportunity in the society. The Preamble of Indian constitution guarantees social and economic justice to women and that is because of Ambedkar contribution.

He wants that women now should not lag behind in the activities of social reform. He measures the progress of a community and a society by the degree of progress which women achieve. He advised the women to learn to be clean, keep away from vices, give education to their children, remove from them all inferiority complex, instill ambition into them, inculcate in their minds that they are destined to be great, and do not be in a hurry to marry. Dr. Ambedkar criticized the traditional and conservative values. He strongly criticized the degradation of women in Indian society. (Keer, 1954 (1981): 350). He strongly advocated for family planning measures for women in Bombay Legislative Assembly. Dr. Babasaheb spent his life for the betterment of women even involved in bad practices and professionals like prostitutions. Dr. Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and devdasi system.

He lamented that the Hindu religion had deprived women of the right to property. His contribution through idea of women education, women freedom in society, critique of caste and Manusmriti, equal fundamental rights in constitution are remarkable in history. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly. He also insisted and evoked all the parliamentary members to help to pass the bill in parliament. Eventually, he resigned for the same. Thus, his deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from each sentence and word. His monumental progressive document, the Hindu Code Bill, for the protection and development of Hindu women was turned down by the parliamentarians in the Parliament and the women themselves on the street due to instigation by the Hindu fanatic men-folk. This bill was a landmark in making the society humane and bringing down the imbalances between men and women. When the bill was not passed, Dr Ambedkar resigned to the Ministry of Law in protest against the fundamentalists and in favour of the rights of the Hindu women whose status was miserable like Dalits in India (Zelliot, 2004: 64).

### **Religious Movements**

Dr. Ambedkar had his own perceptions and diagnosis of the Hindu religion and its caste system. The untouchables were treated as the 'marginals' of the society. The Hindu religion had imposed upon them the myth of their own natural inferiority and thereby had put them in a 'submissive silence' or in a 'culture of silence'. Dr. Ambedkar described Hinduism as a positive religion. The distinctive feature of positive religion is that it is not evolved like a tribal religion but it is purposely formed on a certain occasion in history. It has its own rules of divine governance. It claims that its value system is also divine. It has its own codes of conduct and these codes determine the religious, ritualistic and daily practices of the individual. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that such a religion does not make a distinction between morality and religion. By accepting that the codes of conduct were divine, this religion equated morality with religion. This religion had its own written codes of Buddhism in India. This shows that Hindu religion was not a sanatana religion but a revival of Brahmana religion. Brahmana religion was ritualistic and a defender of Varna vyavastha. This religion believed that the caste system is a divine plan (Ambedkar, 1987:25). The ultimate aim was to convert to the Buddha Dhamma which combines all basic principles like equality, liberty and fraternity together making India an enlightened India. In order to convert to Buddhism in 1956, Dr Ambedkar took almost 20 years as he had to explore world religions, analyze them and find the best one which is extra-scientific and viable. There are also arguments

that Dr Ambedkar despite scientific outlook and westernization preferred an only indigenous system of worship i.e. Buddhism ignoring all other modes of worships and respecting only Indian culture. It must be noted that Dr Ambedkar was not completely western but he was scientific. He constantly made a critical analysis of wide range of religious scriptures whether western or oriental and ultimately came to the conclusion of adopting Buddhism because of inherent basic principles that were present in it for any healthy society. In this process, therefore, his framework of the evaluation was comprehensive and contained eternal principles required for all the living beings. He took them to the feet of Buddha to give them a glimpse of a potential future, and how they can reconstruct their lives in the light of reason and on the principles of justice, liberty equality and fraternity (Keer, 1954 (1971): 42-44).

### **Labour Movements**

Being inspired by labour movements led by Jyotiba Phule and Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, Ambedkar advocated for the cause of Industrial labour. He was also concerned with labor rights and the welfare of workers. He advocated for labor reforms and the protection of workers' rights, including the right to fair wages, safe working conditions, and collective bargaining. He emphasized the importance of economic justice in ensuring human rights for all.

Instead of all workers, he advised for the representative or a group of representatives to present the grievances of the workers. He categorised two types of unions. The first one is of that category which has 20 per cent of the workers as its members and second one is of whose membership is more than 50 per cent and can represent labour to the conciliation to the proceedings. Moreover, he suggested the following objectives:

1. Purpose connected with the promotion of their particular interest as workers, wages, hours of work, promotions in industry, etc.
2. Social purposes conferring certain benefits, giving old age pension, giving unemployment benefit to these members, providing pensions for their widows, etc.
3. Political purpose, viz. freedom to promote a particular line politics, which the union thinks best suited for the protection of the economic and social position (Ambedkar, 1979:227)

Addressing the Conference of Regional Labour Commissioners in Bombay in December 1945, Dr. Ambedkar asserted that three things were necessary to mitigate or prevent industrial disorder: (i) a machinery for reconciliation; (ii) an amendment to the Trade Disputes Act, and (iii) minimum wage legislation. He insisted that the employer must pay reasonable wages, which was another name for elimination of exploitation, and provide comfortable conditions of work, which was another name for labour welfare (Kasare, 1996: 183).

### **Rights Through Constitution and Legislations**

As the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar played a pivotal role in drafting the Constitution of India. He ensured that the Constitution enshrined principles of equality, liberty, and social justice, and included provisions for affirmative action to uplift marginalized communities. His efforts contributed to the inclusion of provisions in the Indian Constitution aimed at abolishing untouchability and promoting social justice.

As an eminent jurist, he was instrumental in framing laws that addressed issues of social inequality, including laws related to land rights, labor rights, and civil liberties. His academic contributions to legal scholarship include analyses of the legal status of marginalized communities, critiques of discriminatory laws, and proposals for legal reforms to protect the rights of the oppressed.

Dr. Ambedkar engaged in legal activism to uphold human rights. He fought for the rights of Dalits and other marginalized communities through legal means, advocating for laws that would protect their interests and ensure equal treatment under the law.

He wanted to incorporate legal safeguards in the Constitution of India and to bring regulatory reforms to bring equalities and to pave way for positive discriminations towards depressed classes including women.

The memorandum presented to the Constituent Assembly by Ambedkar could be termed as a small constitution for the protection of common citizenry and attempted to establish Social Democracy and State Socialism. Ambedkar suggested dual strategy for adopting 'Inclusive Policy' referring to it as 'Safeguards against Economic Exploitation' and 'Safeguards against Social Discrimination and Isolation'. He suggested separate remedies against official discrimination and economic exploitation. Number of measures is suggested as remedies against social discrimination, the focus of which is equal participation in multiple spheres. As a reckoned politician he proposed to adopt state socialism as a policy of the state as a general solution to the problem of economic exploitation (Thorat, 1998:34).

Dr Ambedkar advocates that the rights are the creation of the State; hence they are gifts of the State. Hence Fundamental Rights are the gifts of the Law he also held that fundamental rights are essential for the overall development of man, thus he beautifully combined Legal Theory of Rights with the ethical theory of Rights (Kishore, 2005: 234-236). The special protections are desirable without which the depressed classes cannot be protected and uplifted. Some of the provisions he suggested for the social, political and educational upliftment of the Dalits are:

1. Reservation to the Loksabha and Assemblies (Articles 330 and 332);
2. Employment reservations (Articles 16 (1) 16 (4) and 335; and
3. Reservation in the admissions to educational institutions (Articles 15 (4) and 46) (MoLJ, 2018).

After the second Round Table Conference in 1931, Dr. Ambedkar's dream of a separate electorate for the depressed classes partially came true with the announcement of the Communal Award by the British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsey Mac Donald, on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1932. His struggle for separate electorate could not be realized due to Poona Pact.

### **Contemporary Issues**

Tribal communities continue to be vulnerable even today, not because they are poor, asset-less and illiterate compared to the general population, but often their distinct vulnerability arises from their inability to negotiate and cope with the consequences of their integration with the mainstream economy, society, cultural and political systems, from all of which they were historically protected by their relative isolation. They are suffering from so many problems such as, indebtedness, land alienation, agriculture, poverty, migration, industrialization and urbanization, exploitation of non-tribals, cultural difference, lack of awareness, lack of proper representation, linguistic disability, displacement, mining, problem of identity, restrictions on forest resources, lack of communication, migration, geographic separation, problems of health and education, socio-economic and cultural problems, etc.

In India now-a-days you will see that women are working together with men in every field. This is happening because of the women education. Over the years, India's literacy rate has improved manifold from 12% in 1947 to 74.4% in 2011 (as per Census of India). Even though, the literacy rate is still below the average of 84% around the world. As per 2011 census report, out of 77,84,54,120 individuals who are considered literate in India, 44,42,03,762 of them are male and 33,42,50,358 are female. If you look at the percentage of educated people, there is a huge gap between male (82.14%, in 2011) and female (65.46%, in 2011) literacy rates in India. Low women literacy rate has a huge negative impact on the overall growth and development of the society – where women are majorly responsible for child care and development.

Since the 1980s there has been a steady decline in the allocation of government funds for SCs and STs development and welfare projects. The paper published by National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution on "Issues of Social Justice: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes -An Unfinished National Agenda" states, "there has in general been an inherent lack of interest and seriousness on the part of the planning and implementing machinery to achieve the objectives of the Constitution...benefits secured by the SCs and STs do not appear commensurate with the funds spent so far" (page 93). Despite providing reservation quotas in jobs, the representation of SCs and STs in the higher levels of all public services remains poor. The paper notes that the amendments to departmental orders concerning recruitment and promotion of SCs and STs have adversely affected their interests. The paper quotes extensively from

the Dalit Manifesto to highlight the feelings of SC/STs and backward classes (BCs) regarding the extent of deprivation and humiliation faced by them.

### **Conclusion**

Through his intellectual leadership and activism in these movements, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar made significant contributions to the advancement of human rights in India, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to inspire social justice movements today.

The basic principles of Dr Ambedkar are liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice. Human rights as a discipline did not emerge from Dr Ambedkar. Instead, it developed gradually and reflected in his speeches, memorandums, and movements etc and caught its speed and strength. Dr. Ambedkar's approach towards human rights is visible in his all writings and speeches, memorandums submitted to various committees and above all as an architect of the fundamental rights, rights of the minorities, socio-economic rights in the form of Directive Principles of State Policy, and special safeguards for the welfare of the weaker sections of the society. He did not subscribe to the theory of Natural Rights. Dr Ambedkar advocates that the rights are the creation of the State; hence they are gifts of the State. Hence Fundamental Rights are the gifts of the Law he also held that fundamental rights are essential for the overall development of man, thus he beautifully combined Legal Theory of Rights with the ethical theory of Rights (Kishore, 2005).

Scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) are among the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups in India. They have been facing problems since colonial India to the present times. Scheduled castes, who are also known as 'dalits,' have been suffering from social, religious, legal, political, economic, educational, and other problems. Scheduled tribes live in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills and inaccessible areas and are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. Problems of tribes are mainly related to forest rights, land alienation, exploitation by money lenders, mining and displacement in tribal areas. Development projects, such as industrial projects, dams, roads, mines, power plants and new cities, displace the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes from their homes resulting in destitution and unemployment. Today, displacement is the main problem confronting these communities. Therefore, the present paper outlines the contemporary problems of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of India.

After reviewing several reports it has been found that despite abolishing untouchability, prejudice against the depressed sections, specially mentioned as SCs and STs persists in some form or the other - be it overt, covert or subtle in expression. "Whatever has been done in this regard has been done hesitatingly half-heartedly and as a measure of concession forgetting that this relates to their Constitutional rights and not concession to (them)..." (page XVII) Atrocities against

SCs and STs continue to occur frequently. More and more Dalits and Adivasis are becoming landless and are joining the ranks of agricultural labourers. This is to mention that loss of land is caused by atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis. This state of landlessness makes them vulnerable and promotes further perpetration of atrocities against them.

Now, in near future we have to study the economical downtrodden of scheduled castes and tribes in their livelihoods and the government and other organization, activities towards enhancing their self-employment opportunity and other progressive measure. It is further required to analyze the political ideological and its emergences and development among the scheduled castes and Tribes.

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