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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Women Empowerment in India

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Abstract:

Dr. Ambedkar, a determined fighter and a deep scholar, has worked hard to guide society toward liberty, equality, and fraternity. He was the first Indian to break down the barriers that were keeping women in India from getting ahead. He established a solid and earnest foundation by formalizing the common Civil Code for Hindus and other segments of Indian society. The current paper endeavors to elucidate Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues in pre- and post-independence India and its relevance in the contemporary context. Today, the word "empowerment" is one of those words that sounds beneficial but is difficult to pin down because it can mean different things at different times. The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen from March 6 to 12, 1995, used the term a lot as a goal for social and economic development. This made it popular around the world. The Declaration and the Programme of Action linked up empowerment with the entire gamut of social and economic development policies and programmes. Empowering people, particularly the weaker section of society, is the main objective of development and its principal resource. Dr. Babasaheb spent his life for the betterment of women, even those involved in bad practices and professions like prostitution. Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and the devdasi system. Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's rights in the political

vocabulary and constitution of India. He insisted on the Hindu Code bill, suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in the assembly. He also insisted and evoked all the parliamentary members to help to pass the bill in parliament. Eventually, he resigned for the same reason. Thus, his deep concern and feelings for the all-round development of women are expressed in each sentence and word.

KEYWORDS: Dr. Ambedkar, women empowerment, Hindu code bill

Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the world. Paul Baran, an eminent Marxist economist, had made a distinction in one of his essays between an "intellect worker" and an intellectual. The former, according to him, is one who uses his intellect for making a living, whereas the latter is one who uses it for critical analysis and social transformation. Baran's definition of an intellectual fits Dr. Ambedkar very well. Dr. Ambedkar is also a great example of what Antonio Gramsci called an "organic intellectual," which is someone who speaks for and represents the interests of a whole social class. Dr. Ambedkar was a determined fighter and a deep scholar who earned the highest academic honors from some of the world's most prestigious universities. He worked hard to guide society toward liberty, equality, and fraternity. A survey done by History TV 18 and CNN IBN in June 2012 proves this. After Mahatma Gandhi, who is the best Indian? Is the question asked of the people of India? Some of the people who are competing are first PM Jawahar Lal Nehru, singer Lata Mangeshkar, industrialist J.R.D. Tata, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Indira Gandhi, and Vallabhbhai Patel. After the three polls—jury voting (both online and in person), popular votes, and market research—the final cumulative ranking was done. Finally, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was declared the winner. Historian Ramchandra Guha stated on the declaration of results, "Dr. People have changed Ambedkar's legacy to fit their own needs. He was a brilliant scholar, a great builder of institutions, and a theorist of economics.

Prof. A. K. Sen has also said, "Ambedkar is my father in economics." He is a true celebrated champion of the underprivileged. He deserves more than what he has done so far. But he was a very controversial person in his home country, even though that wasn't true. His work in economics is amazing and will be remembered forever. Ambedkar was not only the father of the Indian Constitution; he was also a great freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, economist, editor, social reformer, revivalist of Buddhism, and the first Indian to break

down the barriers that were holding back women in India. He laid the groundwork for real and lasting change by writing down the common Civil Code for Hindus and other parts of Indian society. He said that women should be given all-around development, but especially social education, their health, and their social and cultural rights. He stressed that every part of Indian women should get their fair share and that it is important to keep and protect women's dignity and modesty. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar always thought that women should lead movements. He also said that if women from all walks of life are trusted, they could have a big impact on social change. They have done a lot to stop social abuses. He said that every married woman should be a friend to her husband and do things with him. But she needs to be brave enough to say that slaves don't have a life. She should stand up for the idea of equality. If all the women do it, they will get the respect they deserve and their own identity.

Women empowerment:

The word "empowerment" is one of those interesting but slippery words that can mean different things, sometimes even the opposite of what you think it means. The term became widely used around the world after the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen from March 6 to 12, 1995, where it was used a lot as a goal for social and economic development. The Declaration and the Programme of Action connected empowerment to all social and economic development policies and programs. The main goal of development is to give people power, especially those who are less fortunate, and this is also its main resource. Empowerment necessitates the comprehensive involvement of individuals in the formulation, execution, and assessment of decisions that influence societal functioning and well-being (Srivastava, S. P., 2005). In the 1990s and after, the focus of development discourse changed from welfare to development and then from development to empowerment. Empowerment denotes a process of consolidating, preserving, or altering the nature and distribution of power within a specific cultural context. As a collective process, it contests fundamental power, wealth, and advancement concerning gender inequality, class disparity, and social differentiation. In this way, the word "empowerment" means giving power to some groups of people who are not privileged or oppressed. Empowerment, in the context of women's welfare and development, is a process that culminates in the attainment of gender equality across social, educational, economic, and political spheres. Empowerment, in its most basic sense, is the redistribution of power that goes against patriarchal ideas and male dominance. It is a change in the structures or institutions that support and keep gender discrimination going. It is a process that helps

women become more aware of themselves, improve their status, and become better at social interactions. It also helps them shape their own lives and surroundings. For women, being empowered means being able to help themselves and breaking down social, economic, educational, cultural, and psychological barriers so that they can go from being passive recipients of government programs to active participants and managers of their own affairs. The agenda for women's empowerment includes taking action to protect and promote women's equal rights and inherent dignity, ending discrimination and injustice against women, removing barriers to women's full participation in public life and decision-making at all levels, including the family, ending all forms of violence against women, ensuring equal access for women in their struggle for self-actualization, and promoting autonomy to ensure their access to productive resources. To put it simply, empowering women means that all women have all of their human rights and basic freedoms, that they can fully and equally participate in political, civil, economic, social, and cultural life, and that all forms of discrimination against women must be stopped (Mohanty, 2008).

Objectives, methods, and materials

This paper endeavors to elucidate Dr. Ambedkar's perspective on women's issues in pre- and post-independence India, as well as the contemporary relevance of his ideas in India's current political and social landscape. Secondary data was gathered from the internet, published papers, books, and speeches by Dr. Ambedkar in Parliament, as well as at various conferences and meetings in pre- and post-independence India.

Dr. Ambedkar and Women's Empowerment

Gender equality, gender mainstreaming, networking, leadership, and financial independence are fundamental components of women's empowerment. Dr. Ambedkar recognized this during his era and incorporated it into the framework of social reforms. Dr. Ambedkar began to include women in the fight against caste systems and for the betterment of the poor. He understood that liberation of the women was essential for achieving this goal. He inspired women and talked to them about joining the fight against caste bias. Women marched with men in the Mahad Tank Struggle. He told women to get their act together. He was impressed by the large number of women who attended the women's conference in Nagpur on July 20, 1942. He told them to be progressive and get rid of traditionalism, ritualism, and old habits that were holding them back.

Empowerment involves enhancing the skills and abilities of individuals and communities to integrate them into mainstream society. The only way for societies to go from being oppressed

to being involved in democracy is through education. It is a strong tool for giving people power. For many years, women and other groups that were on the outside of Indian society were not allowed to go to school. Dr. Ambedkar worked hard to make sure that all Indians had the same chance to get an education, no matter who they were. The British rule got rid of horrible things like sati, but it also made a lot of laws to protect Hindu customs and traditions. Dr. Ambedkar is one of the people who wrote the Indian Constitution. He gave women strong protections in the Constitution. The Special Marriage Act says that a marriage is only valid if the couple is monogamous, of sound mind, of marriageable age, and not too closely related. There are some reasons that only the wife can use in both Hindu and civil marriages. Section 313 says that it is a crime to have violent or forced abortions or abortions without the woman's consent. The Hindu Succession Act gives men and women heirs almost the same rights to inherit. Section 14 states that a female Hindu shall possess property as a full owner, rather than a limited owner. Dr. Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill in 1948, which would have limited women's property rights, but when it was not passed by parliament, he left his position as a minister in 1951.

Today's Scenario

Most people can read and write, but they don't know much. Access to knowledge and learning was a key part of the social reforms. Stagnation in the process of social reforms and the imposition of a so-called divine status of ancient women on contemporary women, thereby affecting their development and advancement. The Indian mindset has not accepted women's equality with men since the reforms and liberation of women during globalization and modernization. This has forced women to stop their progress. The growing number of women being harassed in all ways, including violence, crime, and humiliation, is only because politicians don't care about social norms. The education system, job opportunities, a huge population, inflation, and a lack of resources to work with are all things that make it hard for people to improve. The sheer influence of modern living and using technology doesn't mean that people and society are getting better. The societal framework designed to subordinate or subjugate women must be dismantled. Women from all walks of life could make it happen if they all got involved. Many well-known women activists are working on problems like poverty, health, the environment, and others. People who wanted to change society were not supported, not even by women. The women's reservation bill is the most talked-about topic right now, but the truth is that most women don't even know what it is. The most ridiculous thing men think is that a girl's education is only for her marriage. Women today are stuck in a cycle of fear,

male dominance, not knowing their rights, and not being able to make decisions. People talk a lot about empowering women these days, but it's more about money.

Political and health-related. The issue of women's social empowerment needs to be given more attention and importance if it is to be fully realized. There are five parts to women's empowerment: their sense of self-worth; their right to make choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to control their own lives; and their ability to change society and the economy to make them more fair, both in their own country and around the world. Dr. Ambedkar firmly asserted that the empowerment of women can be realized through their welfare. Dr. Ambedkar's vision should guide efforts to empower women around the world.

Analysis and discussion

In 1920, Dr. Ambedkar began his movement. He said, "We will see better days soon, and our progress will be much faster if we push for male education alongside female education." He started a strong campaign against the Hindu social order and began publishing the journals *Mook Nayak* in 1920 and *Bahiskrit Bharat* in 1927 for this purpose. He emphasized gender equality and the need for education through his issues, and he also talked about the problems that depressed people and women face. Ambedkar's view of women's issues, which included their right to education, equal treatment with men, property rights, and participation in politics, was similar to what feminists around the world wanted. J. S. Mill wrote in *The Subjection of Women* that it is wrong for one sex to be legally subordinate to the other and that this is one of the main things that stops people from growing; instead, there should be a principle of perfect equality, with no privileges or power on one side and no disabilities on the other. Ambedkar also believes the same thing about women's work. A women's group was started in Bombay in January 1928, and Ramabai, Ambedkar's wife, was its first president. In 1930, five hundred women took part in the Kalram Temple Entry Satyagraha in Nasik. Many of them were arrested along with men and treated badly in jail. Dr. Ambedkar's support for giving women the power to speak out was clear when Radhabai Vadale held a press conference in 1931. She said, "I'd rather die a hundred times than live a life full of shame." "We will give up our lives, but we will win our rights." Ambedkar is to thank for this strong sense of self-respect and determination among women. He was a strong supporter of family planning for women in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. As the Labour Minister of the Executive Council of the Governor General in 1942, he put forward a Maternity Benefit Bill. He put a number of things in the constitution to protect women's civil rights and well-being. He brought the Hindu Code

Bill to Parliament and talked about the problems with women's property rights. Many political leaders strongly opposed the bill. Dr. Ambedkar then quit the cabinet because he was unhappy that the parliament did not accept women's rights. He also talked about the problems that Muslim women face. His secular viewpoint is evident in his views on the Purdah system, religious conversions, and the legal rights of Muslim women. In short, he feels the same way about freeing all women as he does about freeing women from the depressed class. Dr. Ambedkar made an effort to include women's rights in India's political language and constitution. That is Article 14: Equal rights and chances in politics, the economy, and society. Article 15 says that you can't treat people differently because of their sex. Article 15(3) enables affirmative discrimination in favor of women.

Article 39 – Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.

Article 42 – Human conditions of work and maternity relief.

Article 51 (A) (C)—Fundamental duties to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Article 46—The state is to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 47—The state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on.

Article 243D (3), 243T (3), & 243R (4) provides for allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System.

The Hindu Code Bill: Ambedkar not only made sure that women had constitutional rights, but he also passed four laws that made women's lives better in society. The Hindu Code Bill included these. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 is one of these. ii) The 1956 Hindu Succession Act. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act of 1956. The Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956. We can easily see that Ambedkar was a great thinker about women's rights and freedom if we look at the laws that were passed. The Acts include the following provisions:

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, was amended in 1976 and made the following provisions for women:

1. The legitimization of illegitimate children (Sec. 16).

2. Punishment-bigamy (Sec. 26).
3. Custody of children (Sec. 26).
4. Marriageable age of females raised to 18 years.
5. Provision for alimony (Sec. 25). The Act abolishes the difference between a maiden and a widow.

Conclusion

In his condolence message after Ambedkar died in parliament, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Dr. People saw Babasaheb Ambedkar as a symbol of resistance to all the bad things in Hindu society. His vision of a society founded on gender equality remains unfulfilled; thus, his ideas are significant for the social reconstruction that promotes women's empowerment.

B.R. Ambedkar fought for women's freedom. Throughout his life, he fought against all forms of discrimination against women. But people in India still ignore discrimination against women. It is our responsibility to realize Ambedkar's aspirations for an improved existence for women. It should also be noted that the concept of "social justice" will not be effectively implemented unless the attitudes of the Indian populace, particularly towards women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other marginalized groups, undergo significant transformation. In the age of globalization, many multinational corporations (MNCs) are looking for merit to make sure their businesses run smoothly. To achieve social justice, companies must operate within the constitutional framework, and the relevant state or central government should establish rules and regulations to facilitate the participation of individuals from diverse categories, thereby ensuring social justice. So that everyone would have the same chances and be treated the same. This would make Ambedkar's dream come true.

In his well-known book "Pakistan and the Partition of India," he talked about Muslim women, their religious customs, and things like wearing a veil and getting married. Muslim women faced oppression due to various religious customs. Babasaheb held a distinct humanitarian perspective towards all women, regardless of their religion, caste, or class. He often spoke out against all kinds of unfair treatment of women.

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