

Women's Empowerment in India the outstanding Roll played by Dr. BR Ambedkar

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Abstract

Empowerment refers to enhancing the sanctity of the divine, constitutional, convivial, profitable, lucrative energy, force, might, power of individuals and coteries of women enjoying the autonomy of self-esteem and the development of the rights of womanhood in a patriarchal society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as a Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution have imbued and incorporated the social rights of women in a beautiful social fabric of woman empowerment in the constitution after independence so that no question would arise depriving woman's right to be subjugated by the patriarchal society trampling the rights of women. He attempted to built a strong social foundations of the constitutional democracy that would always be durable even under dire threats of patriarchal domination. His academic credentials were so genuine and strong that it had remained unquestionable and a dream come true for women empowerment in India.

Keywords:- Women empowerment, women education

Introduction

His authoritative pedagogy left Indelible footprints in our constitution on which no one raised a voice of political and social contention in a patriarchal tapestry that adorned the timeless repressive tendency in the male dominated society. His authoritative views he imbibed from the army background he belonged. He was born in April 14, 1891 in Mhowa city of military cantonment then Central Province in India. His father , Ramji Sakpal Maloji was a Subedar in the army and his mother Bhimabai Sakpal was a house wife. He belonged to the Mahar called lower class who were treated as 'untouchable' His erudition did not deter him to tailor the needs of the society and finding with his indepth erudition the Rights he religiously dreamt of empowering women . The notion of gender equality demands parity between males and females but women have been kept oblivious of their rights. Dr. Ambedkar meticulously framed and incorporated the Rights of Women. For a country like India, women empowerment will be a greater role in its growth and development.

Objectives, Method and Materials

The present paper is an approach to emphasise and accentuate the study and explore the analysis by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on gender relation, the specific sub-set of social relations uniting men and women as social groups in a particular community which were assembled and produced by means of human intervention rather than naturally artificially create an argument created under Hindu social order and women problems in pre and post independent India and the relevance of his modern populist ideas in present and social representation of India. The secondary data assembled is the sequel of literary appraisal and profound survey and material obtained from various sources and link from Internet, published journal , books, discourses carried out by Dr. Ambedkar in parliament , innumerable academic and erudite conferences in pre and post Independent India.

Analysis and Discussion

Dr. Ambedkar's proposition to women's empowerment was entirely dissimilar from other social reformers like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi who tried to ameliorate certain outmoded customs and practices without interrogating socially hierarchical order.

He had credence, credit, and faith that society should be in conformity with strong faith and not on irrelevant reason, not on barbarous transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation of cast system. So he devised an order to modernize, overhaul, rebuild, recreate, regenerate, rejuvenate, remake, and remodel, Hindu society on the seminal ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. His purpose was to call something into question a body of ideas that reflects the beliefs and interests of a the process of applying standardized measurements for varying levels of class hierarchy that deprived equality, freedom and human dignity to women under the patriarchical system in a dogmatic Hindu Society (Mahindra Godbole). He advocate in "Annihilation of Caste System", that the Hindu mind should be eradicated and deposed from bondage, slavery, servitude of the precept, rules, manual, compendium, book or treatise of the shastras.

Dr. Ambedkar's perceptiveness and discernment on women's problem accentuated, highlighted and illuminated on women's right to education, right to own property, participation and involvement in the political process, to voice their rights, gender equality which was akin with the global feminist name Mary Wollstonecraft and her contradictory statement of Rousseau's demand for equal Right to woman. He launched his movement in 1920 and reposed his faith in the sturdiness, courage, durability, energy, firmness, and fortitude of women and their role in the process of Social change and development of the society which can be accomplished by expedite, furthering, hastening, opening up, and quickening male educations inducing side by side with female education. To enforce his movement and to protest for liberation of women and initiating the necessity women's education he launched his own news paper Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahishkrit Bharat 1927 to improve and better the social status, inspire, and persuade women to partake in social reforms against social activity and advocated for their socio-economic rights as the societal changes that came about as a result of the civil rights movement of the women who were not in par with men and they were impoverished from the basic rights, and were treated inhumanely like animals practising inhumanity without any qualms of conscience.

Dr. Ambedkar encouraged in the formations of women's organization and imbuing in them the strength and healthy participation of women in improving their lot shunning them from degradation by the patriarchal dominance over them and encouraging them to voice their grievances democratically by participating in satyagrahas and setting up women's association that could actively participate irrespective of the class they belonged. His aim was to spread education and awareness of their rights among untouchables and down trodden. In 1927 he was nominated as a member of Bombay Legislative Council which gave him the opportunity for the clarion call, to safe guard the dignity of women. Now he devised legal means to spread among all for the recognition of woman's rights. He also introduced maternity benefit bill for women labours. His stand and argument was that woman of the nation enjoyed the birth right of every mother who ought to get and enjoy certain amount of rest during the pre-natal period and he made it mandatory in the bill, That "being so sir, I am bound to admit that the burden of this ought to be largely borne by the Government, I am prepared to admit this fact because of the conservation of the people's welfare is the primary concern of the Government, and in every country, you will find that the Government has been subjected to a certain amount of charge with regards to maternity benefit(Kavita Kait 2013).

In the same year March 1927 he organised a historic march launched by Mahad Satyagrahas. Thousands of men and women joined the march to establish their rights to draw water from Chawdhar tank at Mahad. The great ensemble took the form of a vociferous movement to liberate society from remote traditions and evil customs forced ruthlessly and upheld religiously the sacredness of the people who considered it as the righteous way of extending their hands to the weaker and the downtrodden people, inspiring by offering them the restoration of their human rights and dignity. (Bharati 1992)

The indomitable Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made a bonfire of Manusmriti in the presence of more than fifty women in a formal meeting of women from depressed classes at Mahadon 25th Dec 1927 with a shared interest, At the end of the conference he addressed about three thousand women in a meeting which was first of its kind in modern India and encouraged them to dress well and live a clean and tidy life. He also told them not to feed spouse and sons if they are intoxicated. He encouraged them to send their children to schools. He explained to them the necessity of Education for woman emancipation as it is necessary for males.

The women's association was established in January 1928 and Ramabai, Dr. Babasaheb's wife was its president. Depressed Classes Conference was held in Nagpur in 1930. In it women also participated in another conference in Nagpur in 1930. In the Kalaram temple entry Satyagrahas at Nashik he attended a conference where 500 women participated and many of them arrested along with men and suffered ill-treatment in jails. In 1931 Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference where she addressed empowerment of women being encouraged by Dr. Ambedkar to do so. She said "It is been to die a hundred times than live a life full of humiliation. We will sacrifice our lives but we will win our rights. The credit for this self-respect and firm determinations of women goes to Dr. Babasaheb. (Singariya -2014)

Dr. Babasaheb was also very sympathetic towards prostitutes. He never treated them immorally. He always provided a space of gratitude for them. In Kamathipura, a David, mediator working in a brothel renounced profession inspired by the thoughts and sane teachings Of Dr. Ambedkar and persuaded with righteousness appealing to the prostitutes to renounce and abstain from their profession and lead a life of self-respect and honour glorifying the dignity of their own selves. He appealed to their good senses making them feel at home with ease." Like a mentor he said "Never wear such clothes which will degrade our personality and character. Avoid wearing the jewellery on your body everywhere. It is not fare to make hole on nose and wear 'nath'. Every women followed his advice deeply embedded into their hearts and gladly followed his wise preaching as they would have done the same to a seer.

Dr. Ambedkar's goal was reconstruction of the Hindu Society on the basis of equality rather than social reforms as was done by the Arya Samaj because the later were concerned within the periphery of the upper strata of the society. He had studied profoundly from the Smritis and Shastras and observed from his interaction with upper castes during the temple entry movement, drawing examples than precepts on Hindu philosophy and society.

He decried Manu Smriti, that degrades women and treat them as slaves devoid of intellect and denies them the right to education and right to property. It also proscribes them from performing rituals and sacrifices.

Dr. Ambedkar was equally aware of the rights denied to Muslim women. About Muslim women Purdah (veil) system, religious conversions and legal rights for Muslim women he was equally and strictly vocal. Being India's first law minister and Chairman of the drafting committee of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar enjoyed the power and the right to speak in favour of women emancipation. He, therefore, took the initiative to draft and introduce the Hindu Code Bill in the Constituent Assembly.

His contribution in The preamble to the Indian Constitution guarantees social and economic justice to women. This is the structural right that cannot be denied.

According to Dr. Ambedkar Emancipation of Woman is a necessity that cannot be denied. He emphasised the need for offering Empowerment to Woman in every aspect of the societal rights. Gender equality related rights emanates from him. In addition right of women to divorce is maintained by him with all grace and honour. He also guided with his view about strict control of women through restriction of widow from social castration, Child-marriage without restriction imposed by society and law, Sati a crime committed by a class of the society with strict adherence to their dogmatic societal norms punishable by law and other social vices

Rights

Dr. Ambedkar tried to reduce the adversities facing the women by introducing certain important rights in the constitution of India i.e.,

Article 14- Equal rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres

Article 15- Discrimination prohibited on the grounds of sex

Article 15(3)- enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women

Article 39- equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work

Article 42- proper conditions of work and allowance of maternity relief

Article 51 (A) (c) practices derogatory to women should be renounced

Article 46- the state to promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people and to prevent them from social injustice and any other forms of exploitation and discrimination

Article 47- the state to improve the standard of living, nutrition and public health.

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

There are number of protective levels to protect women from exploitation. A few of them are Sati Prevention Act 1987, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, the Family courts Act 1984, Protection of Human Right Act 1993, the maternity benefit Act 1961, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956, The child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, The pre-natal Diagnostic Technique Act, 1994, the Legal Practitioners(women) Act, 1923 and so on.

Conclusion

Dr Ambedkar had his own insight, intellect, wisdom. perceptiveness of the Indian social order. In the social system of the Hindu and Muslim women were deprived and denied their feminity and peaceful coexistence to enjoy their birth right by the dogmatic patriarchal social system. He was **desperately**, probing of a solution to their ignoble system of depriving their rights bases on equality, justice and fraternity. Women empowerment was a far cry and there was no hope of determining this social factor to give them an opportunity and their legitimate rights and recognition that would enable them to be at par in the main stream of healthy sustenance in India, but also globally spreading their cherished hopes and dreams that the social order was eluding this factor.

So he gave the clarion call “educate, agitate and organize” that has turned watch words since time immemorial till today. So educating the oppressed, subjugated and persecuted, he thought was the only way to imbue in them a sense of awareness, self-esteem and dignity. He wanted the people to prepare, pursue and nurture the essence of freedom and equality among themselves which could only be possible through education that could provide the necessary insight into a brighter tomorrow. This would enable them to provide them with all factors encompassing a great cultural change incorporating the values of freedom and equality among women for giving them the golden opportunity to participate in the [integration, absorption, adaptation and acculturation](#) into mainstream of a knowledgeable and recognisable national life making them proud of their existence.

Dr. Ambedkar was a representation of erudition and character. He conceptualised education as to lead to the threshold of light and discernment to obliterate darkness and ignorance. He had indomitable faith and belief in education to bring awareness in people of social disintegration of values in Hindu Society that devastated the lower strata of the society and affected the social order for the preservation of humanity. He realised that the educational institutes can only strive for sincere educational development of all. *Gramsci* classifies intellectuals

either as traditional intellectuals or as *organic intellectuals*. Dr. Ambedkar was an “ organic intellectual ” in his ideas .He was an independent intellectual of the world. He was profoundly influenced by his independent thinking for the upliftment of the downtrodden. In order to expound his brilliant academic career his statue is positioned at the entrance of London School Of Economics and below that “ Symbol of Knowledge “ is inscribed.. It delineates that how he was eulogized as a great student and educationist of commendable excellence .He is a commendable name in the world of erudition even today in the 21st century for the socio-economic and political progress and development of our country. He was an ardent patriot.

He believed “ So long as you do not achieve social liberty, whatever freedom is provided by the law is of no avail to you”-

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