

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT OF THE DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S ROLE ABOUT WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

In ancient India, women enjoyed a very high position but gradually their position degenerated into merely objects of pleasure meant to serve certain purpose. They lost their individual identity and even their basic human right. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multidimensional and multi-layered concept. Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation, and to gain 'power'.

Dr. Ambedkar –A person with tremendous knowledge, wisdom, courage and vision. The freedom fighter and a scholar who shown a path to the society of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He took the lots of efforts to abolish the barriers in the way of improvement of women in India. He laid down the foundation codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society.

The present paper is an attempt to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's role on women empowerment. Dr. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started fierce propaganda against the Hindu social order and launched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose. The newspapers started by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Mooknayak and Bahiskrit Bharat predominantly used to cover issues related to women and their empowerment. Dr. Ambedkar was always concerned about women empowerment. On 18th July 1927, Dr. Ambedkar addressed a meeting of about three thousand women of depressed classes; he said 'I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women had achieved.' These issues he put forward due to stress the gender equality and the need for education and exposed the problems of the depressed community as well as women. In 1931 he spoke on women empowerment in a press conference and addressed for family measures for women in Bombay Legislative Assembly. He worked throughout his life for the betterment of women involved in prostitution professional. He was a inspiration for poor, illiterate women to fight against injustice and child marriage. He insisted on Hindu Code bill for same cause. Thus his deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from his each sentence, word and every moment of his life.

Keywords: - Women, Empowerment, Civil Code for Hindus, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, Education and India.

INTRODUCTION:

Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. To achieve sustainable and healthy human development it is very much necessary to have women involvement in political, social, economic and health status of community. The role played by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as chairperson of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, has shaped the socio-political, economical and demographic scenario of the country after independence, Dr. Ambedkar had the highest academic credential for an Indian of his time, and his erudition and scholarship have been widely acknowledged. Dr. Ambedkar's vision about women empowerment has explicitly depicted in Indian Constitution. Equality of sexes is strongly backed by the constitution through articles 14, 15 and 16. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

OBJECTIVES, METHODS AND MATERIALS:

The present paper is an attempt to highlight Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's role on women empowerment and the safety provided by the Indian Constitution for the women empowerment, for this Secondary data collected from Government documents, newspapers, published papers, books of distinguished scholars and speeches delivered by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Parliament, various conferences and meetings.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Women empowerment is characterised by Gender equality, gender main streaming, networking, leaderships, and financial freedom. For the eradication of cast system and bringing under privileged cession of community Dr. Ambedkar started involving women in the struggle. He realized that this could not be achieved without liberating the women themselves. He motivated women and addressed them to participate in struggle against caste prejudices. During the Mahad Tank Struggle, women marched in the procession along with men. He encouraged women to organize themselves. Impressed by the large gathering of women at women's conference held at Nagpur on 20th July, 1942, he told women to be progressive and abolish traditionalism, ritualism and customary habits, which were detrimental to their progress. Empowerment helps to develop and build the capacities of individuals, communities to be the part of the main stream of society.

Education is the only mean by which societies grow out of oppression to democratic participation and involvement. It is a powerful tool for empowerment of individual. Over the generations, marginalized sections and women in Indian society were denied the opportunity to education. Dr. Ambedkar put all his efforts to

guarantee the educational opportunities without any discrimination to all the citizens of India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strived throughout his life to bring schedule castes and scheduled tribes and women in streamline of society. He has identified the Indian women's problems and gave solutions in omay Legislative Council. He supported the Maternity Bill; his argument was "It is in the interest of the nation that the mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the prenatal period and also subsequently, and the principle of the bill is based entirely on that principle. In Indian society the women was considered the lowest part of community. He fought a very difficulty battle for their cause. He addressed women for their liberation, development of their mind and the spirit of self help. He advised the education is main part of women development he added "As you are, so shall be your children". The according to him development of a community can be measured by the development and degree of progress made by the women in that community. He advised to the married women to live the dignified life to be a friend of her husband ant not the slave and have an equal right of say. He was against early marriages and producing too many children. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not only a dalit hero but also the saviour of the Indian women. He was of a view that the basic root cause of social and women injustice was gender discrimination and cast system. For Social transformation the gender and cast discriminations are hurdles. His words and deeds inspired billions of women even today to strive and struggle against injustice and inequality. His work is an inspiration of today's women to live dignified life with self esteem. Through the constitution of India, as the chairman of the constitution drafting committee, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in granting equal status to all the citizens irrespective of sex, religion etc. Thus the women, contrary to their low status as per Hindu law books, were for the first time got equal status lawfully.

Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India. i.e,

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

Article 15 – Prohibits discrimination on the ground 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 – Human conditions of work and maternity relief.

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

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

To empower women at that time, presented Hindu Code Bill in parliament but it was opposed by almost every male Member of Parliament If passed, it would have ended Sati Pratha, Dowry system in 1951 only. After

the bill lapsed, he resigned. (The draft also included divorce rights to women, portions of inheritance to daughters, while giving widows complete property rights. Dr. Ambedkar had his own views for women empowerment and this has shown form his contribution and deeds for billions of Indian women which can be reflected from Indian constitution. Indian constitution has given social, political and economical justice to women by giving equal status, equal right, and equal opportunity freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. He has worked for all the women irrespective of religion, caste, creed, gender etc. Not only women all the people of India should thankful to him because of his tremendous and everlasting steps of developmental works.

In present day context, Ambedkar and his thoughts on society based on equality are yet to be realized for reconstructing Indian society and making the life of women better. B.R. Ambedkar was a fighter for women emancipation. He fought against all kinds of discrimination against women throughout his whole life. But still discrimination against women in Indian society is overlooked. So it is our duty to fulfill the dreams of Ambedkar for a better life world of women. It may also be mentioned here that the term “Social Justice” will not be exercised properly if the people of India should not change their attitudes specially towards women, SCs, STs and other weaker section of the society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is a pure symbol of hard work, dedication, commitment, love and humanity. He is a father of Indian constitution and dynamic character of India's history.

CONCLUSION:

In the condolence message, on Ambedkar's death in parliament, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said “Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of Hindu society”. His dream of society, based on gender equality is yet to be realized and therefore his thoughts are important for the social reconstruction that favours women empowerment. Dr. Babasaheb expressed his views on the state of life of all women. He stated that women must be treated equally and given equal prestige. 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. The teachings and thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar are useful not only women but also all the Indian even today. His deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from his each sentence and word. In his last speech in Indian Parliament we can know his feelings and respect showed towards women. He quoted the famous thoughts of an Irish Patriot Daniel O Connal as, “No man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity. And no nation can be grateful at the cost of his liberty.” In his famous book “Pakistan and partition of India he expressed his views about Muslim women and their religious traditions, about wearing veil, their marriages and so on. Muslim women were suppressed under various religious traditions.

Towards all the women, irrespective of their religion, casts and class, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had a particular humanitarianism view. He frequently raised his voice against all sorts of injustice towards women.

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