

DR. B.R.AMBEDKAR'S PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ON INDIAN SOCIETY

A. Jammanna, Ph. D.

Department of History, Srikrishnadevaraya University-Ananthapuramu-515003

Abstract

The process of democratization from below has threatened the very existence of the caste system and the dominance of the traditionally powerful groups. We are now witnessing such momentous historic developments in the social system in India. It is in this historic perspectives, more and more sections of people are discovering the relevance and importance of the ideology of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who put forward scientific analysis of the caste system, the Hindu religion had evolved ways and means to fight out of the evils and degenerations, resulting into the very negation of human values and dignity. We often use the most elusive term social justice but rarely define it as it is covered by conflicting claims of divergent approaches of divergent segments of society. Further it is a multi-contextual term having interpretations and implications in national and international spheres. The modern idea of social justice is concerned with ushering in a new social order without any border which could secure rights and advantages for the different sections of society in general and for the vulnerable and underprivileged sections of society in particular. As whole, it is correctly that any genuine democratization process can be started in India only through social justice. For that the emancipation of the Dalits, by a restoration of self-respect, is very much needed. The vision of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has given us a comprehensive programme for achieving social justice in India. So, it is the duty of all progressive and democratic forces to assimilate the ideology and vision of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the establishment of genuine social justice.

Keywords: *Social justice, marginalized, depressed, social democracy, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, dignity, emancipation, human personality.*



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In the span of about four decades Ambedkar went through various phases. 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 organised 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'. In the last phase he renounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism. He subordinated his movement for social emancipation to religious reform movements.

One of the reasons why India faces many problems like illiteracy, corruption, unemployment, poverty, dogmatism and intercommunity conflicts, is that Indian Government has failed to distribute wealth and the burden of responsibility among the citizens on the basis of social justice. Secondly, citizens are not made aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities, nor have they internalized social values like liberty, equality and fraternity. Dr. Ambedkar has contributed to the first task through his role in drafting the Indian constitution. He contributed to the second task by presenting and propagating his social philosophy.

The need for making citizens aware of their duties, rights and responsibilities was felt by many social thinkers and reformers to greater or less extent. In ancient times, the thinkers like Charvaka, Mahavir, the Buddha, Kabir and Nanak made attempts to teach constructive social values to Indians and promote social unity and religious tolerance. In modern times, social and religious reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Jotiba Phule, Agarkar, V.R.Shinde, Shahu Maharaja and many others made similar attempts. Though Dr. B.R. Ambedkar can be said to belong to the same tradition of social thinkers and reformers, his contributions are different from most of others in an important way. Unlike many others, Dr. Ambedkar vehemently and directly attacked Hindu social philosophy, which formed the basis of traditional Indian society and religion and emphasized the need to form a new society on the foundation of social justice so as to ensure the amelioration of the downtrodden and backward classes. He was sure that a just social order would go a long way in making the citizens aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities and promoting the spirit of nationalism and patriotism among the people. Thus, Dr. Ambedkar's critique of Indian society and his quest for national and social integration, as also his endeavour to solve social problems like inequality, and discrimination against the downtrodden and backward classes were governed by a distinctive concept of social justice. Hence we need to draw on Dr. Ambedkar's social philosophy in our efforts to tackle the social problems India is facing.

Dr. Ambedkar's Social Justice:

We can talk about social justice from different perspectives, like political, social, economic, and religious. Therefore it is very difficult to give a single definition of social justice. According to Prof. D.R. Jatava defined of social justice "Social justice is that sort of justice which prescribes certain ideals closely related to human society; it sustains the existence and continuity of the individuals, family, society and the nation; its implementation safeguards the interests of the weaker sections of society; this removes all the serious unjust

imbalances found between man and man so that the lives of all the citizens become improved and emancipated. As a result, every man, according to his own potentiality and merit, may avail of the opportunities for acquiring social goal of his own liking and outlook”¹.

Social justice as a guiding and evaluative principle is always dynamic because it takes stock of the changing situation and suggests the abolition or modification of unjust custom, tradition and social structures to promote the welfare of the people and the preservation of the rights of the rights of the poor and weaker sections of society.

Social justice being multifaceted deals with various aspects of human life and society, focusing on the preservation of the rights of the handicapped, marginalized, and depressed people. It deals with the people who are intentionally made victims of exploitation, injustice and unsociability, e.g., bonded labourers and unpaid scavengers.² Social justice also critiques the laws, traditions, dogmas, customs, manners and usages that are used to perpetrate injustice.³

There are basically two considerations behind the concept of social justice; namely, social justice as governed by a divine element and social justice as governed by an individual who has purity of mind i.e. morality. So far as the first consideration is concerned, it was advocated during the early Vedic period where a certain conception of God and in terms of the karma theory. So far as second consideration is concerned it was advocated by Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism. Instead of giving importance to the divine element, they gave primacy to man and his righteous acton.

Dr.Ambedkar accepted that there are moral and legal considerations behind the concept of social justice. He also accepted justice as a guiding and evaluative principle. His concept of social justice was based on human values such as liberty, equality and fraternity⁴.He agreed with the explanation of Prof. Bergbon, “Justice has always evoked ideas of equality. Rules and regulations, right and righteousness are concerned with equality in value. If all men are equal, all men are of the same essence and the common essence entitles them to the same fundamental rights and to equal liberty.”⁵

He believed that if these values are cultivated by individuals then there will be neither caste barriers dividing them, nor any obstacles created by caste preventing the individual from a suitable career. Each individual will have sympathy and respect for others. This is what Dr. Ambedkar called social democracy. According to him, social democracy is a way of life, which accepts liberty, equality and fraternity⁶. These three are not separate but

together form a trinity. Dr. Ambedkar said, “These three form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy.”⁷

According to Dr. Ambedkar, liberty shapes the human finds expression in his action. Through liberty the hidden talents of the individual are expressed. It enables man to make his destiny. Equality binds men together through reciprocities, co-operation and social sympathy. Fraternity creates an atmosphere that is conducive to the enjoyment of liberty and equality. According to Dr. Ambedkar, “Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians, all Indians being one people. It is the principle, which gives unity and solidarity to social life.”⁸

Prof. Jatava termed Dr. Ambedkar’s concept of social justice as a mode of life, giving every man his right place in society. “Its precepts may be: to live honorably, to respect all, to injure no one, and to give every man his due without any artificial discrimination in mind and unnatural classification in society. The other precepts of social justice are the supremacy of constitutional rule, equality before the law, safeguarding fundamental rights, performance of duties, adherence to social and legal obligations, and finally, a staunch faith in the values of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and dignity of human personality”⁹.

Thus, according to Dr. Ambedkar the concept of justice does not merely mean the distribution of social wealth, but basically a mode of life based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

In short, the essence of Dr. Ambedkar’s concept of social justice is the unity and equality of all human beings, independently of considerations of class, caste, gender and caste, with respect to respect, rights, benevolence, mutual love, sympathy, tolerance and charity towards fellow beings, the dignity of all citizens, the abolition of caste-distinction, education and property for all, good will and gentleness.¹⁰

Dr. Ambedkar insisted on social justice because it includes all kinds of justice, namely, legal, economic, political, divine, religious, natural, distributive, administrative as also welfare of children and women.¹¹ With this elaboration of Dr. Ambedkar’s concept of social justice, we will see how he has used it as an evaluative principle.

Dr. Ambedkar’s Critique of the Hindu social order:

While critically evaluating the social order, Dr. Ambedkar’s attempt was twofold. On the one hand he wanted to show how this social order was purposefully formed to protect the rights and powers of the Brahmins and on the other hand he wanted to refute the arguments which were made in its support. Dr. Ambedkar showed that both Hindu philosophy and social

order were contrary to human values and rights- that they were specifically made for the welfare of Brahmin community.

Dr. Ambedkar on Philosophy of Hindu Religion:

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 is purposely formed on a certain occasion in history. This religion has its origin in the thought of a great historical personality. 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.¹² According to Dr. Ambedkar, all these characteristics of positive religion are applicable to Hinduism and therefore Hindu religion is a positive religion. 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.¹³

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the Hindu social order is based on Hindu religion. Hindu religion, as also the Hindu social order, is purposely formed. Dr. Ambedkar elaborated this point by using the concept of social justice and utility criteria to Hindu religion. With these criteria Dr. Ambedkar critically evaluated the philosophy the philosophy of Hindu religion.

Dr. Ambedkar used the concept of justice in a wider sense. According to him it includes moral concepts like liberty, equality and fraternity. He showed that Hindu religion does not accept equality.¹⁴ Although Manu, according to him, is not the progenitor of the caste system, he is responsible for upholding the principle of gradation and rank. Manu defended the graded form of social structure. Dr. Ambedkar wrote, "In the scheme of Manu, the Brahman is placed at the first in rank, below him Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra and below Shudra is the untouchable. This system of rank and gradation is simply another way of enunciating the principle of inequality. So it may be truly said that Hinduism does not recognize equality. This inequality is a permanent social relationship among the classes to be observed, to be enforced at all times in all places and for all purposes. In every phase of life Manu has introduced and made inequality, the vital force of life"¹⁵ Ashramvyavastha and slavery through Varna and Jati are some of the examples of inequality that we find in the Hindu social order.¹⁶ While forming the rules, Manu took enough precaution not to spoil the

principle of inequality. According to Dr. Ambedkar, social and religious inequalities are the essential nature of Hindu religion, which is reflected in the Hindu social order.

Dr. Ambedkar showed that Hindu religion does not believe in the principle of liberty. Liberty is associated with social equality, economic security and availability of knowledge. Hinduism does not promote social equality. Similarly it denies freedom of vocation as an individual's work is already predetermined and fixed. He has no right to choose the occupation of his liking. Hinduism does not allow Shudras to accumulate wealth. Thus in Hinduism, there is no choice of vocation, economic independence or economic security.¹⁷

Dr. Ambedkar also showed that Hindu religion does not encourage development of the feeling of brotherhood because there are water-tight compartments in this graded social order. He made this point more clear by pointing out that there are 3000 castes and sub-castes due to which social life is fragmented. Similarly, Hindu religion does not give permission to inter-caste and exogamous marriages. Hence there is a lack of fraternity among the Hindus.¹⁸

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the graded social order which is advocated by Hindu philosophy is practically useless. It does not have utility value. Dr. Ambedkar tried to find out the reasons behind non-cultivation of liberty, equality and fraternity by Hindu philosophy. He argued that Hindu religion is a worshipper of a superman i.e. Brahmana. It is a Brahmana centered religion. All rules and codes of conduct are formed to please the Brahmana caste. This religion and the Hindu social order, which is based on this religion, do not allow the individual belonging to castes other than the Brahmana to develop his qualities and skills. Besides that this society does not create an atmosphere where an individual can develop himself.¹⁹

Against the Caste System:

Dr. Ambedkar started his critical evaluation of the caste system by elaborating its origin and genesis. According to him endogamy is an essential trait of the caste system. Rather the rule of endogamy is responsible for the caste system.²⁰ He pointed out that since Manu, marriage rules became more rigid. Manu codified these rules and treated them as religious sanctions. Inter-caste marriage was considered, as a sin against the divine will. Stringent penalties were imposed on those who broke these codes. A person who broke the rules was excommunicated from the main caste. These excommunicated people were forced to form their own independent group. The rule of endogamy was also functioning within these groups.

Here what Dr. Ambedkar wanted to show that the caste system originated in the selfish intention of the Brahmins and became more rigid through the support of religious texts like Manusmṛiti. He further wanted to show that the Hindu social order was not informed by the feeling of fraternity as it originated in the selfish and self-centered attitude of the Brahmins.

Dr. Ambedkar made strong arguments against the caste system. The caste system has been enmeshed with the structure and constitutive elements of the Hindu society. It created hierarchical social system. It divided the society into four castes. These castes were arranged in a hierarchical way. Social, religious and economic status of the individual in this system was determined on the basis of the caste in which he was born and an individual, though capable, did not have any right to change his status. Besides, the relations among the members of the society were fixed and determined. So apparently the caste system presented a systematic and well organized social design. According to him, the caste system did not allow positive human values to play any role. Consequently, there was no mobility, no progress, no unity and integration in Indian society. While critically evaluating the caste system, Dr. Ambedkar not only argued against the structure of Hindu society but also against the principle on which the caste system was built.²¹

Many times while talking about the importance and necessity of the caste system, it is argued that the system is based on the principle of division of Labour. Dr. Ambedkar did not agree with this. According to him it is in fact based on a division of labourers because it does not allow the individual to change the occupation, traditionally assigned to him. So an individual had to do the same occupation, which his father was doing. Dr. Ambedkar further pointed out that this principle did not recognize the natural qualities and skills of the individual as it is based solely on the caste in which the individual was born. In this situation an individual is bound to an occupation.

Dr. Ambedkar critically examined this principle and found that it is unjust for various reasons. Firstly, this division of labour forces the individual to an occupation which he may not find congenial. It also denies him the opportunity to develop his qualities and skills, doing him an injustice. Thirdly, it is also unjust to predetermine the job of the individual prior to his birth. Fourthly, when an individual is forced to do the work which he dislikes, it adversely affects the efficiency of the individual as well as that of the society.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the caste system created several obstacles in the development of the Hindu society. While elaborating this point further, Dr. Ambedkar said

that in a rapidly changing economy an individual should have the freedom to choose the job of this liking. Otherwise he will be unable to adjust with the changing situation. However, according to Dr. Ambedkar, the caste system never gives the individual freedom to choose his job. Because of that the individual is not mentally ready to adapt to the changing situation. However, according to Dr. Ambedkar, the caste system never gives the individual freedom to choose his job. Because of that the individual is not mentally ready to adapt to the changing situation.. this rigidity may make it hard for him earn his livelihood. In t his way, by not giving freedom to the individual to choose his occupation, the caste system has created obstacles in the development of the individual as well as the larger society.

Dr. Ambedkar argued that the caste system has created problems for the unity and integrity of India. Due to the ban on inter-caste marriage and co-dining people do not have an opportunity to come together and exchange their thoughts. Besides, there is diversity is not conducive to the feeling of oneness. Consequently there is no unity and integrity among them. According to Dr. Ambedkar, it is because of the lack of social cohesion that country has been so vulnerable to external aggression.

According to Dr. Ambedkar division and disintegration are the characteristics of the caste system and they create social unrest. He said that India is not only an aggregation of various castes; it is also a collection of the groups of selfish and self-interested people. Their memories of enmity are always fresh. So they could not forgive each other and this feeling does not allow them to come together.

Dr. Ambedkar further pointed out that the caste system made the Hindu religion feeble. In ancient times the Hindu religion was a missionary religion but the caste system deprived the Hindu religion of this characteristic, because it left no place to the individual who had converted himself to Hinduism. The caste system is unable to create social space for such people. Besides there is no provision in Hinduism for the Hindu individual who has embraced another religion and now wishes to come back to the Hindu fold. This makes the Hindu religion feeble.

Dr. Ambedkar is against those who claim that there is unity in diversity in Hindu society, because according to him unity and social solidarity are not created out of mere similarity in customs, thoughts and physical proximity; they are created out of the feeling of brotherhood and friendship.

Dr. Ambedkar traced the problems of widow marriage, child marriage and the custom of sati to the caste system. According to him, the origin of the vulgar theory of 'surplus man and surplus woman' is responsible for these practices and customs.

Dr. Ambedkar also critically evaluated the Varna vyavastha as it divided society into four varnas, Certain duties were prescribed to each varna and it was obligatory to be pure and capable of learning, so they were ascribed the task of studying the Vedas and giving education to the capable students belonging to the first here varnas. The Kshatriya was supposed to be active, enthusiastic and courageous. So the job of studying the Vedas and giving education to them. The Vaishya were ascribed the work of cultivating land, as also trade and commerce. The Shudras were supposed to be dull and hence they were denied access to education. They were ascribed the task serving the upper varnas.

It was believed that this social order was divinely ordained and each individual took birth in a particular Varna according to his past karmas. It was also considered as infallible, and sacred. Thus the concept of social justice expressed by the Varna vyavastha was inherent in the classification of varnas. It was believed that if every individual follows the duties assigned to him, then the organization and regulation of society would be harmonious and just.²²

Dr. Ambedkar did not agree with the Varna vyavastha. For it did not take care of the common man. It served the interests only of in a particular class i.e. Brahmans. As Prof. Jatava has said, the Varna system for Dr. Ambedkar does not recognize the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The Varna system pampers social inequality and advocates a deliberate debasement of human personality. It contains no economic security to those who are below the rank of Brahmans. It has established the hierarchical character in Hindu social order. It believes in an official doctrine of 'social inequality'. That is why Dr. Ambedkar rejected the entire philosophy of varnashrama dharma. It opposes all that which constitutes the essence of social justice'.²³

The Vedic principle of justice insisted that every individual has to perform the duties of varnashrama-dharma according to his caste. This idea was supported by the Hindu shastras. This view is not tenable because its distribution of the duties to each Varna is based on social inequality. It has given the highest and sacred status only to Brahmans and the rest of the people were considered inferior to them. Extensive rights were given to the former so that they could control and suppress the demands of other people. 'Every thing religion, morality, testimony, law, state etc. - was interpreted only in the interest of the Brahmans'.²⁴

According to him untouchability is the mentality of higher-caste people towards the lower-caste people. So untouchability is not intrinsic to community. It is imposed by the individuals who belong to the upper castes and think that their caste is higher. Such a mindset is created through religious, social and cultural norms and is further cultivated by the process of socialization and Sanskritization.²⁵

Untouchability is essentially an outcome of the Hindu religion. Hinduism has generated this mentality through the caste system. The caste system is based on gradation. It assigns social status to the individual on the basis of his birth in a particular caste, which is supposedly determined by the actions that he performed in his previous life. The Hindu religion considers Brahmins to be superior and higher than the other castes. An individual who performed good action in his previous life would be born in a Brahmin family. It is according to such religious beliefs, that an individual thinks himself as either superior or inferior to others. Due to this mentality, an individual; creates barriers around himself and lives within them. He neither comes out of this confined space nor does he allow others to enter it. Consequently the gap between touchables and untouchables becomes wider and wider.

Dr. Ambedkar gave another reason for such a mentality. That reason is graded inequality. In the graded social system, the first in the grade thinks himself as superior to the next in the grade. He thinks that the next grade is inferior. Dr. Ambedkar categorized these grades as highest, higher and high, low and lower. The individuals who belong to the 'low' grade want to but cannot protest against the highest. In order to protest successfully they would have to take the help of individuals who belong to the lower grade. But to seek their help would mean treating them on an equal footing and they are not ready to grant them equality because they think that the individuals who belong to lower grade should remain where they are. Due to such a mentality it is difficult according to Dr. Ambedkar, to eradicate untouchability.

In some cases, especially regard to Shudra castes, untouchability is associated with the concept of purity and impurity. Touchables think themselves as pure and not only avoid the touch of untouchables but also avoid the shadow of the untouchables preserve their purity.

Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that the codes of conduct were made by the Touchables. Untouchables could not make any argument against the touchable. For them there is no equal

right, no justice and no liberty. Because the social order of the village was hereditary so Touchables remained Touchables and untouchables remained untouchables permanently.

Dr. Ambedkar showed that numerous unfair restrictions and prohibitions were imposed on untouchables. Although caste Hindus were aware of this injustice, they turned a blind eye to it. Even if some of them wished to interfere, they could not because Hindu religion did not allow them to do that.²⁶

Dr. Ambedkar considered untouchability as a striking example of the lack social justice in the Hindu social order. Thus Dr. Ambedkar used the concept of social justice to critically evaluate the Hindu social order. He also used it to formulate the scheme of an ideal society where an individual will have complete freedom to bloom and society will also provide opportunities to the individual for his development. Such a society will be based on three principles; namely, liberty, equality and fraternity. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to take a closer look at Dr. Ambedkar`s concept of an ideal society.

Social Justice as the basis of Ideal Society:

The ideal society that Dr. Ambedkar wanted to actualize is based on the following principles:

- ❖ The individual is an end in himself. The aim and object of society is the growth of the individual and the development of his personality. Society is not above the individual and if the individual has to subordinate himself to society, it is because such subordination is necessary for this betterment.
- ❖ The terms of associated life between members of the society must be founded on liberty, equality and fraternity.
- ❖ The society should be based on a rational religion.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, an individual cannot be treated as a means but should be treated as an end. This is because by nature every individual is free. He has the capacity to acquire knowledge. Besides, he has spiritual purity. Hence society should provide equal opportunity to each and every individual and should create the space for his development. Society should not use the talents of the individual needed to serve parochial interests.

Dr. Ambedkar held that the Hindu social order treated the individuals belonging to lower caste as a means to promote the interests of the higher caste. Consequently the individuals belonging to the lower castes could not get any opportunity to develop themselves. All forms and rules were made to suit the upper castes. Thus the Hind social order did a grave injustice to the lower caste people.²⁷

Dr. Ambedkar did not want the ideal society so to fall into the same trap. He said that an ideal society should not treat the individual as a means but an end. Society should take care of every human being by giving him liberty, equality and justice.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, liberty, equality and justice entailed social democracy. He further said that democracy does not mean only a form of government; it is a way of living together in peace. Democracy means reverence, respect and love for each other. The commitment to liberty, equality and freedom encourages us to adopt this way of life. Hence according to Dr. Ambedkar these principles presuppose social democracy.²⁸

Liberty-according to Dr. Ambedkar there are two kinds of liberty; namely, civil liberty and political liberty. Civil liberty is also of three kinds; namely, (i) Liberty of movement, (ii) liberty of speech, (iii) liberty of action. All these kinds of liberty are necessary for the intellectual, spiritual, moral and social development of society. Dr. Ambedkar believed that an individual should be free to act, speak and think according to his will. It must be noted that his concept of freedom was associated with rational religion and hence with reason.

Political freedom guarantees individual's participation in government and also in the legislation and administration. Dr. Ambedkar considered this kind of freedom to be important because as a responsible member of society, every individual has to keep a watch on the activities and decisions of the government.

Equality-when Dr. Ambedkar talked about equality he did not mean that all individuals are equal with respect to intelligence or mental and physical development. He was aware of the fact that heredity, social and cultural environment, opportunities for education and the individual's independent efforts play an important role in the formation of his personality. Different individuals moulded by different circumstances cannot be equal, but that does not mean we should treat them in an unequal manner. According to Dr. Ambedkar, we should transcend all these differences and put all individuals on an equal footing.

Fraternity-Dr. Ambedkar equated fraternity with the feeling of love, reverence and respect towards our fellow men. This feeling gives rise to the sense of one blood and one body. That means every individual thinks that all the members of the society share the same blood. This sentiment fosters social unity and integration

According to Dr. Ambedkar, society should be based on a rational religion. Although he criticized the Hindu religion as a basis of the Hindu social order, he accepted that religion is necessary for the formation and development of the society. However, the principles of

such a religion according to him should be consonant with the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus Dr. Ambedkar was against the Hindu religion but not against the concept of religion. According to him, we should have a rational religion based on principles. Such a religion should affirm the importance of social democracy. Only if society is based on such a religion, will the individual have an opportunity to develop his qualities and skills, as also an opportunity to change his social, economic and religious status. Everyone will have this freedom because all individuals will be treated in a spirit of equality. The feeling that everyone is equal, would give rise to will be unity and integration among the members of such a society.²⁹

Here Dr. Ambedkar made a distinction between rules and principles. Rules always talk about how to behave while principles talk about why we should behave in a particular way human behavior determined by rules is mechanical and does not presuppose awareness of responsibility on the part of the individual but behavior based on principles is accompanied by a sense of responsibility. Therefore the latter kind of behavior may be right or wrong, but it is guided by reason

According to Dr. Ambedkar the Hindu religion of rules. It is an aggregation of social, political and religious rules. It consists of commands and prohibitions. So the Hindus accustomed to these rules have to change themselves to become more and more rational.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, Gautama Buddha's Dhamma is a rational religion. He elaborated this point by making a distinction between religion accepts the supreme authority of God. It holds that a person who wants to free himself from suffering must surrender himself to God. Instead of giving importance to reason and experience, religion gives importance to the sacred texts and accepts the authority of the Vedas.

On the contrary Gautama Buddha, the founder of dhamma, did not claim any divine power, nor did he give importance to any sacred text. Instead, he gave importance to experience and reason. He frequently advised his disciples not to blindly accept any precept without testing it with the aid of experience and reason. He further said that in order to solve one's problems it is not necessary to surrender oneself to an external authority. A person can independently solve his problems. In short dhamma means good conduct based on reason.

Contribution to Modern Indian Social Philosophy:

Dr. Ambedkar was one of the importance political and social thinkers of modern India. He was well-versed in diverse subjects like anthropology, sociology, economics, philosophy, religion, law, history and politics. As he was born in a Dalit family, he also had a

bitter experience of injustice and inequality. His knowledge of diverse subjects and his experience as a Dalit made him think over social problems in a distinctive way. He did not consider political and economic reforms to be necessary preconditions for reformation of the society, nor did he believe that political independence would invariably lead to social reform. He pointed out that when the Peshwas were ruling over Maharashtra, political power was in the hands of Indians, and yet the only desirable form of power for how can one explain in economic terms why people renounce their home wealth for mental peace.³⁰

According to Dr. Ambedkar, before initiating political and economic reform it is necessary to make people capable of enjoying the benefits of such reforms. This cannot be achieved only by abolishing immoral customs like widow marriage, child marriage and the custom of sati. What it requires is a fundamental transformation of society as a whole. For the reform of family will bring about change only in the higher castes. The lower castes will gain nothing from such a reform. Therefore he argued that if we want to make each individual capable of enjoying the fruits of political and economic reforms it is necessary to reform the entire society.

Dr. Ambedkar had a definite perspective behind advocating the need for reforming society as a whole. According to him, the problems such as widow marriage, child marriage and custom of sati are major social evils as they are inimical to fundamental human rights and are also responsible for making Indian society inactive and inefficient. Hence Dr. Ambedkar advocated the importance of social justice to establish a casteless society for the full development of the individual, society and the country as a whole.

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