

SOCIAL EQUALITY AND DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF LIFE: DR B R AMBEDKAR

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Abstract

*Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it
social democracy. What does social democracy mean?
It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity
as the principles of life.*

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar

Social equality is a concept seldom fully achieved, whereby all members of a society have completely equal treatment, opportunity and access to resources. There would be few separating strata, such as differentiations between genders, races, religious groups, or income that give some people more opportunities than others. This is different than socialism, where everyone has approximately the same amount of resources. Instead, true social equality means that no matter what society members have or who they are, they are treated equally and have equal opportunities. The idea of social equality is often intimately tied to concepts of egalitarianism in both of its forms. This concept either represents the sense, from a political standpoint, that all people deserve equal rights and treatment, or it is a movement that proposes a society should specifically direct its resources toward promoting equality of wealth. The latter stance is more of a socialistic approach, and the former is something adopted by many countries. It's argued that the two definitions are related, because in so many societies, wealth confers additional power, and without addressing income inequities, there can be no true social equality. Social equality means that all the citizens are entitled to enjoy equal status in society and no one is entitled to special privileges. There should not be any distinction of caste and creed, colour and race, groups and classes, clans and tribes All should have an equal opportunity to develop his personality. All citizens In India enjoy social equality.

Key Words: *Social Philosophy, Democracy, Untouchables.*



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Introduction

Social equality is a state of affairs in which all people within a specific society or isolated group have the same status in certain respects, often including civil rights, freedom of speech, property rights, and equal access to social goods and services. Social equality would then mean that freedom should be equally distributed. The problem of defining social equality involves the specification of the goods that should be equally distributed and the units to which those goods are distributed. Social equality in a society is the social state of affairs whereby all the people in the society have equal rights under the law, including right to vote, physical security, freedom of speech and assembly, and the right to own property and to protect it. In addition to that, social equality also includes concepts of economic equity, that is equal access to education, health care, social security's, public infrastructure (e.g., roads), and starting and running a business / organization. It also includes equal opportunities for employment, equal access to rent apartments, etc. In order for a society to consider itself a bastion of social equality, it will mean that there are no legally enforced social class / caste boundaries and there is no unfair discrimination motivated by a person's ethnic identity. It also means that gender, age, sexual orientation, origin, caste or class, income or property, language, religion, convictions, opinions, health or disability do not result in unequal treatment under the law and will not reduce opportunities based on any of those criteria.

Social Democracy as a Way of Life

The ideas of Ambedkar can bring social unity in the country to build our nationhood on principles of equality. Therefore it is time to take the great ideas of our Constitution to our schools, colleges and all educational institutions, public places and villages for annihilation of caste and for building modern India on principles of social democracy. Ambedkar and Constitution of India should be widely read and discussed among all, especially youth, who are the future of our nation. Along with enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, there should be programme for social change to change the caste, communal and patriarchal based mindset of the people. The builders of modern India have put much emphasis on human liberty, brotherhood and dignity without which a democratic society is not possible.

Ambedkar has argued for social democracy as a way of life in family and social life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as its basic principles. He said democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen. Political democracy cannot last without social democracy. He also said

fraternity is the other name of democracy, a sense of common brotherhood which is equally important to build a nation like ours with so much of diversity and social hierarchy based on caste. Ambedkar was more engaged in building social movements to bring the socially oppressed sections into the nation building as equal citizens of modern India. While ensuring diversity and equal rights for all its citizens in the Constitution, the provisions of affirmative action have brought protection for the marginalized. Affirmative action, reparation, compensation and reservation have been in practice worldwide to protect and ensure the participation of the marginalized, indigenous communities, ethnic and religious minorities, and people getting discriminated based on their identities, race, caste, gender, ethnicity, indigenous and minority status. The principles of reservation have been in practice in India in the field of education, employment in Government and public sector and political governance. It has created scope of participation of the marginalised in national building and making our public place inclusive of all social groups of the country. It has contributed to promote brotherhood and social harmony among fellow citizens from diverse groups. The country with constitutional governance is mandated to bring equality in social and economic sphere but it is fact that all the successive Governments are more focused on economic growth and have paid very less attention to equality and social justice agenda. But without social equality only economic growth has resulted in concentration of wealth in the hands of a few families and they are also ruling over the majority of the poor and have-nots.

The socio-economic equality cannot be realized without active participation of the socially oppressed in decision making process in the Government. Political power is the key to any change and social progress but political power has been monopolized by a few in this country which needs to be democratized. Ours is a multi-party parliamentary democracy and our election system having universal adult franchise based on FPTP should be changed to proportionate electoral system to give equal representation to all by converting votes into seats. The use of money and muscle power in election and caste and communal vote bank politics should be done away with to ensure political participation of the poor and socially oppressed. Therefore while paying tribute to Ambedkar his political ideas should be respected in letter and spirit.

Social Philosophy: Dr B R Ambedkar

In short Ambedkar's social philosophy is based on democracy and social equality. He demanded liberation of the Hindu society from casteism. His philosophy was not only giving

assurance and peace of mind to the aggrieved; but it was making them ready for the Revolution. According to his social philosophy, every Hindu should have the liberty to associate in all legitimate ways with his co-religionist. The Hindu should build a common social code. If they had the freedom to marry among themselves, to dine together to work together in all spheres of life; they would become a united people and would have the ability to grow and to assimilate new members in their fold. Ambedkar worked relentlessly for the regeneration of humanity, for the well-being of mankind, for the transformation of man and society. He was a great social liberal. His vision was to produce a new social order based on the principles of justice, equality and fraternity. Thus, the idea of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity was the crux of his activities. He regarded justice is the foundation of moral order and justice is related with equality. Justice is to be secured through Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Equity signifies equality. In a nutshell, justice is simply another name for liberty, equality and fraternity so far as Ambedkar was concerned. In Ambedkar's philosophy, liberty and equality had a place, but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality and absolute equality left no room for liberty. To restrain absolute liberty, equality comes in picture. Equality recognizes equal basic rights of people. Positively, his social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words, liberty, equality and fraternity. In Ambedkar's view, Hinduism does not recognise liberty and fraternity. He stated that liberty must be accompanied by certain social conditions. These are social equality, economic security, knowledge, and education.

Social and Economic Equality: Vision

The social and economic equality vision of Ambedkar continues to inspire Indian nationalism and in building India on principles of democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity and dignity of human being. But it is a fact that the last 65 years of planned economic growth of the country has not been able to ensure socio-economic equality among its citizens. There are various forms of gaps in status and opportunity; discrimination and exploitation continue and the marginalized groups are being excluded from the process of development without a fair share with dignity. It is important to reorient ourselves with the ideas of Ambedkar and the principles of constitution while moving on the path of building a modern India. It is fact that our centuries old caste system has not only divided our human society but also deprived many of their basic human rights. There has been denial of access to education, land and

participation in governance to low caste people. The caste system in India and untouchability practices needs to be eradicated by the effort of Government and others.

Upliftment of downtrodden

Dr. Ambedkar played a significant role for the upliftment of downtrodden. He was considered as messiah for suppressed class as he belongs to untouchable's community. He experienced caste discrimination right from the childhood, that's why he raises the issues related to untouchability there are many leaders who raise their voice for the down trodden of India, but the most significant, eminent actions were taken by B R Ambedkar because he himself faced such problems, After noticing the evils of prevailing caste system and its impacts on suppressed human being prompted founding father of the Constitution of India to create an egalitarian society wherein justice, social, economic and political right prevails which includes equality of status and opportunity may be available to everyone irrespective of caste system. No doubt India has got political freedom and has political democracy, but it must be the concerned of everyone that real freedom cannot be cherished without attainment of social and economic democracy. It is unfortunate that the Indian society is sharply divided into various caste and sub caste which is obstacle due to rigidity segregation and division of the society based on rigid caste consideration. B R Ambedkar was impressed enough by the conduct and humanism of the great social reformers like Budhha, Kabir and Jyotiba Phule. He declared that Untouchables must leave the Hindu culture and accept another religion instead, and he himself embraced Buddhism.

Educational System through Social Philosophy

The educational system in Democratic India prepares individuals who can adapt to the changing societies, who are able to shoulder social responsibilities, who uphold the ideals and values of the democratic society. The mission of Dr.B R Ambedkar was social amelioration of his community. He tried to overcome this problem through legislative measures; social reforms and educational rights. Thus societal changes through the instrument of education were the important aspect of his social philosophy.

Conclusion

Dr. Ambedkar believed in peaceful methods of social change. He was supported to constitutional lines in the evolutionary process of social transformation. He thought the factors like law and order which are indispensable for social life. It also strives to sustain institutions that will make better 'social order'. He was opposed to the violent methods in

social change for it obstacle the tranquillity and creates chaos. He had no faith in anarchy methods. A welfare state of all cannot be developed on the grounds of terror, force and brutal methods.

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