

Women Empowerment in India: Dr. B.R.Ambedkar Perspective

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Abstract:

Babasaheb Ambedkar, often known as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was a key figure in the drafting of the Indian constitution. He was a unique combination of a devout scholar and a real freedom fighter who aspired to both liberate India from British rule and make it a nation where everyone is free. Throughout his life, he dedicated himself to promoting social justice and the welfare of the Dalits in society. Despite harsh criticism and accusations of challenging Hinduism, he accomplished amazing work in eliminating social problems such as the caste system. Ambedkar was also notable as an economist. He was also an advocate for modernisation and advancements in technology. He was, in truth, a complex individual. This essay sheds light on his contributions to the emancipation of women, gender equality, the right to vote in elections, and the requirement that all members of society complete a compulsory education program. It also raises awareness of numerous unfair practices, such as child marriage and the devdasi system. Its main goal is to talk about his contribution to the empowerment and uplift of oppressed women in Indian society.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Social, Economic, Political, Education, Gender Equality.

Introduction:

Increasing an individual's or a community's spiritual, political, social, or economic power is referred to as empowerment. In addition to being a vital goal in and of itself, women's autonomy and empowerment as well as improvements to their political, social, economic, and health conditions are essential for achieving sustainable human development. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's position as the head of the Constitution Drafting Committee has influenced India's socio-political landscape and left a lasting impression on the nation's social fabric since independence. Without him, India probably would have been a very different, unfair, and unequal place. He worked hard to create a constitutional democracy with a political order that is sensitive to the underprivileged, whether they are a legacy of the past or are the result of prevailing social relations. He also strove to establish new moral and social foundations for India. For an Indian of his era, Dr. Ambedkar held the highest degree of education, and his scholarship and erudition are well known. Everyone knows that the father of the Indian Constitution is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. However, after reading a few volumes about his life and ideas for India, it will become evident that he was a multifaceted genius in addition to being a serious scholar, effective teacher, capable lawyer, loving leader, dedicated writer, notable educationist, social rebel, and formidable debater. He was a fierce champion of human rights, a brilliant statesman, a liberal emancipator, an authoritative constitutionalist, a bold liberator of the oppressed masses, and an excellent administrator.

On April 14, 1891, Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was born at Mhow, which at the time was a military cantonment in Central Province, India. Her mother, Bhimabai Sakpal, was a homemaker, while her father, Ramji Sakpal Maloji, was a Subedar in the army. Babasaheb was a member of the Mahar caste, which was referred to as "untouchables." Nevertheless, in spite of numerous social protests, his father, an army officer, was able to provide their kids with a quality education. Ambedkar was regarded as "untouchable" at school alongside other Dalit children. They were permitted to drink water from a communal water container but were not permitted to sit with other youngsters who were supposedly from higher castes. After completing his early education in Bombay, Ambedkar, who was highly intelligent, travelled to the United States for graduate studies and research. He earned his doctoral and graduate degree from Columbia University in New York. He also completed his master's and PhD studies at the London School of Economics.

Objectives:

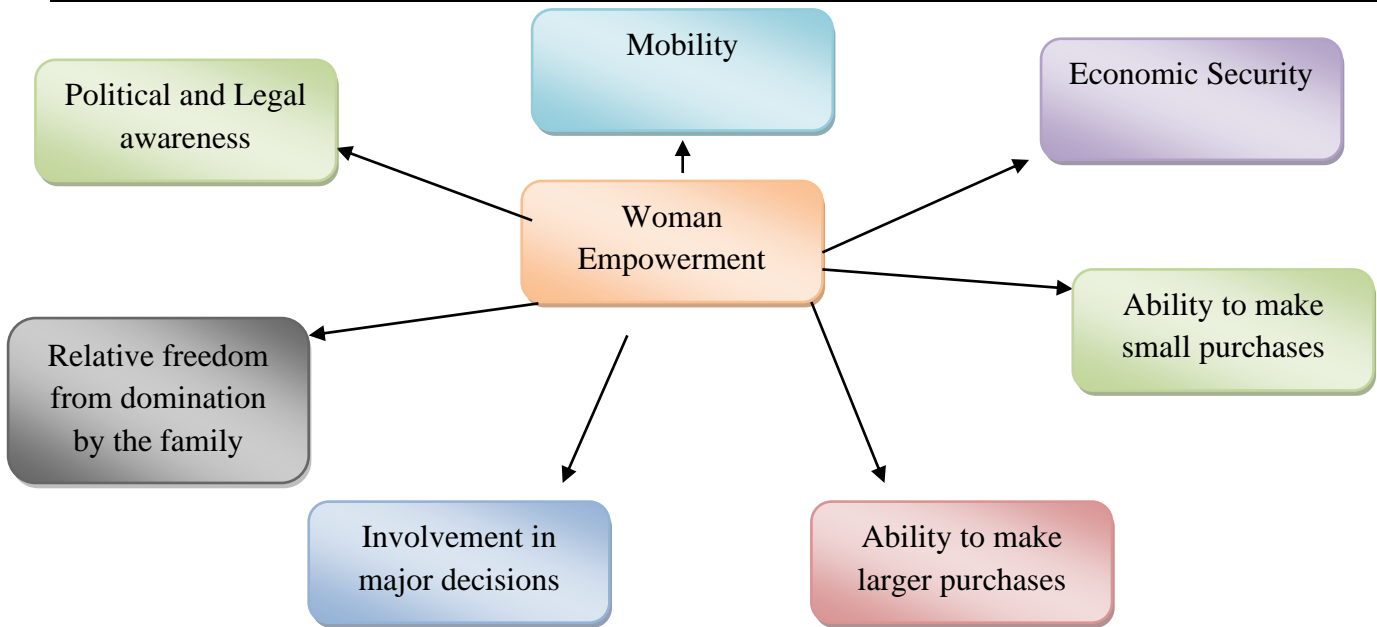
1. To Woman Empowerment in Ambedkar perspective.
2. To justice and woman rights in Ambedkar thoughts.

Methodology:

The methodology is the base on which the research is carried out. Without methodology, the research is mere imagination and speculation of a desired result. It is the research methodology which provides the blue print for the research work from first step to the last. Right from the statement of a problem to drawing the conclusion for the same, everything depends on the selection of an appropriate methodology. This study is an exploratory research based method. I am used secondary sources for this study. Were collected from books, journals, articles, reports, newspaper etc.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Aim for Indian Women's Empowerment:

Ambedkar's perspective on women's oppression, social democracy, caste, and Hindu social order and philosophy is important to contemporary Indian feminist thinking because of the ways that caste operates both at the systemic level and at the functioning of patriarchy, as well as the widening caste/class divide in feminist political discourse. Ambedkar proved to be a genius and was regarded as a great thinker, philosopher, revolutionary, jurist, prolific writer, social activist, and critic. He also strode like a colossus in the Indian sociopolitical scene until his death. However, because he was born an untouchable, his ideas were never given enough attention in the majority of Indian society. But given the social realities of today, it is necessary to closely examine his broad subject matter, his broad perspective, his in-depth analysis, and the humanity inherent in his recommendations for actionable steps and the rationalism of his viewpoint. Therefore, Ambedkar serves as a major source of inspiration for the Indian women's movement in developing a feminist political agenda that simultaneously addresses the issues of gender, class, and caste in the current sociopolitical framework, which still upholds conservative and reactionary values in many areas, most notably those related to gender relations. Ambedkar's works and speeches outline the ideals that India should embrace in order to modernise its political and social structures. Ambedkar believed that women were the victims of a rigid, caste-based, and oppressive social structure.



Justice and Women's Rights under Ambedkar

Other social reformers such as Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Mahatma Gandhi attempted to rid Hindu society of some antiquated customs and practices without challenging the hierarchical social structure. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's approach to women's rights is entirely different from theirs. However, Ambedkar expressed his own opinions about women's rights, and the Indian Constitution reflects those opinions. Creating a society founded on social justice was his aim. Ambedkar secured this goal by putting various clauses in the Indian constitution that grant women the same position as males. According to him, everyone should have equal opportunities in society and sexual prejudice should be eradicated. Because of Ambedkar's contribution, women are guaranteed social and economic fairness in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. The following are mentioned in the preamble: (i) social, economic, and political justice; (ii) freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; (iii) equality of status and opportunity; and (iv) fraternity, which ensures that every Indian citizen is treated with dignity and that the country remains united without regard to caste, creed, or colour. He had put up a great deal of effort not just for the advancement of untouchables but also for women. Dr. Ambedkar expressed disapproval towards conventional and conservative ideals. He expressed significant disapproval of the way Indian society treats women. He thought that women needed to have the same rights as men, including the right to education. He bemoaned the fact that women's property rights had been taken away by the Hindu faith.

In order to guarantee women's status, Dr. Ambedkar had also introduced an emancipatory bill (the Hindu code Bill) in Parliament. This bill sought to unify the Hindu code in accordance with progressive and modern thought, primarily proposing the elimination of various Hindu marriage systems and the establishment of monogamy as the only legal system, as well as the conferment of property and adoption rights upon women and the restitution of conjugal rights and judicial separation. His worries extended beyond Hindu women. He noticed that because they were shaped by their Indian surroundings, Muslim women were also not receiving what was rightfully theirs per Islamic Shariah.

Ambedkar also disagreed with the Muslim purdah system in India, arguing that it was not in line with the true purdah system of Islam. The individual had the belief that the purdah system causes a form of seclusion among Muslim women, negatively impacting their physical health and preventing them from

participating in social activities. The separation of men and women will undoubtedly have a negative impact on men's morals. In his view, a system that is worth-based cannot excuse permanently denying women the access to an education and the freedom to practise their religion.

The government of India has taken the following actions to empower women:

- **National Commission for Women**

Established in January 1992 by an Act of Parliament, the National Commission for Women was given the explicit responsibility to investigate and oversee all issues pertaining to the legal and constitutional protections afforded to women, assess the current legislation, recommend changes as needed, and protect women's rights and privileges. The Commission provides educational institutions and non-governmental organisations with financial support to run legal awareness programmes that educate women about their rights.

- **The Education of Females**

The most effective way to alter women's status in society is through education. A person's status within the family can be improved and inequality can be reduced through education. Schools, colleges, and even universities were set up specifically for women in the nation in an effort to support women's education at all levels and to lessen gender prejudice in the delivery and acquisition of education. In an effort to encourage more girls, particularly those from underprivileged BPL homes, to enrol in mainstream schools, the government has been offering a range of benefits, including free books, uniforms, boarding and lodging, clothing for hostilities, midday meals, scholarships, free bicycles, and more. Numerous universities, including Mother Teresa Women University, were founded to further women's studies, support women's higher education, and promote their social mobility.

- **Women's Involvement in Politics**

One of the fundamental tenets of democracy is the provision of political equality to all children, irrespective of their place of birth, gender, or race. Political equality encompasses not only the equal right to vote but, perhaps more crucially, the right to enter the established power structures. Therefore, women's political engagement entails not just exercising their right to vote but also sharing power, contributing to decision-making, and co-creating policies at all levels. Women's empowerment and the advancement of a gender-equal society depend on their active involvement in politics, which also serves to accelerate the process of national development.

Armamentary Provisions

The Indian Constitution has a number of clauses that guarantee men and women the same opportunities and rights. The most notable aspects are as follows:

- Article 14 ensures that the State will not withhold equality before the law and equal protection under the law;
- Article 15 forbids discrimination against any citizen based on their sex;
- Article 15(3) gives the State the authority to discriminate positively in favour of women and children;
- Article 16 offers equality of opportunity in matters of public employment; and
- Article 23 forbids forced labour and human trafficking.
- Article 39 (a) and (d) mandate that the State provide equal opportunities for employment and compensation for equal work;

- Article 42 requires the State to establish policies for maternity relief and just and humane working conditions;
- Article 51A (e) imposes a Fundamental Duty on all citizens to abstain from practices that denigrate women's dignity;
- Article 243D (3) stipulates that at least one-third of the seats to be filled by direct election in each Panchayat must be reserved for women, and that these seats will be distributed by rotation among the Panchayat's constituencies;
- Article 243T (3) stipulates that a minimum of thirty percent of all seats to be filled through direct election in each municipality must be set aside for women. These seats may be distributed by rotating among various constituencies within a municipality. Additionally,
- Article 243T (4) reserves the positions of Chairperson in Municipalities for women who are Sc, ST, women in the ways that a state legislature may stipulate by legislation;

Various legislative enactments have been designed to protect, safeguard, and promote the interests of women in accordance with the aforementioned constitutional principles. Numerous legal measures have been implemented to improve the working circumstances for women in the labour force.

The Current Context of Today

Most people lack formal education yet are literate. Education as a way of gaining knowledge and education was crucial to the social reforms. Stagnation in the social reform movement and the imposition of the supposed heavenly status of ancient women on modern women, which has an impact on women's advancement and growth. The Indian mentality has not accepted equality on par with males, shattering with the reforms and women's empowerment in the age of globalisation and modernization and driving women to regress in their progress. The only reason women are experiencing an increase in violent crimes, harassment in all forms, and criminality is political indifference that has failed to uphold societal norms. The obstacles to human progress are the education system, work prospects, large population, inflation, and lack of resources for aspiration. Adopting technology and living a modern lifestyle by itself does not equate to bettering individuals or society.

The social structures designed to enslave or subjugate women must be destroyed. It might be feasible if women from all social classes actively participate. Numerous eminent female activists are addressing issues related to poverty, health, and the environment. Social reformers received no support at all, not even from women. The women's reservation law is currently the most talked-about topic, and the truth is that most laywomen are unaware of it. The girl's education was simply intended for her marriage, which is a more absurd male viewpoint. Today's women are caught in a vicious cycle of lack of decision-making authority, male dominance, insecurity, and ignorance of their rights.

Nowadays, women's empowerment is a hot topic, but it mostly pertains to economic, political, and health issues. Only then will the problem of women's social empowerment be fully addressed and given the attention it deserves. Women's sense of self-worth, their freedom to choose, their access to opportunities and resources, their control over their lives both inside and outside the home, and their capacity to shape social change in order to establish a more equitable social and economic order both nationally and globally are the five pillars of women's empowerment. Dr. Ambedkar was adamant that improving women's welfare would lead to women's emancipation. Global initiatives aimed at uplifting women ought to be guided by Dr. Ambedkar's vision.

Conclusion

The evolution of society is an ongoing process. The correction of these imbalances will take several decades. Changes in attitudes and views will result from education for both men and women. Eliminating ingrained cultural values or changing customs that support discrimination are difficult tasks. Law can only be a tool for change, and it must be applied wisely. Low conviction rates stem from ineffective law enforcement, which strengthens the perception that the guilty can get away. It is imperative that the statute contain and strictly execute deterrent penalties. Urban regions have undoubtedly made a start. In addition to their jobs, working women are still primarily in charge of maintaining the home and raising the children. They are now more vulnerable to heart disease and other stress-related illnesses due to increased stress. Therefore, it's imperative to enhance the working women's support system.

To make it relevant for the great majority of women in this nation, the march towards the abolition of gender bias must continue. Now, there is more representation in the court, executive branch, and legislative. One of the few nations in the world with a female prime minister is India. Occasionally, women have served as chief ministers in a few of states. It is now typical to see a woman judge on both the Supreme Court and the High Courts. Today's huge multinational corporations have multiple departments headed by women who have overcome many obstacles. Women are now being commissioned as SSC Officers in the Army, marking another first. 1993 saw the ratification of the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, which marked a significant advancement in the cause of equitable access and greater involvement in the political power structure.

Currently being considered is the proposed Women's Reservation Bill, which would grant women a 33% reservation in the Lok Sabha and State Legislature. Women's empowerment in metropolises and urban areas cannot be used as a gauge of the nation's progress. In a nation where eighty percent of people live in rural areas, progress will continue to be a myth for women there unless their situation is also improved concurrently. It is impossible to improve women's status without providing them with options for independent employment and income. Women are primarily employed in labor-intensive, unskilled jobs in rural areas that need basic or traditional skills. Access to institutions for vocational training is limited.

The rights of rural women are completely unknown to them. For women living in rural regions to benefit from the various policies, a considerably larger and more concentrated effort will be needed. Only with the combined efforts of the State, non-governmental organisations, formal and informal education providers, the media, etc., can this be possible. The ultimate goal we should strive for is the empowerment of women to enable them to become equal partners with their male counterparts, whereby they share the responsibilities of the house and finances and exhibit mutual respect for one another. Gender equality is a fundamental human right that must be upheld without compromising the value of marriage and the family unit.

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