

Ambedkar's Vision of Women: Empowerment, Equality, and Social Justice

*Sudhamayee Kumar

Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Sonamukhi College

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*Corresponding Author

Email: [sudhamayeeekumar1\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:sudhamayeeekumar1[at]gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

As an advocate of human rights, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar fought for the dignity of women and the depressed. Being a social justice pioneer, he consistently worked to promote the empowerment of women. He believed that everyone should receive the same treatment regardless of caste, creed, gender, or religion. He began working for women's rights and their liberation as a result. His mission was to establish a just society. He became aware of the gender disparity in Indian society and spoke up for their inclusion in contemporary society. Dr. Ambedkar gave women the same status as men by including numerous provisions in the Indian Constitution to support and advance women's rights. This essay focuses on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideas and viewpoints on women's emancipation. The essay also examines Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's role as a thinker and social reformer in advancing the status of women in society. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a well-known social reformer and the creator of the Indian Constitution, had a forward-thinking viewpoint on social justice, equality, and the empowerment of women. In promoting women's rights and opposing the prevalent social and cultural conventions that supported gender inequity and discrimination, his thoughts and work were extremely influential. This subject explores Ambedkar's conception of women, emphasising his ideas of their political, social, and economic empowerment.

Empowerment is the process of enhancing a person's or a community's spiritual, political, social, or economic power. The political, social, economic, and health condition of women must be addressed in addition to being a very important means in and of themselves if sustainable human growth is to be achieved. Following independence, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's participation as the chairman of the Constitution-drafting committee had an impact on the social fabric of the country and contributed to the development of the socio-political system that exists in modern-day India. India would have likely been a very different country without him, one that was much more unequal and unjust. He put a lot of effort into creating a political system inside the constitutional democracy that cares for the impoverished, whether they are relics of the past or products of contemporary social relations. He made an effort to build India's moral and social foundation from scratch. Dr. Ambedkar had the greatest academic degree available to an Indian at the time, and his knowledge and scholarship have been widely praised. We all know that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is regarded as the founding father of the Indian Constitution. However, it would become clear after reading a few books about his contributions and perspective on India that he possessed a multifaceted intellect as he was also a serious thinker, effective teacher, competent lawyer, dedicated leader, committed writer, notable educationist, social rebel, and formidable debater. He was a fierce defender of the constitution, an effective manager, a liberal emancipator, a brilliant politician, a valiant liberator of the downtrodden masses, and a daring champion of human rights. On April 14, 1891, Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was born in Mhow, then in India's Central Province. His father Ramji Sakpal Maloji was a subedar in the military, while his mother Bhimabai Sakpal was a housekeeper. Babasaheb belonged to the Mahar lower caste, also referred to as the "untouchables," who suffered abuse. His father, an army officer, was able to set up a good education for his children despite several social obstacles, nevertheless. Ambedkar experienced distinct treatment since he was a "untouchable" when he went to school alongside other Dalit kids. They were allowed to use the community water supply, but they were not allowed to sit with other kids from the so-called upper caste. Ambedkar, who was academically gifted, finished his elementary education in Bombay before moving to the United States for graduate studies and research. He graduated from Columbia University in New York and received his PhD there. He studied at the London School of Economics, where he later pursued his master's and PhD degrees.

Empowerment means building and improving individuals' capacities to incorporate them into society at large. Education is the sole means by which a country can transition from oppression to democratic participation and involvement. It works well as a tool to empower people. Ambedkar made a distinction between two applications for knowledge: the first is obtaining it for the benefit of others, and the second is using it to further one's personal development. Ambedkar has also been against the British Educational System's professional education, which aims to shape workers into administrative positions. Ambedkar gave secular education for social liberation a lot of weight. The sole purpose of education is to further the cause of social, economic, and political uplift for the oppressed classes. Ambedkar's social and ethical philosophy made an effort to inform the depressed people of the importance of changing their old thought and behavior patterns in order to move toward freedom and unity. His educational philosophy's main objective was to develop the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and moral character in boys and girls from all religions,

regions, classes, and castes. Ambedkar listed these three things as objectives for those who make policy decisions: The first stage is to redefine education's goals and purposes, then education as a means of achieving genuine equality and education for women.

Dr. Ambedkar believed that education was a crucial weapon for emancipating women. They were forbidden from studying alongside people from lower castes. His speeches make it clear that he cared deeply about the advancement of women. Speaking on July 20, 1942, during Nagpur's Second All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference, he said,

...measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved. I shall tell you a few things which I think you should bear in mind. Learn to be clean; keep free from all vices. Give education to your children. Instil ambition in them. Inculcate on their minds that they are destined to be great. Remove from them all inferiority complexes. (Vijay, 2011, p.23)

This is one manner that Dr. Ambedkar underlined the significance of education for the growth of women and our country. Ambedkar advised them to educate their children because he had faith in their ability to achieve independence. He stresses the significance of having a self-help mindset and mentality for both men and women. He wants them to realize how crucial it is for them to properly raise their children. He simultaneously advised both of them to send their children to school. He considers education to be the most important factor in affecting how men, women, and children live. Ambedkar observes

...education is as necessary for females as it is for males. If you know how to read and write, there would be much progress. As you are, so your children will be mould their lives in virtuous way, for sons should be such as would make a mark in this world. (Vaishali, 2012, p.3)

He aimed to liberate women from poverty and economic dependence. In order to offer women economic independence and rights, Ambedkar pushed for their access to education, equality, and the right to property. He asked for men and women to attend classes together in order to educate women. He believed that education would empower women to think independently and promote their intellectual and mental development.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's viewpoint on women's rights is completely different from that of other social reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Mahatma Gandhi who attempted to eliminate some antiquated traditions and practices from Hindu society without questioning the social hierarchy. Ambedkar did, however, voice his own views on women's rights, and the Indian constitution reflects those views. A society that respected social justice was what he aimed to build. Ambedkar incorporated a number of clauses that give women the same standing as men in the Indian constitution in order to accomplish this goal. He held that society should be free of sexual prejudice and that everyone should have access to equal chances. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution guarantees women social and economic equality as a result of Ambedkar's contributions. The preamble of the constitution refers to the following: (i) social, economic, and political justice; (ii) freedom of speech; (iii) equality of status and opportunity; and (iv) fraternity, which guarantees the dignity of the individual and national cohesion to all Indian citizens without distinction on the basis of caste, creed, or sex. He had worked very hard for the untouchables as well as the growth of women. Dr. Ambedkar criticized the old and orthodox values. He was open in his criticism of how women were treated in Indian society. The right to an education was one of the rights he believed should be extended to women. He lamented the fact that Hinduism forbids women from being property owners.

To ensure women's status, Dr. Ambedkar also introduced an emancipatory bill (the Hindu code Bill) in Parliament. This bill sought to harmonize the Hindu code with progressive and modern thought by proposing, among other things, the conferral of property rights and adoption rights on women, the restoration of conjugal rights, and judicial separation. He wasn't just worried about Hindu ladies. He noticed that Muslim women were also not receiving the respect they were entitled to under Islamic law since they were impacted by their environment in India. He also questioned Muslim women's lack of access to divorce rights. He bemoaned the miserable situation faced by Indian Muslim women and said:

...no Muslim girl has the courage to repudiate her marriage, although it may be open to her on the ground that she was a child and that it was brought about by persons other than her parents. No Muslim wife will think it proper to have a clause entered into her marriage, contract reserving her right to divorce. In that even her fate is, 'once married always married' she cannot escape the marriage-tie however irksome it may be. While she cannot repudiate her marriage, the husband can always do it without having to show any cause. (Sashi, 1992, p.34)

Because he believed it to be incompatible with the true purdah system of Islam, Ambedkar even argued against the Indian Muslim purdah system. He believed that the purdah system caused Muslim women to live in a state of isolation, which had an adverse effect on their physical health and deprived them of a rich social life. The separation of men and women will surely have a negative impact on male morality. He contends that a merit-based society cannot legitimately support continuously denying women access to education and religious freedom.

Only a few articles in the Indian Constitution give women in Indian society the tools they need to rise to new levels of status and compete with men. Consider Article 14 Everyone is afforded the same level of legal standing and protection. All persons have equal access to political, economic, and social opportunities. Article 15 forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation. Article 15(3)

permits positive discrimination in favor of women. In accordance with Article 16, no citizen shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or gender in matters relating to employment or appointment to any post. Children under the age of 14 are not allowed to work in mines, factories, or any other hazardous jobs, according to Article 24. Article 39 and 39(d) make this clear. equal use of resources and payment for work of comparable quality. In accordance with article 41, the state is required to uphold each person's right to employment, education, and, in some cases, public assistance, all within its financial capacity. In Article 42, the state specifies maternity leave and fair working conditions. Article 44 of the constitution grants all Indian citizens access to a single Civil Code. Article 46 - People from disadvantaged groups must be protected from all forms of exploitation and social injustice, and the state must take special care to enhance their economic and educational interests. Article 47 - The state is required to raise the living conditions, public health, and other aspects of its citizens' lives. Article 51(A)(C) - Fundamental duties to reject actions that are degrading to the dignity of women. Articles 243D (3), 243T (3), and 243R (4) specify how Panchayati Raj System seats are distributed. Women and members of the underclass are given access to education. The Indian constitution's chairman, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, made an effort to fully protect the rights of women and people from marginalized groups. He considered the law to be an instrument for creating a just social order. He included the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity into the Indian Constitution. Special measures, such as Article 30(1), which gives linguistic or religious minorities the freedom to form and manage educational institutions of their choice, are made to ensure the depressed class's equal access to education. While providing assistance to educational institutions, Article 30(2) bans the state from discriminating against any educational institution because it is run by a linguistic or religious minority. Article 29 (2) of the Indian Constitution, which also provides that no citizen will be denied entry to any state-funded educational institution on the basis of their religion, race, caste, language, or any combination of these factors, outlines the protection of minorities' rights. According to Article 46, the state has a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of society from social injustice and all forms of exploitation, as well as to pursue their economic and educational interests with particular care.

Although most people can read and write, they lack formal education. Education and access to knowledge were essential to the social reforms. Modern women are granted the apparently divine status of ancient women, which affects how they develop and are exalted, while social improvements are stagnating. The Indian mentality has not recognized that women should have the same rights as men, which has caused women's advancement to be set back by the changes and freedoms brought about by modernization and globalization. Only because of government inaction, which has failed to uphold social doctrine, do more incidents of assault, crime, and humiliation against women occur. The school system, work opportunities, vast population, inflation, and a lack of funds to put out the effort are all obstacles to human progress. Technology use and adopting a modern style of life alone won't benefit an individual or a community. The social systems that are meant to devalue or oppress women must be destroyed. With the active participation of women from all social classes, it might be accomplished. The issues of poverty, the environment, and health are being addressed by a large number of prominent women activists. Nobody, not even women, supported social reformers. Even the women's reservation law, which is currently under review, is unknown to the average woman. The more ridiculous male perspective is that the girl's education was only meant to get her ready for marriage. A vicious circle of weakness, male dominance, misunderstanding of their rights, and insecurity holds women captive in today's culture. Nowadays, there is a lot of debate about women's emancipation, but it is really more of an economic, political, and health issue. If social empowerment for women is to become a fully realized phenomenon, it must be elevated and given top importance. The five pillars of women's empowerment are women's self-worth, their freedom to choose and make choices, their access to opportunities and resources, their right to control their own lives, both inside and outside the home, and their ability to affect social change to create a more equitable social and economic order, both locally and globally. Dr. Ambedkar was sure that women's empowerment could result from their welfare. The objectives of Dr. Ambedkar should direct global initiatives to empower women.

Ambedkar's view of Hindu or Muslim Indian social systems in certain respects raises the possibility that women were routinely denied their dues in society. He labored tirelessly to create a society built on fairness, equality, and fraternity while searching for a fix for their corrupt structures. Dr. Ambedkar's theories on women's rights and advancement are still relevant in the current world, not just in India, even though the goal of women's empowerment has not yet been achieved. Dr. Ambedkar's three-word plan to change society—"educate, agitate, and organize"—remains effective today. Ambedkar assisted the downtrodden people of the lower classes in realizing that they had rights that had been withheld from them for a long time. He thought that the best way to give the oppressed people a sense of consciousness, self-respect, and dignity was via education. He wanted the people to promote the values of freedom and equality among themselves, which could only be accomplished via education. They would then have the necessary cultural foundation for their progressive integration into society as a whole in a civilized nation as a result of this. Dr. Ambedkar served as a metaphor for moral rectitude and virtue. He viewed education as a means of removing ignorance and darkness by opening the portals of light and perception. He used his educational philosophy to spread awareness of the social decay among the lower strata in Hindu society, changing the social order for the betterment of all humanity. Through his educational institutions, he seeks to improve everyone's educational opportunities. He was, in fact, a "organic intellectual."

Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to education and his capacity for independent thought helped him establish himself as a well-known independent intellectual. He advocated his own educational idea and profoundly altered how the oppressed saw themselves. A statue recognizing his illustrious academic career is on display at the London School of Economics' entrance, with the words "Symbol of Knowledge" underneath it. It shows how he was commended for being a top student and teacher. Dr. Ambedkar's educational philosophy and thoughts about education are still relevant to our country's socioeconomic and political development even in the twenty-first century. "Whatever freedom the law grants you is of no use to you so long as you do not achieve social

liberty.” — B. R. Ambedkar, who served as the nation’s first minister of justice. Social justice, equality, and self-determination served as the cornerstones of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s notion of women. His campaigns to advance women’s rights left a lasting impression on Indian society. Ambedkar’s principles continue to inspire and guide initiatives aimed at advancing women’s empowerment and gender equality, acting as a continual reminder of the struggle for a more just and inclusive society.

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