



**Novel Insights**, *An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*

A Peer-Reviewed Quarterly Research Journal

ISSN: 3048-6572 (Online) 3049-1991 (Print)

Impact Factor: 4.25(IIFS), 8.2(IJIN)

Volume-II, Issue-II, November 2025, Page No. 123- 129

Published by Uttarsuri, Sribhumi, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://novelinsights.in/>

DOI: 10.69655/novelinsights.vol.2.issue.02W.047



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## **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and His Values on Social Justice**

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Received: 22.11.2025; Accepted: 21.11.2025; Available online: 30.11.2025

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### **Abstract**

B.R. Ambedkar was one of the rare personalities who not only tried to solve the problem of untouchables but was also adequately concerned with social justice for all. Dr. Ambedkar himself born on lowly family had bitter experiences in his life within the domain of caste system. His early life was full of experiences. But most of them were painful discouraging and sometimes even disgracing, barring some exceptions. However, the effect of some influences and impacts was long enduring on him. Ambedkar's life, ideals and were also a projection of various formative influences. In his social and political ideas, the discerning reader will discover a rich synthesis of various influences and impacts. A study of the formative influence is therefore helpful in understanding Ambedkar's ideas and activities. While, most individuals either adjust to situations, some succumb to them, others confront them and strike out new paths and lead the people on it and Ambedkar was one such leader out of a whole galaxy of leaders India has had in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ambedkar was a sociol-reformer-politician who was in full knowledge of the facts of social and political life in India. He knew how weak the caste-divided, Untouchability-ridden, Indian society. He was quite conscious of the role of caste in the society and in the politics of his times and was able to anticipate the dimensions in which it was to grow in the post-Independence politics of India. Ambedkar aspired to establish equal status in religion, social, economic and political matters for all, offering them an opportunity to rise in life. He thought that social environment was as much responsible for human sorrow as man himself was. Dr. Ambedkar made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus, the main objective of this present paper is to highlight B.R. Ambedkar with his values on social justice. And also, it attempts to focuses on Dr. Ambedkar's struggles and ideas on social justice.

**Keywords:** Values, Social, Justice

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### **Introduction:**

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1891 at the lowly caste family Mahar at Mhow Cantl in Madhya Pradesh. He was popularly known as Baba Saheb, was as Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who played a crucial role in shaping

the destiny of free India, and inspired the Dalit Buddhist Movement and campaigned against social discrimination against Untouchables, while also a votary of women's right and the messiah of the untouchables of Indian society.<sup>i</sup> Before independence in India, the conditions of depressed classes were almost hellish. His heart was excessively charged with pathos when he found inhuman, discriminatory behaviour being practiced between man and man in the then society. He resolved against the social evils, and to eradicate them from the orthodox, traditional society. And he was heated for his exceptional fearlessness and outspokenness.<sup>ii</sup>

Ambedkar start out as a political fighter and started struggles for movement in 1920. To provide the voice to the poor oppressed helpless people he started fierce propaganda against the Hindu social order launched are, 'Mook Nayak', Bahiskrit Bharat, 'Janata', 'Samata' was launched as the organ of the 'Samaj Samata Sangh' so on, thorough issues he put due stress on the gender equality and need for education and expose the problems of the depressed as well as women. Ambedkar was greatly influenced by the thoughts of Lord Buddha, Saint Kabir and Jyoti Ba Phule. This is why he made significant efforts to lead the society as the path of liberty, equality, fraternity. He made no any discrimination between son and daughter in Hindu family. Ambedkar was not opposed to Hindu society or Hindu religion; he rather thought that Hindu society should be recognized on the basis of two crucial principles of equality and castelessness society.

One man one value was the egalitarian message of Dr. Bhimrao Babasaheb Ramji Ambedkar, a revolutionary who challenged the social order where the contradiction of caste and class enjoyed a prominent role through centuries. Ambedkar battled to change the existing social order which stood upon caste and class and tried to plant the seed of social justice' by advocating various issues pertaining to plight of caste system and untouchability, human rights, labourers, women rights and above all the Indian politics. He arose out of inequalities and humiliation throughout his life and stood for the establishment of society based on the socio-economic and political justice as his whole life itself is a perennial source of saga of social justice. The idea of social justice is built upon the foundation of liberty, equality and fraternity' where every person residing is capable of getting equal opportunities. So, this paper basically deals with the principles of Ambedkar which are necessary to strengthen the arena of social justice.

### **Concept of social justice:**

The concept of social justice is closely related to the concept of socialism and revolutionary communism in the society, that all benefits and privileges should be shared among all members the society. If there is any constructed inequality towards any particular group of the people, the government should take affirmative action in eliminating such inequalities in the society and the government should be responsible to eradicate the inequalities. In simple way it is related to the idea of the positive liberalism and with the concept of welfare state for all. It stands for that kind of the state whose functions are not bounded to law and order but are extended to take care of the people who are not in a position to help and bring benefit to themselves. According to Ambedkar, his social justice is based on the moral values and self -respect of each person in the society. He believed that justice situates through social, political and economic justices that regulated by constitution of the nation.

### **Ambedkar's reflection on Hindu social system vis a vis untouchability:**

Ambedkar wanted to reorganise the society on equality and rationality, therefore opposed the caste based on social structure which he thought, was characterised by graded inequalities. Ambedkar criticism against the principle of Chaturvarnaya, as a basis of social organization. According to him, the Hindu Society, in common was composed of four classes namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Shudhras. According to him it is not only based on division of labour, but is also a division of labourer, into water-tight compartments...Chaturvarnaya presupposes classification of people into four definite categories. Ambedkar strongly objects to this. In this respect according to him, the ideal of Chaturvarnaya has a close affinity to the Platonic ideal of division of society into three classes i.e., Philosopher-King, Soldiers and Artisans. Therefore, he subjects both the same criticism. According to him, modern science has shown that lumping together of individuals into a few sharply marked off classes is a superficial view of man not worthy of serious consideration. In his opinion both Plato and the propounders of Chaturvarnaya fail to recognize the infinite diversities of the active tendencies and the uniqueness of which an individual is capable. Ambedkar emphasizes the fact that it is impossible accurately to classify people into four definite classes. That is why the original four classes have now become four thousand castes, he points out.<sup>iii</sup>

Ambedkar was a staunch believer that in order to make a society based on equality and fraternity, the caste system must abolish, so being the victim of such discrimination, he decided to give his life to fight battle against this system. Caste implies a system in which status and occupation are hereditary and descend from father to son. With the development of caste, all the requirements of just social order were lost. With the fixation of individuals into castes and sub-caste, their status and occupation were fixed by birth. The individual was not a free human to choose his course of action. Such system of regarding the status of individual by birth lead to disorganization of Hindu society.

The Shudras became the worst sufferers as their position was worse than slaves, they were denied basic access to water, wells, temple was out of reach and they were forced to live in dirty places in the outskirts of villages. Their touch shadow or mere voice was enough to pollute the caste Hindus. Ambedkar himself probed the caste system. His three tracts are annihilation of caste, who were Shudras? and the untouchables. His findings were as follows. Initially Varna's were based on worth but in the course of time worth was replaced to birth and the four Varna's were regarded as castes. The principle of graded inequality fixed the contact between castes.<sup>iv</sup>

There was according to Ambedkar a close relation between caste system and untouchability. It was therefore not possible to abolish the one without abolishing the other. There can be no severance between the two as untouchability is the extension of caste system. he opined that the two stand together and fall together. He therefore favoured abolition of caste system and reorganization of society on the basis on equality, liberty and fraternity only then social justice could be achieved.

After several movements and struggles of Ambedkar to abolish the evil of untouchability, laws were incorporated in the Indian Constitution to commemorate the great oppression faced by the untouchables. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolished untouchability and declared it as a punishable act. According to this, no one can restrict the Dalit's or Harijans from entering temples, streets, buses, etc. the constitution also provides

reservation to these class by virtue of article 15(4) and 29(2) read with article 341 of the Indian constitution. <sup>v</sup>

### **Ambedkar and state socialism:**

The theory of state socialism in India has developed by Dr. Ambedkar. He submitted a memorandum entitled as 'State and Minorities' in the constituent assembly on behalf of all India scheduled caste federation in the year 1946. In this memorandum he opined that any privilege or extra privilege arising out of any rank, birth, caste or sub-caste should be abolished in order to achieve social democracy in the nation. Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism is based on the following points;

- State ownership of agriculture and key industries to meet the demand of the poorer strata of the society.
- Management and maintenance of productive resources by the state.
- A just distribution of common produce among the different people of the society without any kind of distinction within caste or creed.
- He wanted that the state socialism to be established as the fundamental right within the Constitution, making it a permanent feature of the Indian State and independent of the fluctuating will of the legislature.

The aims and objectives of his state socialism are to remove the extreme inequalities and evil caste system from the society which has created the inequality within the people of the society. The concept of the state socialism is based on principles on justice for all the people instead of the merit and gradation.

To him, men are different from each other by virtue of their birth, mental ability, faculty, hereditary and social atmosphere but they should enjoy equal opportunities for their upliftment and they should get to have the equal rights in every sector.

In Ambedkar's concept Socialism was an economic blueprint for India that advocated for the state ownership of basic industries, agriculture and land to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth and prevent capitalist exploitation against the oppressed classes. Ambedkar believed a planned economy, guided and managed by the state was crucial for rapid industrialization and for providing opportunities to the poor and marginalized sections. He proposed establishing State Socialism through the Constitution, making it from being changed by the future parliamentary majorities.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Why Ambedkar proposed State Socialism for the Social Justice?**

- He identifies the caste system as the root of social injustice and argued for its complete eradication.
- Ambedkar was critical of unchecked capitalism, which he believed would reinforce caste-based hierarchies and economic disparities in India.
- He saw a direct link between the caste system and economic inequality and viewed State Socialism as a necessary tool to break this link and promote social justice.
- He considered state intervention essential for the rapid industrialization of India, which he believed private enterprise was incapable of achieving without creating massive inequalities.<sup>vii</sup>

## Equality as prime value of Social Democracy

Ambedkar's conception of social democracy is based on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. The idea of equality is fundamental value of democratic life. In Ambedkar's view liberty and fraternity are derived from equality. He holds that where equality is denied, everything else may be taken to be denied. In other words, equality per-supposes democracy. According to Ambedkar:

*"Democracy is another name of equality. Parliamentary democracy developed a passion for liberty. It never mind even a nodding acquaintance with equality. If failed to realize the significance of equality and did not ever endeavour to strike a balance between liberty and equality, with the result that liberty swallowed equality and has made democracy a name and farce."*<sup>viii</sup>

Ambedkar emphasizes the necessary connection between equality, liberty and fraternity as a key principle of the democracy and mandates a balance between them for the success of democracy.

Ambedkar observed that a realize democracy as an ideal and the Indian society has to overcome its social order which is built on the principle of inequality. He pointed out that the Hindu social order is nurtured on the following three principles:

- Grading inequality
- Fixation of occupation of each class and continuance by heredity and
- Fixation of people within their respective classes.

This scheme of graded inequality is designed and preserved to maintain social inequality.

The Hindu social order leaves no choice to the individual. It fixes his occupation. It fixes his status. All that remains for the individuals to do is to conform himself to these graded inequality has been carried into the economic field. He viewed Hindu social order as based primarily on class or varna and not on individual worth; there is no room for individuals' merit and no consideration of individual justice. He further holds the position that inequality is the official doctrine of Brahmanism and lower classes have been suppressed remorselessly by Brahmins. Ambedkar says, Hinduism is inimical to equality, antagonistic to liberty and opposed to fraternity.<sup>ix</sup>

In Ambedkar's words,

*"Justice has always evoked ideas of equality of proportion of compensation. Equity signifies equality. Rule and regulations, right and righteousness are concerned with equality in value. If all men are equal, then all mean are of the same essence, and the common essence entitles them of the same fundamental rights and equal liberty... in short justice is another name of liberty, equality and fraternity."*<sup>x</sup>

Ambedkar maintains that society has to discover aptitudes and capacities of individuals and train them progressively for social use. He emphasizes that there are indefinite pluralities of capacities in an individual which may characterize his person. A society to be democratic should pave the way to use all these capacities of the individual. Social conditions necessary for flourishing of democracy are:

- Social equality
- Economic security and
- Access to knowledge.

Ambedkar believes that the more equal the more social rights of citizens are, the more able they are in utilizing their freedom and individuality.

### Concluding Remarks:

Ambedkar's legacy in social values on social justice is a powerful and enduring call for a Society based on liberty, equality and fraternity, where individual's dignity and the human rights are paramount in the society. His work culminated in the Indian Constitution provides a legal framework for a just society by guaranteeing equal rights to all citizen and for him the conclusion is that achieving his vision requires continuous effort. Ambedkar's ideas continue to be a vital guide for addressing discrimination and inequality through constitutional and legal methods and promoting education and rational thought to realize true social justice in the nation.

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