

B.R. AMBEDKER (1891-1956)

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was a Buddhist revivalist, an Indian jurist, scholar and Bahujan political leader who is the chief architect of the Indian constitution. Born in a poor untouchable community, he spent his life fighting against the system of Hindu untouchability and the Indian caste system. Ambedkar, the champion of uplifting the cause of untouchables, believed strongly in social equality. He believed that untouchables were a separate entity and for long favoured separate electorate for depressed classes. He wanted to provide a political base to them and form an independent labour party for widening political base off the country, which he considered essential for promoting political cause of the so-called untouchables. He charged the Cripps mission for conspiring against depressed classes in India. He has been honoured with Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, awarded for the highest degrees of National Service.

His Views About Social Equality

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was opposed to the existing social system which was based on exploitation of the depressed classes. He believed that humanly treated twice centuries past because of the caste system and Brahmanism. He was sure that this old tradition-ridden system could be ended only when the exploited decided to struggle for their rights. Therefore, he did not favour social stability. He was of the view that change was law of life and that all existing institutions and systems must change. Social inequality is bound to yield to social equality. According to him the greatest enemy of India is the traditional caste system. He, therefore, strongly opposed to all those institutions, systems and traditions which adhered to the past.

His Struggle For Safeguarding Rights Of The Untouchables.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been called as the "Messiah of the Untouchables". He believed that unless untouchables were allowed free and unhindered entry to the public places one could not think of equality between caste Hindus and untouchables. In 1926, he arranged the Mahar conference at which he stressed the needs of granting rights of equality to untouchables. He also organized the Mahar Tank Satyagrah in 1927. In his speeches and writings he made the untouchables

understand that for getting their rights and status of equality they will have to retaliate against all moves launched by the caste Hindus against them.

His Views About Caste System.

He said that division of our society into untouchables and caste Hindus were both undemocratic and unrealistic. It has not only resulted in social inequality but also has stood on the way of economic growth of the nation. He said that without social democracy, political democracy could not be possible. He stressed that the untouchables should also be given full rights, which were now being denied because of caste system to the untouchables, about getting education, particular spiritual and religious education. Ambedkar forcefully pleaded that atrocities and all types of social discriminations against the untouchables should be stopped. For him abolition of untouchability was the only solution for the problem.

Demand For Political And Constitutional Rights.

Dr. Ambedkar demanded Political and constitutional rights for the untouchables. He said that mere changing the name from untouchable to Harijan, as proposed by Gandhiji and Congress Party was not going to improve their lot. He held the view that Gandhiji was not sincere about the uplifting of the untouchables. He wanted that the lot of the untouchables could improve and they could come out of their humiliation, if they were given jobs in public service and their shares and the elected bodies, according to their population ratio.

An Unjust System.

Dr. Ambedkar was convinced that untouchability was an unjust system because it was based on exploitation of man by man. For its existence there is no justification and it is an inhuman system. It has very badly damaged social and cultural fabric of India and brought down image of country in family of nations, as spiritual leader of the world. He said that in the interest of the nation as a whole uplifting of the untouchables, socially, economically and politically should be made an integral part of the India's political struggle for freedom.

His Views About Brahmanism.

He resented domination of Brahmins over Hindu society. In fact he believed that present day Hinduism was Brahmanism. One of the methods of ending this supremacy of Brahmins according to him was unity of non-Brahmins. He said that much could not be expected from Brahmins for the welfare of non-Brahmins and as such any institution established for the welfare of depressed classes by the members of this community alone was not likely to deliver any good to the untouchables. He was convinced that the curse of untouchability has been imposed upon the untouchables by caste Hindus, particularly the Brahmins.

B.R.AMBEDKAR

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a great constitutional expert and has been called as the architect of Indian constitution. As a chairman of the Drafting Committee he very ably defended every provision of the draft constitution and present constitution owes much to his genius. He has therefore, very rightly called as Manu of our times. He did not allow personal preferences to creep in which flaming provisions of the constitution, but while doing so he keep national interest above every thing else.

Dr. Ambedkar's Imprint On Constitution:

There can be controversies and differences about his role as social reformer, his views about Hinduism and Hindu society, but their can be no controversy about his role as constitutional expert. Because of his overwhelming contribution to the making of constitution that K.V.Rao has remarked that he is not only father but also mother of our constitution. It has been said that “the achievement of independence would go to the credit of Mahatmaji and its consolidation to one of Mahatma's worst critic, viz. the great architect of our constitution, Dr. Ambedkar.”

His Role In The Constituent Assembly:

From the beginning till the end of the works of the Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar dominated it. All look towards him and listens to him with rapt attention. At the early stages he fear that the Assembly would be dominated, by caste Hindus and that the interests of the depressed classes and castes would be ignored that gradually he relaxed his hard attitude and decided to co-operate with congress leadership. He felt that this co-operation would enable him to safeguard the interests of the untouchables.

Champion Of Fundamental Rights:

Dr. Ambedkar was great champion of fundamental rights. In his opinion such rights are essentially needed for the development of the people, for the development of the people, both mental and moral. Without such rights, those belonging to depressed classes shall never come up in the society. It was because

of his efforts that a separate chapter on Fundamental Rights was included in the constitution. He provided safeguard, so that these Rights were not misused.

Supporter Of Strong Centre:

Dr. Ambedkar was supporter of strong centre and he made his views very clear in the constituent Assembly. In the Assembly he supported even wider powers to be given to the centre for the unity of the country than what the centre had under the Government of India Act, 1956. He however, favoured the idea of country's being a federation. It was because of his views that India was called as "Union of States" rather than a "federation". He said in the Assembly, "The country and the people may be divided into different states for convenience of administration, the country is one integrated whole, its people a single people, living under a single emporium, derive from a single source."

His Support For Federal Set Up:

Dr. Ambedkar very strongly believed that in India a Unitary System could not successfully and efficiently work. It was administratively difficult to rule over India from one single centre. He, therefore, supported federal type set up for India. About the nature of this set up he set in the constituent Assembly, "Both the Union and the States are created by the constitution, both derive their respective authority from the constitution. The one is not subordinate to the other in its own field; and the authority of one is co-ordinate with that of the other". He further said, "The constitution has sought to the forge means and method by which India will have a federation and at the same time will have uniformity in all the basic matters which are essential to maintain the unity of the country."

Justification For Emergency Provision:

Constitution of India incorporates emergency provisions under which under certain circumstances head of the state can declare emergency conditions. Once emergency is declares federal structure gets converted into unitary system and Fundamental rights given to the people under the constitution are abrogated. This provision of the constitution was badly criticized in the constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar, however, defended these provisions pointing out that all federal systems are placed in a tight would of federation.

Assessment Of Work:

Credit goes to him for providing in the constitution abolition of untouchability and making India a secular polity. He provided for a mix of rigid and flexible constitution, freedom of worship, expression and equality of opportunity. He could convince the assembly for providing reservation of seats for their in the elected bodies for SC and ST. Similarly, he realized that of India laid in secularism, but what he meant from secularism was something wider and broader that what is it is now being followed.