

DR B. R. AMBEDKAR VERSUS POLITICS -A NEED FOR RE-INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

The process of liberalization, privatisation and globalization in its natural course has led to severe exclusivism of certain sections of society from the mainstream. In fact, the efforts at providing the marginalized groups, like the dalits, with a level-playing field have been reversed by the new global economics. It is a fact that the new market, society will absorb the human resources only on the basis of efficiency criterion. The market phenomenon does not recognize the caste, creed or gender bias. But at the same time, the social norms leading to complete denial of opportunities to certain sections of society for years will inevitably cast their impressions on the process of human resource mobilization in the market age also.

A Chain is as strong as its weakest link.

In special aspect of India the word 'weaker sections' refers to a group of Indian community which is socially and economically backward. In medical terminology the word weaker sections refers to different age groups sensitive for disease.

In the post-independence period, the constitutional provisions and the welfare policies of the state did provide some kind of opportunity to dalits, enabling them to occupy spaces in politics, culture, education and occupations.

However, these efforts suffered from severe conditions as the state could not offer more dignified alternative vocations for the dalits who remained ghettoized in occupations like sanitary work, scavenging, tanning and lately, regpicking.

The main reason behind this outcome of dalit struggle is the dalit discourse which over emphasized the social issues and sidelined the economic issues. Ambedkarism, which is a "Living force in India, added caste to class and brahmanism to capitalism. Although it consisted of a broad economic radicalism but it was interpreted as "socialism", (State Socialism in some versions and democratic socialism in other & mixed with and growing out of Dr. Ambedkar's democratic liberalistic liberal dedication to individual rights. "There is no proper definition of weaker sections in Indian constitution." There are four main indicators to identify weaker sections, i.e.

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1. Social status
2. Educational status
3. Economic status &
4. Political status

In fact, the development of Ambedkarism took place on the lines of dismissing Marx and Gandhi on one hand and affirming Buddhism on the other. Dr. Ambedkar in his writings went on to argue that the precondition of united working class struggle was the eradication of caste and untouchability. This struggle would not be fully anti-capitalist because capitalism would not be opposed to the eradication of caste as such because freeing potential workers from caste workers would increase the reserve army of labour.

However, taking standard Marxian economic assumptions for granted had two consequences for Ambedkarism and the dalit movement : First, it led to attempts to formulate a historical theory of caste and social struggle in India that functioned primarily at the “super structural” level, stressing factors of political conflict and ideology apart from those of economic development. Second, it effectively suppressed any dialogue with alternative economic models and ignored the degree to which a state-controlled heavy industry would be effectively a Brahmin and high-class controlled economy.

METHODOLOGY

Regarding to the nature of the study Historical research design is opted for the purpose.

OBJECTIVES

To study if the thoughts of Dr Ambedkar affected Indian modern politics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Ambedkar’s view on economic issues can be divided into two parts. In the early 1920s. Ambedkar is seen as a general supporter of a capitalist organization of the economy, assuming inevitability and capability of providing growth and being amenable to a balancing of interests. In this model, the role of the state was to provide infrastructure and generally handle currency and exchange so as not to discriminate against any of the major business or agricultural classes of the country.

The new momentous force for change represented by the Russian revolution, the upsurge of the working class in India and Dr. Ambedkar’s own theoretical and practical confrontation with Marxism. Unlike his earlier beliefs in capitalism, limited state control, and small peasantry farms as a solution to landlordism, his economic thoughts in opposition of capitalists and landlord, the need for state control, and mechanised agriculture through collective or cooperative farming.

Dr. Ambedkar’s economic thoughts were very much within the framework of standard Economics. However, in the atmosphere of fierce oppression during these times Ambedkar could not help highlighting the socio-realization factors in the light of anti-caste struggle. The marginalization of economic issues on the

emancipatory agenda of the dalits was thus, a natural phenomenon.

In the global competition today, the dalits can overcome their caste regimentation only through inclusion in the opportunity structures on the basis of skill, abilities and excellence. However, even in the age of LPG, the upper-caste/ class communities continue to hold enormous resources.

Moreover, the market mechanisms are essentially unfriendly to the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. Privatization of education based on information technology and biotechnology will lead to exclusion of poor dalits from a major resource of development. This would render the system of reservation totally ineffective and will lead to mass exclusion of dalits from the realism of productive economic activities. The Resulting alternative will lead to strict generalization of dalits.

Therefore, globalization also strikes the dalit community with the equality and dignity. But the question of equality in this millennium is likely to be pursued primarily in terms of access to and equal distribution of resources. The dalit intellectuals will have to reaffirm as well as redefine Ambedkarism and highlight his economic ideology.

In context of current debates on economic policy, Dr. Ambedkar's specific recommendations for prescribing state ownership of basic industries and collective farms may be questioned by many today. However, his thesis that market by itself cannot guarantee equality would be questioned by few. State must play a defining role and at time supercede the

market through the public policies to ensure equal economic opportunities. Thus, Ambedkarism will have to be re-interpreted in the light of the fact that only distributive or economic justice will render social justice in the new market order.

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