

DR. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of nation building

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Abstract

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's image as the father of Indian Constitution and an icon of Dalit emancipation is only a part of his great persona, work and life. The visionary aspects of his thought process and works are reflected in his myriad activities which he pursued relentlessly. His acumen as an economist, jurist, political democrat and reformist, are not fully visible at the outset. His contributions in making India a mature, developed nation, with all the trappings of a progressive society, are all patent in his life and endeavors. In this paper, I have made a faithful albeit brief effort, to highlight his vision of nation building and the part he played in making India what it is today.

Keywords: DR. B. R. Ambedkar's, Indian Constitution

Introduction

Many an Indian thinks of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as the maker of Indian Constitution or as a Dalit Icon. But it escapes the attention of Indians that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a visionary, who was ahead of his times. Today's India is built up, on the contributions of this great statesman and his foresighted approach.

India's journey since independence has seen many successes. The greatest challenge for our founding fathers was to come up with a viable system of governance of the vast country with its peculiarities, languages, religious, geographical and cultural diversity. In the last 69 years, we have established an inclusive & successful parliamentary democracy, independent judiciary and strong constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission, the CAG and other central commissions to sustain and support our polity & systems, the credit to which goes to Dr. Ambedkar in no less measure.

The biggest and the most complex issue of exclusion of significant segment of population of the nation, in political, social and economic sectors, was a single most complex and daunting challenge. It was done through a unique and comprehensive policy of affirmative action, through the Constitution, to empower members of the communities which were socially excluded and bring them, into the national mainstream, through the relentless efforts of Dr. Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar dreamt of a India in which all sections of the society were empowered socially, economically and politically, a India in which every section of our population believes, that they have an equal stake in the country and in its future; a India in which social status will be decided not by the standing in cast hierarchy or economic stature, but individual merit and worth. Dr. Ambedkar's vision was of an India where social system and economy would permit the full development of human potential and ensure a dignified existence for all the citizens.

Dr. Ambedkar's message, work and life are a constant reminder of the outstanding Constitution, strong democracy

and effective, independent institutions, the nation has inherited from its founding fathers.

As a person from the marginalized section of Indian society with its age old rigid caste system, Dr. Ambedkar emerged as a herald and a shining star. Because of his background and the extreme difficulties in his early life & education, he had the full import of the difficulties of marginalised sections of society, social imbalance and discrimination of dalits, untouchables, women etc. Keeping this in constant view he strived for an equitable, fair and balanced system, which will treat uniformly all the citizens of this great country.

He was a scholar and luminary with several university degrees and doctorates in the fields of economic development, social empowerment, legal nuances, political system and good governance. His path breaking thoughts in his writings such as, Federation versus freedom(1939)The problem of Rupee; its origin and its solution (1925), Annihilation of caste (1936), casts in India; their genesis, mechanism and development (1918) Who were Shudras (1946). The untouchables; who were they and why they became untouchables (1948), what congress and Gandhi have done to untouchables (1945).

By his writings he created public opinion against the gross inequalities in the society. As a social democrat he visualized the stable development of the country in an inclusive philosophy and outlook. The proof of such thinking and vision is replete in the Indian constitution where equality is not only propounded, but safeguards against its violation have also been put into place.

His work "The problem of Rupee; its origin and its solution" paved the way for framing the guidelines for the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934. The concept is paying rich dividends to the country. Today RBI as a regulator has not only contributed to the economy of the country, but also is a knight in armour, of regulation of commerce, industry and foreign trade of this vast developing nation.

He was the first to propose the revolutionary of "Hindu code Bill" However the traditional outlook and lack of vision of the

legislators of that time, did not do justice by allowing that Bill to lapse, Dr. Ambedkar who was the first Law Minister resigned from the government on that issue and displayed his strong bent of mind to address the issue such as women's labour fund, women and child labour protection, maternity benefit for women labour, equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex, issues of succession, right to property, marriage, divorce, guardianship etc. Today the same issues have vindicated themselves, proving the vision of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

His thinking has gone on to assist development of the country by way of irrigation projects. The creation of organization like Central Water Ways, Irrigation and Navigations commission (CWINC) has paved the way for the present Central Water Commissions (CWC) and Central Electricity Authority (CEA) which are the direct outcome of his creative and visionary thought process. His views on Damodar Valley project, Hiracud project, Sone river project etc., are eye openers.

His concern for technical training for progress of the country, in the industrial sector, has given rise to starting of technical institutions creating a ready reservoir of skilled technicians, which not only has been the bulwark of Indian Industry, but has also made Indian proud by its contribution to the world by this skilled man power. The progress of India as a developing economy and developing industrial giant is a tribute to the farsightedness of this great Indian.

Dr. Ambedkar is a leader of the nation, whose sterling thoughts are relevant today. His ideas of equality, fraternity, Independence, economics, politics, democracy etc. are beacons of guidance to this nation. Prof. Amartya Sen a noble laureate economist has described Dr. Ambedkar in these words- "Dr. Ambedkar is my father in economics"

As a labour leader and member of the Viceroys Executive Council between 1942 and 1946, Dr. Ambedkar initiated many moves to start employment exchanges, recognition of labour unions, women's rights and their emancipation, voting rights to women, Industrial disputes, Employees State Insurance (ESI), minimum wages etc., which are firmly established today.

He advocated generation of adequate electric power and had the pioneering thought, that cheap and abundant availability of electric supply was the prime requirement for industrial progress. Towards this objective, he advocated for power grids, which eventually led to the creation of a "National grid" and the Power supply department at the centre (CTPB)

The other brain child of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is the paper for his Ph.D. thesis; "Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India" written in 1923, which led to the establishment of the independent Finance Commission of India. The provision for Finance commission every five years, enshrined in the Indian constitution is the statutory mile stone of Dr. Ambedkar.

Many of the present day features of a welfare state and a vibrant democracy trace their origin to the efforts of Dr. Ambedkar. The right to vote, resolving of Industrial disputes, labour welfare and labour welfare funds, Provident fund, Holidays with pay to factory workers, establishment of eight hours of duty as against twelve hours as duty hours, Tripartite labour conference, Technical training scheme and skilled workers, Indian statistical Law, reservation to minorities and dalits etc., were initiated by the thought process of Dr. Ambedkar, in his visionary approach towards the country.

In the framing of the Constitution for the country, the role of Dr. Ambedkar was seminal. His vision of liberal, fair and equitable society is enshrined in the Indian constitution, which is the bulwark of Indian democracy and polity.

The constitution guarantees and protections, are instituted for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens including the freedom of religion, abolition of untouchability, outlawing all forms of discrimination, reservation for weaker sections, women's rights etc.

The fundamental rights in part III Articles 15(2) 17, 23 & 24 of the constitution guarantee the safeguard of the individual liberties and also makes them enforceable through the Supreme Court (Article 32) against the state as an entity. The feature of parliamentary democracy coupled with federal structure is a well-crafted structural constitution for the country. In his unique foresight, the constitution provides for a federal structure which could be transformed into unitary one if the need arises.

In the part III & IV of this constitution in Article 17 about untouchability and Article 30 about minority rights, his vision have provided for seamless integration of different segments of the society, in a practical and laudable manner. Similarly the protective discrimination/reservation, for these classes, is a benevolent effective for-sight for the country.

The directive principles of state policy, though not questionable in the court of law for breaches, cannot be ignored, as they form the underlying rationale for the public representatives, who are answerable to the people. The preamble of the constitution itself at the very outset, spells out the nation that is India- a projection visualized by its maker Dr. Ambedkar.

The independent election commission, has been enshrined as a safeguard for purity of elections, for fairness of election, squarely takes away the authority from the hands of the executive, so that elections reflect the true will of the people without any manipulations and ensuring fair play.

He described the progressive constitution of India in his own words as "It is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and war time. Indeed if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad constitution. What we will have to say is that man is vile"

The life, works and message of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the great visionary for India, are established in the outstanding Constitution, a very vibrant democracy and unbiased independent institutions. It is for all Indians to make his vision incarnate by combined and committed efforts. Indians should also translate his vision in the modern day by faithful endeavors which shall be a fitting tribute to this great visionary of the country i.e. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

References

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