



Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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Dr. Ambedkar adopted peaceful means of social change. He believed in the evolutionary process of social change, which moves on constitutional lines. He preferred the evolutionary process since it preserves the factors like law and order which are indispensable for social life. It also strives to develop institutions that will guarantee a better 'social order'. Ambedkar rejected the revolutionary or radical method of bringing about social change for it disturbs peace and tranquility and creates chaos, strife and war¹. Ambedkar held that a really new society cannot be brought about through the means of 'violence', 'contempt' and 'hatred'. A welfare society of all cannot be developed on the basis of 'violence', 'force' and 'compulsion'. To him, violent approach to a peaceful society is not only unscientific but also improper and immoral².

It is a contradiction to suppose that a society of liberty, equality and fraternity can be built by means of violence. Resorting to violence would be the violation of the principles which were dearest to Ambedkar's heart and mind. He resorted to the means of 'peace' and 'persuasion' even before the constitution came into force. He adopted a 'peaceful campaign' to secure civil rights for the untouchables even before the Indian independence. To him, the campaign was legal and based on 'legitimate rights'. It was peaceful as well as reasonable. It did not involve violence against those who denied the fundamental rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to millions of people.

Ambedkar wanted social reformers to generate public opinion for the condemnation of the gross inequalities in the society. He urged them to establish bureaus to deal with urgent cases of inequality. The bureaus should persuade the powerful section of society to give a chance to the depressed classes to work in the shop, factories, and mills of the rich and the caste Hindus. The caste-Hindus should patronize the depressed sections by employing them in their firms and offices in various grades and occupations suited to the capacities of the applicants³.

Ambedkar suggested a 'common participation' on the family level among the touchable and the untouchable classes of the Hindus. This kind of participation establishes an intimate relation between them. It helps people to overcome the strangeness of feeling. Bringing the isolated groups into contact and allowing the depressed classes to the houses of the caste-Hindus as guests or servants would bring people together effectively. Ambedkar says that the live contact thus established will familiarize both to a common and associated life and will pave the way for the unity which we are all striving after⁴.



Finally, Ambedkar emphasized the need for the employment of a large army of sincere workers who can carry out the programme against caste and untouchability. He wanted the workers to regard social service as love's labour and believe in the words of Tolstoy 'only those who love can serve'. It is only when the workers serve with "a single minded devotion to one task and one task only"⁵ that the caste and untouchability would be removed.

Ambedkar shunned force and compulsion for social change. He wanted to bring about change through peace and persuasion. He never subscribed to violence and hatred as the means of social harmony. Ambedkar gave utmost importance to love as a means of bringing the untouchables and the caste Hindus together. He says, "The touchables and the untouchables cannot be held together by law, certainly not by any electoral law substituting joint electorates for separate electorates. The only thing that can hold them together is love"⁶.

Dr. Ambedkar holds that political institutions should take up the responsibility of reforming the existing social institutions, by taking into account the social forces existing in the society. Ambedkar admits using legislative force when the means of peace and persuasion fail to yield the results. Political institutions will have value only when they accurately express the social forces which are in practice in the society⁷. Ambedkar opines that the social forces, at times, may manifest itself through the legislature. They may be reflected in legislative changes. Ambedkar was of deep conviction that using social force is the only effective way of changing the perverse social institutions, like caste and untouchability, when social change through a change of heart cannot take place within a short time. It is not an easy task even to intellectually convince the die-hards of the urgent need for the eradication of caste. So the reformers have to resort to legislative force.

In the process of legislative measures Ambedkar proposed the introduction of the 'Hindu code Bill' through an act of legislature in 1950. Initially the attempt ended in Failure. Brahminic forces opposed it. But later on some of the items of the Bill like women's inheritance, the Dowry Act, etc., were passed by the parliament. The Bill would have brought about radical changes in Hindu society if it had been passed in toto⁸.

On the political front Dr. Ambedkar wanted to spread of mass education and the establishment of a two party system to be implemented for good functioning of legislature and democracy. A sound legislature 'is possible only when it is constituted by the best candidates elected by an educated electorate. The sound legislature is possible only when it is governed by two parties, more than two makes the issues confusing whereas a single party system is no democracy et al.'⁹ Two party system can be established through an act of legislation. The system can act as a check on the growth of communal parties in a society like India. Ambedkar deplore that the communal parties were disturbing the emotional unity and integrity of our nation.

Economically also, Ambedkar wanted to bring about economic self sufficiency, justice and equality of the poor through an act of legislature. In this, he wanted the co-



operation of both the governmental and individual voluntary organizations. It is only through peaceful means of economic planning and legislation that Ambedkar wanted to achieve economic justice in the society.

Ambedkar was a multifaceted personality. He was a scholar, a lawyer, an educationist, a constitutionalist, a social reformer and a lover of peace. He wanted peace both individually and in social relationship. It was through peaceful means only that he did a lot of good for the downtrodden. He stressed upon the change of the heart and mindset of the people. He sincerely believed in the Buddhist teaching that hatred cannot be put an end to by hatred. Hatred ceases to be only when there is love. Ambedkar's motto was to change but not to revenge.

According to Ambedkar, the social norms founded on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity alone can guarantee of egalitarian society. The egalitarian society can be established by the peaceful means of educate agitate and organize. The three slogans of Ambedkar were purely for internal change of self. He adopted the method of three slogan from the Buddhist trinity namely, Buddham, Dhammam and Sangham. The three slogans are strictly based on non-violence.

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