

**Social Movement for Self-Respect and State Socialism by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar****Harshwardhan Suryawanshi**

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**Introduction:**

**D**r. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956) operated the movements upon the level of political, social, religious etc. He experienced the ideological conflict in the society. His main object of the various movements was to get self-respect. He has taken many efforts to establish liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice in the Indian society. His life was a struggle for self-respect and social democracy. Core of social democracy was equality. To obtain equality he argued for nationalization of state wealth. He advocated the state socialism for equality. His view on socialism is found in his memorandum which is now published as 'State and Minorities', in his speech on the Directive Principles of the State Policy in the Constituent Assembly in 1948 wherein he critically analyzed state socialism with a democratic base. Also he had a plan to include socialism in fundamental rights but it could not be come into existence according to him. Dr. Babasaheb did not accept as it is the theory of Karl Marx's (1818-1883) ideology based on economic exploitation. He modified the concept of socialism in the context of Indian society which is recognized as Dr. Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism. His social movement for self-respect and State socialism can be studied as following.

**Main Initiatives in Social Movement:**

Dr. Ambedkar has struggled for self respect for everyone in the society. He has given the Evidence before 'Southborough Committee' on Franchise and representation in provincial legislation for untouchables (1919), Mahad Choudar Talab Satyagraha (1927), Kalaram Mandir Pravesh Satyagrah. Muknayaka, Bhisrut Bharat Periodicals, and Bahishrut Hirkarini Sabha. Also he fought for ideological and theoretical conflict, out of the works the idea of state socialism is to be studied here.

**Ambedkar's idea of state socialism:**

Dr. Babasaheb did not accept as it is the theory of Karl Marx's ideology based on economic exploitation. He thought, eradication of economic

exploitation alone cannot free the individual from the tyranny of the society in India. He advocated that the socialism on democratic base and also state ownership of land and other means of production can free the individual from the tyranny of the society in India. According to him there can be no political stability unless and until there is social democracy and economic equality. He wanted to abolish the Zamindars system.

His plan for introducing socialism runs as follow-

"The United States of India shall provide: Clause 4- The United States of India shall declare as a part of the law of it Constitution:

- 1) The industries which are key industries or which may be declared to be key industries shall be owned and run by the state.
- 2) The industries which are not key industries but which are basic industries shall be owned by the state and shall be run by the state or by Corporations established by the state.
- 3) The insurance shall be a monopoly of the state and that the state shall compel every adult to take out a life insurance policy commensurate with his wages as may be prescribed by the legislature.
- 4) The agriculture shall be a state industry.
- 5) The state shall acquire the subsisting rights in such industries, insurance and agricultural land held by private individuals, whether as owners, tenants or mortgagees and pay them compensation in the form of debenture equal to the value of his or her right in the land. Provided that the reckoning value of the land, plant or security on account shall be taken of any rise therein due to emergency, or any potential or unearned value or any value for compulsory acquisition.
- 6) The state shall determine how and when the debenture holder shall be entitled to claim cash payment.
- 7) The debenture shall be transferable and inheritable property but neither the debenture holder nor the transferee from the original holder nor his heir shall be entitled to claim the return of the land or

interest in any industrial concerned acquired by state or be entitled to deal with in any way.

- 8) The debenture holder shall be entitled to interest in his debenture at such rate as may be defined by law, to be paid the state in cash or in kind as the state may deem fit.
- 9) Agricultural industry shall be organized on the following basis:
  - (i) The state shall divide the land acquired into farms of standard size and let out the farms to civilization to residents of the village as tenants (made up of groups of families) to cultivate on the following conditions:
    - (a) The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm;
    - (b) The farm shall be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by Government;
    - (c) The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly leviable on the farm.
  - (ii) The land shall be let out to the villagers without distinction of caste and creed and in such manner that there will be no landlord, no tenants and on landless labourer.
  - (iii) It shall be the obligation of the state to finance the cultivation to the collective farms by the supply of the water, drought animals, implements, manure, speed, etc.
  - (iv) The state shall be entitled to:
    - (a) To levy the following charges on the produce of the farm.
      - (i) a portion for land revenue;
      - (ii) a portion to pay the debenture holders; and
      - (iii) a portion to pay the use of capital goods supplied, and
    - (b) Prescribe the penalties against tenants who break the conditions of tenancy or willfully neglect to make the best use of the means of the cultivation offered by the State or otherwise act prejudicially to the scheme of collective farming.
  - (10) The scheme shall be brought into operation as early as possible but in no case shall the period extend beyond the tenth year from the date of the constitution coming into operation.1

**Essential features of his socialism and Self Respect Movement:**

To achieve the essential features of his socialism, he advised as following:

- (i) Condemnation of the present order of society and economic inequality.
- (ii) Advocacy of one man, one value and one vote.
- (iii) Achievement of state socialism and parliamentary democracy.

(iv) Acceptance of the fact that present immoral social order is due to the attitude of high cast Hindu and their Varnashrama.

(v) A widespread desire to change the social and economic order, for, unless we are surcharged with a will to practice the gospel, we will not succeed.

(vi) A program of actions leading to the ideal to be achieved through constitutional means only; and,

(vii) A revolutionary will establishing social democracy to carry out the program social solidarity.2

Dr. Ambedkar opposed Gandhisim and Marxism because he believed that both of these ideologies could not free the individual from the tyranny of the society.

He says that suffering is not only due to economic exploitation but also social exploitation. Ambedkar also thought that the industries should be nationalized gradually by the way of democracy. And his proposal was the establishment of socialism is possible avoiding the demerits of dictatorship. The dictatorship of proletariats was proposed by Karl Marx.

Ambedkar states that the ideal political solution would be to avoid all dangers of establishing socialism and taking advantages as to retain democracy and to prescribe state socialism by the law of the constitution, so that it will be beyond the reach of parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. **One can achieve the objects to establish socialism, retain parliamentary democracy and avoid dictatorship.**

To avoid the dictatorship he said for in India, Bhakti in religion may be the road to salvation of the soul. But in politics, **Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and eventually dictatorship.** To free individual avoid this all types of dictatorship, Dr. Ambedkar wanted a democracy, not a dictatorship in Indian society. He refers democracy as fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people and the acceptance of **those changes by the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed.**3

His sole concern was the all-round development of the downtrodden masses. For the successful democracy there must not be the suppressed class and oppressed class in the Indian society.

**Self Respect Movement Rests On Four Premises:**

- (i) Every human is born and dies equally.
- (ii) That the individual has certain inalienable natural rights.
- (iii) No one has to privilege, one man and his same dignity.

(iv). Equality before law and equal opportunity. Dr. Ambedkar writes, "The plan has two special features. One is that it proposes state socialism in important fields of economic life, the second special feature of this plan is, **that it does not leave establishment of state socialism to the will of the legislature. It establishes state socialism by the law of the constitution and thus makes it unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive.**"<sup>5</sup>

Thus Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish state socialism through political democracy but not through the dictatorship. He wants to include the program of socialism in fundamental rights but it would not be possible at that time when the constitution structure making because of the refusal. He also criticized the objective proposal of Jawaharlal Nehru that there was not a strong emphasis on the socialism. While framing the directive principles of state policy in the constitution of India he said, "...Our object in framing this constitution is really two-fold: (1) to lay down that our ideal is political democracy and, (2) to lay down that our ideal is economics democracy..."<sup>6</sup>

Again Dr. Ambedkar states that the individual is an end in himself **and the state shall not delegate powers to private persons to govern others.** The individual has certain unalienable rights which must be guaranteed to him by the constitution that the individual cannot be required to relinquish any of his constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of privilege.

"..Constitutional lawyer assumes that the enactment of fundamental rights is enough to safeguard their (individuals') rights and nothing is more called for. They argue that where the state refrains from intervention in private affairs, economic and social – the residue is liberty...**what is called liberty from the control of state is another name of the dictatorship of the private employer.**"<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Ambedkar stated, his proposal was the planning of economic life of community which is so essential to maintenance the liberty of the individual in the modern society. These thoughts are related to

the state socialism. **Only writing the fundamental rights in the constitution is not the guarantees but this plan of state socialism can assure the guarantees it.**

#### Conclusion:

Dr. Ambedkar's self-respect Movement's sole concern was the all-round development of the downtrodden masses. For the Social democracy, there must not be the suppressed class and oppressed class in the Indian society. His state socialism plan has two special features. One is that it proposes state socialism in important fields of economic life, the second special feature of this plan is, that it does not leave establishment of state socialism to the will of the legislature. It establishes by the law of the constitution and thus makes it unalterable by any act of the legislature and the executive. He wanted to establish liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice in India. He not only wanted the social equality but also the economic equality.

#### References:

1. Makrand K. C., Directive Principles in Indian Constitution, p.372-373
2. R. R. Bhole on forwarded page x, xi. in G. S. Lokhande, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar A Study in Social Democracy. Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi
3. Speech delivered by Dr. Ambedkar quoted in ibid. G.S Lokhande p23.
4. Ambedkar B.R., State and Minorities, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, compiled Vasant Moon, **1**, 392-393 (1979) referred in Badal Sarkar, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's theory of State Socialism, *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* ISSN 2319-3565 Vol. **2(8)**, 38-41, August (2013) *Int. Res. J. Social Science* Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in) Received 6th July 2013, revised 31th July 2013, accepted 12th August 2013
5. Nim, Holital (ed.) Thoughts on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar , article by G.S Lokhande , p.85-86 and quoted in ibid, p.34.
6. Makrand K. C., Directive Principles in Indian Constitution, p.137-138. And ibid p.40.
7. ibid pp 374-375.