

**The Contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the Establishment of State Socialism in India
through the Constitution: An Analytical Study**

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Abstract

The present research paper explores Dr. Ambedkar's basic philosophy on the concept of State Socialism and its establishment in India through the constitution. It also highlights the important events and debates on the Constitution in the constituent assembly. This paper is based on the analyses and available primary and secondary sources. The researcher tries to focus on the different opinions on the concept of state socialism and its meaning. But he has concentrated on the basic philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar to established state socialism in India. It also traces the original structure of the preamble of the Constitution and investigates as to why the political term Socialism was incorporated in the preamble in 1976 through the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution and why Dr. Ambedkar has not accepted Socialism word in the original Preamble of the Constitution. The researcher analyzes on the views of experts on the Amendment. It deals with the Marxist ideology on Socialism and why Dr. Ambedkar rejected Marxist ideology on Socialism? And why he adopted the Buddhist philosophy? And how it will be useful to establish the casteless society based on the Democratic Principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Key Words: Socialism, Constitution, Preamble, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Democracy, Secular, Federal, Directive Principles, Caste Hierarchy

Introduction

The constitution of India was adopted on 26th November 1949 by constituent assembly and came into force from 26th January, 1950. Thereafter, India became Independent and Republic country in the world. The preamble of the Indian constitution reflected the philosophy and fundamental values of the constitution and it is the preface of the constitution which highlights the essence of the entire constitution. The constitution of India declared in its preamble:

We, the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, Democratic,

Republic and to secure to all its citizens.ⁱ

The preamble proclaims that India is a sovereign state. It also denotes that the end of British rule over India.

The Constitution of India was adopted on 26th November 1949 by the constituent Assembly. The preamble of the constitution has been amended by the 42nd constitutional Amendment Act (1976) which was added three new words- Socialist, Secular and Integrity.ⁱⁱ The original preamble included only three words and after the 42nd Amendment Act 1976 the remaining three words included in the preamble. There was a critique on 42nd Amendment of the Indian

constitution by the constitutional expert Hormasji Maneckji Seervai. He stated that the newly inserted words are ‘Ambiguous’ and it should not been inserted in the preamble without reason.ⁱⁱⁱ

The constitutional expert started big debate in the constituent assembly on this words and the principal architecture of the constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar opposed to K. T. Shah who proposed an amendment seeking to declare India as a ‘Secular’, Federal, Socialist’ nation.^{iv} Dr. Ambedkar stated that his objection is raised for two points.

While arguing in the constituent assembly Dr Ambedkar puts that the first place was the constitution is merely a mechanism for the purpose of regulating the work of the various organs of the state. Further, he says that it is not a mechanism whereby particular members or parties are installed in office. He questioned that what should be the policy of the state, how the society should be organized in its social and economic side are matters which must be decided by the people themselves according to time and circumstances it cannot be laid down in the constitution that the social organization of the state shall take a particular form and it should be the liberty of the people to decide what should be the social organization in which they wish to live. He again questioned why constitution should force the people to adopt any particular form of the social organization. It should be the freedom of the people to choose any particular form of the social organization. This must be one of the reasons why Dr. Ambedkar opposed the amendment.^v His second objection regarding

the amendment was ‘purely superfluous’ and ‘unnecessary’, as ‘socialist’ principles are already embodied in our constitution through the fundamental rights and the Directive principles of the state Policy. Referring to the directive principles, Dr. Ambedkar asked Mr. Shah that ‘if these directive principles to which I have drawn attention are not socialistic in their direction and in their content, I fail to understand what more socialism can be?’ With this argument Mr. Shah’s amendment failed to pass, and the preamble of the Constitution was remained unchanged until the 42nd amendment made in the year 1976 by the Indira Gandhi government on the occasion of the emergency.^{vi}

Now the question arises here that why was the word ‘secular, not included, even when all of Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts pointed towards a ‘Secular’ state? Does it mean that the thinker of Dr. Ambedkar’s stature was unaware of that term? If he was, then why did he not include it in the preamble despite suggestions given by Prof. K.T. Shah? We will have to re-think about it in light of the gross misuse of the word secular today. Dr Ambedkar was very much clear about his opposition to Prof. Shah’s amendment. In support of his argument and fact that it was up to the people to decide what kind of economic policy they want from the democratic government should follow. Socialism is an ambiguous word which could include myriad possibilities.

During the time of India’s independence in 1947, this was particularly the importance given to the economic policies that the USSR was pursuing under the name of Socialism. In India Dr. Ambedkar was not

intended to start the right versus left debate but the point is that the people of India have the rights to democratically elect a government whose policies might not conform to the ideas of the people of India of socialism but do not interfere with the fundamental rights of the citizens and the obligations of the executive towards the people.

The idea behind the word Socialist has a philosophical background. Dr. Ambedkar inclusion of word Socialism in the Constitution was very enormous and philosophical. The then Prime minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has rightly pointed out that 'Dr. Ambedkar play a very important and constructive role in framing India's Constitution.'^{vii} State Socialism is one of the constructive ideas of Dr. Ambedkar. The word Modern Socialism originated from 18th century intellectual and working class political movement that criticized the effects of industrialization and private property on society. In the early 19th century, Socialism referred to any concern for the social problems of capitalism regardless of the solution. However, by the late 19th century, 'Socialism' had come to signify opposition to capitalism and advocacy for an alternative system based on some form of social ownership. Socialism was a most fascinating concept from M.N. Roy to Nehru and Lohiya. Dr. Ambedkar was also attracted towards these concepts and conceptualized it as State Socialism. The concept of Socialism is not only a potential doctrine but it has a practical value.

The importance of the Socialism is to eradicate of the poverty and extension of welfare activities on grass root levels means

the bottom level in the Caste hierarchy. The same concept was used related to the collective farming by Dr. Ambedkar. He argued that with abolition of intermediaries, the state must be the owner of the land and state should distribute these lands to the farms and the farmer should cultivate the farm collectively. He further stated that the state should supply essential capital to the agricultural sector and obtained income should be distributed among the farmers. He was very much confident that this policy will lead to solve the problem of agriculture labors.^{viii}

Dr. Ambedkar's idea of state socialism was not only related to the agriculture field but it was succulently summed up by him as "one man, one value in all walks of life Political, Economic and social.' In other words, state socialism in his view, was to embrace social, Political and Economic equality.^{ix} The concept of State Socialism in India was developed by Dr. Ambedkar.

In the year 1946 Dr. Ambedkar has submitted a memorandum entitled on 'State and Minorities' to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation. In the same memorandum he has pointed out that the born or naturalized citizens of India should be treated equally. He further stated that any privileges or extra privileged arising out of rank, birth, person, family, religion or religious usage should be abolished. He also emphasized that all citizens of India without caste, creed, religion, race, birth etc. should be treated by equality before law and equal protection of law. The state also should play a crucial role to protect the fundamental rights of Indian

citizens and no religion is to be state religion.^x

While drafting the constitution of India he has made special provision about the welfare of the people and their equality in the directive principles of the constitution before the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution in 1976. The directive principles ensure that the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by promoting a social order in which social, economic and political justice is informed in all institutions of life. It is also mentioned that the state shall work towards reducing economic inequality as well as inequalities in status and opportunities, not only individuals but also among groups of people residing in the different areas or engaged in different vocations.^{xi}

Dr. Ambedkar had already made a provisions regarding social safeguards an in socio, economic and political level before the word 'Socialism' included in the preamble after 42nd Amendment of the constitution in 1976. Through this amendment the term 'India is a socialist state' really means, 'India is a democratic socialist state'.^{xii} Dr. Ambedkar was the man who devoted his entire life to struggle against the evil practices, untouchability in the caste-based society in India. Therefore while drafting the constitution he advocated the state Socialism with Parliamentary Democracy. Dr. Ambedkar was visionary who wanted to establish an egalitarian society in India which is based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity and social justice.^{xiii} He also wanted to establish the principle of one man, one vote and one value not only in the political life in India

but also in social and economic life. His vision was to have a political democracy to be accompanied by social democracy.^{xiv} The path to established social democracy in India was started by Dr. Ambedkar forcefully put forward the principle of 'one man, one value' while addressing in the second roundtable conference at London on 19th January, 1931. Dr. Ambedkar declared in the roundtable conference, 'I belong to that class which takes its stand on democracy and which seeks to destroy monopoly in every shape and form. Our aim is to realize in practice our ideal of one man, one value in all walks.'^{xv}

He further discussed on Marxist theory of socialism, from the above elucidation of his views on socialism. He considered Karl Marx's philosophy as 'satisfying' one 'to the lower order', but in his opinion, it was 'a direction not a dogma'.^{xvi} However, he refused to accept Marxian theory of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dr. Ambedkar believes on Buddhist philosophy because Buddhism is based on rationality and morality. Its principal base is a triad of Justice, Equality and Fraternity. He wanted to establish a state control society based on morality, justice, peace, liberty, equality and fraternity in socio, economic and political level.

There is a basic difference between Karl Marx's Socialism and Dr. Ambedkar's State Socialism. Karl Marx concept of socialism is based on stateless he wanted to abolish the state because it is an instrument of exploitation of the people. But Dr. Ambedkar wanted state to control the society in a fair manner. He further explains that socialism is not only a potential doctrine

but it has a practical value. The significance of socialism is related to the eradication of poverty and extinction of welfare activities on grass root level.^{xvii} The Indian society is divided into various race, religion, caste and sub-castes so there is a desperate need of communal harmony and social equality. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish state socialism through parliamentary democracy not through dictatorship.^{xviii} He is not only advocated the parliamentary democracy but he wanted to convert the parliamentary democracy into social and economic democracy by means of state socialism. He further explains the meaning of democracy means 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.^{xix}

Therefore, he remarked: "A democratic society must assure a life of leisure and culture to each one of its citizens."^{xx} He also believed that each and every section of the society should have equal rights politically and equal share socially and economically. He always gave an importance on human rights.

Dr. Ambedkar in his final address to the Constituent Assembly stated, "The important thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. He appealed to the assembly that we must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. While speaking on social democracy he says that, social democracy means a way of life which recognizes

liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."^{xxi}

The debates and speeches of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the constituent assembly on the draft constitution were the milestones in the history of India. His arguments and justifications on each concept or word in the constitution reflect his philosophy and vision to making the Modern India. Dr. Ambedkar also saw a dream to establish new society in India based on 'Justice, Equality and Fraternity with equal opportunity to every citizens and groups of community at socio, economic and political levels. But unfortunately his dream is not yet to come in reality in Toto.

Dr. Ambedkar an architect of Indian Constitution tried at his best level to satisfy all the citizens of the country and also tried to provide equal opportunity and safeguards to the people of India through the Fundamental Rights, different Articles and through the Directive Principles.

His philosophical bend of mind, his profound knowledge of all religions with their philosophical and epistemological foundations and his clear understanding of Caste and Class based Indian society and their psyches. The whole background of this country was completely diverted and it was very difficult task to tie them in one equal thread. But he did it in a very systematic and without touching and hearted their religious faiths. Therefore, through his dedication, scientific temperament, sincere efforts and his patriotism and unbiased attitude he succeeded to provide great and rich Constitution to the nation. The nation will always remember to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for

his great contributions and service to the nation.

To conclude, the original idea of State Socialism of Dr. Ambedkar was somehow implemented through the Parliamentary Democracy at the political level but it

should be reflected at socio- economic level. When the poverty, untouchability, social and economic inequality are abolished in the Indian society, the importance of state socialism will be realized in true sense. And the society is leading towards that direction.

ⁱ <http://www.constitution.org/cons/india/const.html>

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forty-second_Amendment_of_the_Constitution_of_India,1976.

ⁱⁱⁱ Prateek Deol, “42nd Constitutional Amendment: A Draconian Act of Parliament- Gujarat National Law University”. Legalserviceindia.com Retrieved 2013-11-23. *Legalserviceindia.com*.

^{iv} Constituent Assembly Debates, vol-7, 1949, pp.494-495 and vol-1, 1946. Pg.98

^v "*Constituent Assembly of India - Volume Vii*". *Nic*. 15 November 1948. Retrieved 2013-11-23. This article incorporates text from this source, which is in the public domain.

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^{vii} Chanchreek K.L. “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar” H.K. Publication, Delhi,1991, Pg.3

^{viii} Rajendra Kumar Arya Dr. Tapan Choure an article on Developing Country Studies published www.iiste.org ISSN 2224-607X (Paper) ISSN 2225-0565 (Online) Vol.4, No.25, 2014 84 The Economic Thoughts of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar with Respect to Agriculture Sector, Pg.2

^{ix} <https://www.quora.com/Why-is-the-word-socialist-still-there-in-the-preamble-of-the-Constitution-of-India>

^x Badal Sarkars an article on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s theory of State Socialism published in International Research Journal of Social Sciences ISSN 2319–3565 Vol. 2(8), 38-41, August (2013) Int. Res. J. Social Sci. International Science Congress Association 38, Pg.39

^{xi} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Directive_Principles_Constitution_of_India-Part_IV_Article_38 Directive Principles of State Policy

^{xii} The Constitution of India (As Modified Up To The 1st December, 2007) Government of India Ministry of Law and Justice,Pg.1

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^{xv} Lokhande, G.S: Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: A study on Social Democracy, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982 Pg.38

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^{xvii} Ibid,Pg.3

^{xviii} Lokhande, G.S: Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: A study on Social Democracy, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982 Pg.34

^{xix} <http://www.oijrj.org/oijrj/jan2015-special-issue/32>

^{xx} Ambedkar B.R, 1945, What Congress and Gandhi have done to Untouchables?, Bombay, Thacker and Co Ltd,
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^{xxi} Sudhi Mandloi an article entitled 'Dr. Ambedkar's Philosophy on Democracy and his Dissent: An Analytical Study of Ambedkar's Socio-Political Ideas' published in Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, {Bi- Monthly}, ISSN 2249-9598, Volume-V, Jan 2015 Special Issue, Pg.248