

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: The Architect of Indian Constitution

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1. Introduction

Dr. Ambedkar's seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution, is popularly known all over India as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. His efforts to eradicate social evils were remarkable and that is why he is called the "messiah" of the down trodden in India. Dr. Ambedkar was appointed the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. His text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Constituent Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs for members of the SC and ST, Ambedkar kept the clauses of the Constitution flexible so that amendments could be made as and when the situation demanded. He provided an inspiring Preamble to the Constitution ensuring justice, social, economic and political, liberty, equality and fraternity. The creation of an egalitarian social order, however, remains an unfulfilled wishful thinking to this day. Dr. Ambedkar was not only a learned scholar and an eminent jurist but also a revolutionary who fought against social evils like untouchability and caste restrictions. Throughout his life, he battled social discrimination while upholding the rights of the Dalits and other socially backward classes. He was not only a great national leader but also a distinguished scholar of international repute. He not only led various social movements for the upliftment of the depressed sections of the Indian society but also contributed to the understanding of the socio-economic and political problems of India through his scholarly works on caste, religion, culture, constitutional law and economic development. As a matter of fact, he was an economist and his various scholarly works and speeches indicate his deep understanding of the problems faced by the Indian society. Upon India's independence on August 15, 1947, the new Congress-led government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister, which he accepted. He was appointed as the nation's first Law Minister and was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1990. On August 29, 1947 Dr. Ambedkar was appointed the Chairman of the Drafting Committee that was constituted by Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution for independent India. The draft Constitution was the result of the collective efforts of a galaxy of great leaders and legal scholars in the Constituent Assembly such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Bhimrao Ambedkar, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, B.N. Rao, Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar etc. The intent of this paper is to examine the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar only to the Indian Constitution.

2. His Crucial Role in Indian Constitution

Dr. Ambedkar played a seminal role in the framing of the Indian Constitution. He used all his experience and knowledge in drafting the Constitution. In his capacity as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, he hammered out a comprehensive workable Constitution into which he incorporated his valuable views. He gave free India its legal framework, and the people, the basis of their freedom. To this end, his contribution was significant, substantial, and spectacular. Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to the evolution of free India lies in his striving for ensuring justice - social, economic and political - for one and all. Despite his increasing unpopularity, controversial views, and intense criticism of Gandhi and the Congress, Ambedkar was by reputation an exemplary jurist and scholar. Members of First Central Cabinet of Indian Republic Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India are sitting in the center. Dr. Ambedkar is sitting at the extreme of the first row. (Jan. 1950). On August 29, Ambedkar was appointed chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, charged by the Assembly to write free India's new Constitution. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his drafting work. In this task Ambedkar's study of Sangha practice among early Buddhists and his extensive reading in Buddhist scriptures to come to his aid. Sangha practice incorporated voting by ballot, rules of debate and precedence and the use of agendas, committees and proposals to conduct business. Sangha practice itself was modelled on the oligarchic system of governance followed by tribal republics of ancient India.

The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action, India's lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socio-economic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India's depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need base.

3. The Adoption of his Constitution

The Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly. Speaking after the completion of his work, Ambedkar said "I feel that the Constitution is workable; it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in 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 was with Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet in 1951 following the installing in parliament of his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to expound gender equality in the law's of inheritance, marriage and the economy. Although supported by Prime Minister Nehru, the cabinet and many other Congress leaders, it received criticism from a large number of members of parliament. Ambedkar independently" contested an election in 1952 to the lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha but was defeated. He was appointed to the upper house of parliament, the Rajya Sabha in March 1952 and would remain a member until his death.

4. Fundamental Rights of Human Beings

Ambedkar was a champion of fundamental rights, and Part 3 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights to the citizens against the state. Some of the fundamental rights contained against individuals as they are very significant rights relating to the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth etc. The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights- for women. According to Ambedkar, the most significant feature of the fundamental rights is that these rights are made justifiable. The right to move to the Supreme Court for enforcement of fundamental rights.

5. Democracy in Parliament

Dr. Ambedkar was a strong advocate of the parliamentary form of government right from the inception of the Government of India Act of 1935. He firmly believed that the parliamentary system of government alone can usher in an egalitarian society through the application of the principles of social democracy. Dr. Ambedkar's social democracy comprised politicians, political parties with high standards of political morality, honesty and integrity and strong and highly responsible Opposition party or parties committed to the cause of the downtrodden and depressed classes. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution echoes the principles of parliamentary democracy. It reads "We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens - Justice, Social, Economic and Political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, Equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all - Fraternity, assuring the dignity of Individual and the Unity of the Nation, in our Constituent Assembly this 26th day of November, 1949 do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution."

Dr. Ambedkar was a strong advocate of the federal structure of the Union and States based on the principles of a strong Centre and independent States. Dr, Ambedkar also did great service to the nation by proposing the institution of a unified judicial system and common All India Services with a view to strengthen national unity and integrity.

6. Protective Reservation

The real contribution of Ambedkar is reflected in the protective discrimination scheme or the reservation policy of the government envisaged under some provisions dealing with the constitutional mandate to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the other backward classes. Provisions like prohibiting untouchability and dealing with the protection of minorities are some of the notable examples.

The dealing with the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes speak clearly about the substantial and significant contribution of Ambedkar for the development of untouchables. Ambedkar made it his life's mission to uplift the untouchables and other downtrodden masses from the unequal position of inferiority to that of equal position of parity in socio-economic status with high-caste Hindus. For achieving this goal the reservation policy or the scheme of protective discrimination was advocated and implemented by him for ten years at least to ameliorate the conditions of the various depressed and downtrodden sections of Hindu society.

7. The Doctrine of State Socialism

Dr. Ambedkar advocated his economic doctrine of "state socialism" in the draft Constitution. He proposed state ownership of agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form of state socialism in the field of industry. But due to strong opposition in the Constitution Assembly, he could not incorporate his scheme of state socialism under the fundamental rights as a part of the Constitution. In 1948, Dr. Ambedkar presented the draft Constitution before the people of India; it was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly in the name of the people of India and came into force on January 26, 1950 marking the beginning of a new era in the history of India. Speaking after the completion of his work, Ambedkar said: "I feel the Constitution is workable; it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. It has been in effect since January 26, 1950, which is celebrated as the Republic Day in India. The first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, praised the services rendered by Dr. Ambedkar in the making of the Constitution and said: "I have carefully watched the day-to-day activities from the presidential seat. Therefore, I appreciate more than others with how much dedication and vitality' this task has been carried out by the Drafting Committee and by its chairman Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar in particular. We never did a better thing than having Dr. Ambedkar on the Drafting Committee and selecting him as its chairman." At last he came to be known as Baba Saheb for his contribution to our country.

8. Conclusion

The contribution of Dr. Ambedkar in Indian Democracy is not to be forgotten. As a chairman of the Constitutional Committee he gave a shape to our country of a complete Sovereign, Democratic and Republic based on adult franchise. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's name will be written in golden letters in the history of India as a creator of social justice. This fact is doubtless. He was not only the man of age and builder of the Constitution but also the creator of social justice and betterment of the downtrodden. He was one of the few sons in the History of India

that he can be said to the gift of Indian freedom movement. If Mahatma Gandhi gave direction and lesson of morality then Baba Saheb gave shape to social aspect without exploitation. In true sense of the word, he gave democratic and antifascism. He spent his whole life for the betterment of the poor, exploited, untouchables and troubled classes. Thus, Dr. Ambedkar's contribution to the Indian Constitution is undoubtedly of the highest order. Indeed he deserved to be called the "father or the Chief Architect" of the Indian Constitution.

Dr. Ambedkar's drafting of the Indian Constitution has enabled the abolition of un touchability and the outlawing of all forms of discriminations. Due to all these outstanding contributions Dr. Ambedkar can be rightly called the architect of the Indian Constitution. Thus, the degree is being conferred in recognition of the work done by him in connection with the drafting of India's Constitution. The University hailed him as "one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and valiant upholder of human rights".