



DR. AMBEDKAR'S THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is known as staunch protagonist of Democracy in his belief and action. He was the emancipator of the untouchables, a champion of the Depressed and suppressed classes, a great scholar with highest intellectual integrity, a far sighted statesman a legal luminary with extraordinary acumen, a Constitutional expert of exceptional learning, a true nationalist with great ability and mettle and above all, a staunch protagonist of Democracy in true spirit.

The term democracy is derived from the Greek words 'demos' and 'Kartos', the former meaning the people and the later power.⁰¹

According to R.K. Kshirsagar, democracy is a form of Government in which the people rule themselves either directly or indirectly or through their elected representatives. In democracy sovereignty vests with the people in general.

According to J.R. Lewis, "Democracy is basically as a form of Government, but a form which exists to supply and maintain a better society and to provide the maximum amount of liberty for individual consistent with the attainment of order and security within the State".⁰²

The most popular definition of Democracy is given by Abraham Lincoln as, "Democracy as Government of the people by the people and for the people."⁰³

According to Walter Bagehot Democracy is a, "Government by discussion".⁰⁴

Many thinkers have given many definition's and meaning of democracy. But the fact is Democracy is not merely a form of Government but it is a way of life. Which is based on radical humanism?

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave snuggle and channelized his all efforts to realize Democracy in India. Dr. Ambedkar revolted against Chaturvarnya, Caste and Untouchability system to establish democracy in India.

Dr. Ambedkar defines democracy as “a form and a method of Government whereby re volutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed”.⁰⁵

Dr. Ambedkar believes in constitutional way of life. In his concept of Democracy he wants the Government to be responsible for bringing revolutionary changes in economic and social life of the people without bloodshed whereas Marxism believed in bloodshed against State. Dr. Ambedkar differed with Marx on the means of realizing the objectives and purposes enshrined entwined with socialism. He advocated democratic means and believed that though democratic means are slow far more enduring stable and permanent.⁰⁶

Is definite that dr. Ambedkar never propagated violence, bloodshed. He always preached his followers to use democratic, non-violent and constitutional ways to solve their problems.

Dr. Ambedkar further defined Democracy as, “democracy is a mode of associated living. The roots of Democracy are to be searched in social relationship, in terms of associated life between the people who form the society.”⁰⁷

Historical evidences put fourth the truth that Chaturvarnya, Caste and untouchability system has adversely affected the Indian society. Vedas, Smritis, Shrutis, Upnishadas has propagated inequality . Since ancient times there was no associated life in Hindu society. As the theory of Caste and

Chaturvarnya system is based on graded inequality. The Indian society was divided in many Castes. The downtrodden castes were treated inhumanly.

People from Ati Shudra castes were not allowed to live in the village's along with upper castes. Their Shadows were considered as polluted one and they were treated as untouchables where as some animals were touchable for them and their were worshiped and considered as pious. Untouchable's were not allowed for access to water from village. Such inhuman treatment was given to untouchables. Therefore it can be stated that there was no healthy social relationship amongst Indians since ancient times. Dr. Ambedkar being true democrat wanted associated life amongst the people in Indian democracy.

Dr. Ambedkar states that, political democracy rests on four premises. They are :

- 1) The individual is an end in himself.
- 2) The individual has certain inalienable rights which must be guaranteed to him by the Constitution.
- 3) The individual shall not be required to relinquish any of his constitutional rights as a price of any privilege.
- 4) The state shall not delegate power to private persons to govern others.⁰⁸

All these points are absolutely important in Democracy. Thus according to Dr. Ambedkar the main objective of Democratic Government should be the welfare of individuals.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had very explicitly stated the conditions which are very much necessary for the successful working of democracy. They can be stated in brief as under.⁰⁹

- 1) Equality :- For the success of democracy the first and foremost necessary element is equality. He stated that there must be no glaring inequalities in the society. There should not be an "Oppressed Class" and there should not be a "Suppressed Class". He refers to

Abraham Lincoln, who once said that “a house divided against itself cannot stand” and endorses the letters statement.

The entire Indian society was divided in caste system which was based on negation of human value's and glaring inequalities in society. Dr. Ambedkar explained the evil effects of caste system as follows.

“Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's public in his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no charity to the needy.”¹⁰

Thus Dr. Ambedkar said that caste was the root of undemocratic system and it was hurdle in success of Democracy. His idea of Democracy was based on principle of equality. According to him, “where equality is denied everything else may be taken to be denied”.¹¹

- 2) Two party system :- The second important condition for the successful working of democracy is the existence of strong opposition to the ruling majority.¹² In Kingship there was no Veto Power in hands of people but in Democracy there is Veto power in hands of people. To avoid dictatorship and fascist tendency it is necessary in democracy to have two political party system, one for ruling and other for opposition, to have counter check on ruling party.
- 3) Equality in Law and Administration :- There must be not only equality before Law, but there must be equality of treatment in administration.

The administration must be well responsive, responsible and impartial; and it must be well determined. It should command obedience to authority, “We must have a Government,” he

said,” in which the men in power will give their undivided allegiance to the best interest of the country. We must have a Government in which men in power, knowing where obedience will end and resistance will begin, will not be afraid to amend the social and economic code of life which the dictates of justice and expediency so urgently call for.”¹³

He observed that, “the administration in India is completely in hands of Hindus. Their one aim is to discriminate against the untouchables and to deny and deprive them not only to the benefits of Law, but also of the protection of Law against tyranny and oppression. The result is that the Untouchables are placed between the Hindu population and the Hindu ridden administration, the one committing wrongs against them and the other protecting the wrong-does, instead of helping the victims.”¹⁴ Discrimination in administration cause atrocity on Untouchables and depressed classes in India. Therefore Dr. Ambedkar wanted equality in Law and Administration as one of the condition for success of Democracy.

- 4) Constitutional Morality :- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said that, “A Constitution which contains legal provisions, is only skeleton. The flesh of the skeleton is to be found in what we call constitutional morality.”¹⁵ According to Dr. Ambedkar Constitution is important for success of democracy but more important was constitutional morality in polity and society.
- 5) No Tyranny of Majority :- Dr. Ambedkar said, “The minority must always feel safe that although the majority is carrying on the Government, the minority is not being hurt.”¹⁶ The reason behind Dr. Ambedkar’s this thought is that there is always clash between majority and minority for superiority. Which leads to undemocratic situation in society.
- 6) Moral order :- Dr. Ambedkar said, “A politician dose not merely trade in politics, but he also represents a particular faith covering both the method as well as the metaphysics of

politics.” He further said that, “Politics has become a kind of sewage system intolerably, unsavory and insanitary. To become a politician is like going to work in drain.

According to Dr. Ambedkar Politics is the key of all emancipation. Therefore he asked depressed classes to capture political power. For realization of Social democracy in true spirit. He emphasis for moral order in Politics just because he wanted Democracy to be implemented in true sense.

- 7) Public Conscience :- According to Dr. Ambedkar Public Conscience means, “Conscience which becomes agitated at every wrong, no matter who is the sufferer; and it means that everybody whether he suffers that particular wrong or not is prepared to join him in order to get him relieved.”

Dr. Ambedkar considered the condition but public conscience as essential condition for successful working of democracy because without public conscience democracy cannot be successful. It is the will of the people that makes healthy democratic atmosphere.

Dr. Ambedkar wanted Social democracy to cherish in India. He said very categorically Political Democracy cannot be successful unless there lies at the base of it of Social democracy. He warned the nation in this direction that, “on the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into the life of contradictions. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man, one vote and one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason if our social and economic structure continue to deny the principle of one man, one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else

those who suffer from inequality will bloro up the structure of political Democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up.”

Dr. Ambedkar was of opinion that political Democracy must change its form to social Democracy in order to develop state socialism.

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