

## Empowerment of Dalits and Sharing of Local Level Water Resources: A Strategic View of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar towards Sustainable Development in Rural India

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### Abstract

### Review Article

Empowerment refers to creating capacities in the individuals or groups to participate actively in their own welfare. Empowerment is multi-dimensional in the sense that it occurs within social, economic, political and cultural spheres. Empowerment should be a process that helps people to gain control over their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. Caste-system in India assigns particular sets of functions and roles even before one's birth, and also provides specific economic, civil, cultural and educational rights to one without a freedom to change. The present paper highlights that dalit empowerment in terms of granting of power and flexibility to partake and use the water resources available in the rural pockets of India, with a view of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar thoughts.

**Keywords:** Empowerment, Caste System, Social, Economic, Political, cultural.

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### INTRODUCTION

The concept of social justice implied the absence of discrimination on the ground of caste, race, religion, sex etc. in present scenario. This all perspective somehow or the other meant for giving equal opportunity to each and every person in every sphere to develop their total personality which also should work for removing the imbalance of society in socio-economic and political life. The constitution indeed works for that and realize fundamental rights to empower the people which would ensure economic and social democracy. Empowerment refers to creating capacities in the individuals or groups to participate actively in their own welfare. Empowerment is multi-dimensional in the sense that it occurs within social, economic, political and cultural spheres. Empowerment should be a process that helps people to gain control over their lives through raising awareness, taking action and working in order to exercise greater control. As Jo Rowlands stated that it is about the individuals being able to maximize utility and use the opportunities available to them without or despite constraints of structure and state'. According to Gutierrez, 'it is the process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals, families and communities can take action to improve their situation. Thus empowerment refers to building capabilities among

individuals and groups through which they become self-reliant and organized [1].

### Objectives

- To describe the socio – economic condition of the dalits.
- To examine the empowerment of dalits and sharing of water resources.
- To bring out the suggestions and remedies for resolving of social problems affecting dalits in sharing of water resources.

### Caste System and Vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Touching this aspect in this paper is important because of the reason that undoubtedly the aspect of caste is still with us in this society and we approaching 70 years of independence have not been able to eradicate this. These are indeed not been touched by any of the government but in a true sense the caste division is a great hindrance in the development process. We live in 21st century but there are some intricacies which is difficult to understand when it comes to caste differences. Today, in India a child work is decided before birth seeing his or her caste. The question is that whether we can imagine a Brand India where still the caste system is prevalent. The Branding in a true sense does not check the caste of a person but

on the ground level this is always asked upon. My whole perception lies on the assumption that we live in Good Society and there is society where the work is not defined according to caste. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who chaired the Drafting Committee, is notably considered as the Father of the Indian Constitution and played a very pivotal role in the constitution-making. Though when the leadership in the Constituent Assembly selected him to be the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, B.R. Ambedkar was very pleasantly amazed at the choice and said that came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interest of the Scheduled Castes greatly surprised when the Assembly elected me to the Drafting Committee. I was more than surprised when the Drafting Committee elected me to be its Chairman. Through these words one can easily denote the exact purpose that led Dr. Ambedkar thought. He precisely worked for the downtrodden class and what he expected was the constitution with everybody co-operation and co-ordination because he knew that he cannot dream of a brand India without the support of all and which was easily understood by Dr. Ambedkar [2].

Caste-system in India assigns particular sets of functions and roles even before one's birth, and also provides specific economic, civil, cultural and educational rights to one without a freedom to change. It ignores therefore an individual capability, preferences and choices. In this regard, the social order prevail in the Indian society provides no entailments, social and economic rights and freedoms to lower castes, and in contrary, gives manifold opportunities, privileges and rights to the higher castes, particularly the Brahmins. Therefore, the fact was much known to the Constituent Assembly that the constitution was going to be introduced in a deeply unequal and discriminatory society. This is probably why its member greatly debated and drafted the constitution with the explicit purpose of dislodging the status.

B. R. Ambedkar, undoubtedly and noticeably, was the man who borne the responsibility to fight against the untouchability and exploitation based on Hindu caste system, and struggled for the untouchables 'rights and carved for them a place in the Republican Constitution of India. B.R. Ambedkar though managed to include certain provisions in the Constitution of India for empowering lower castes, but the fact was much known to him that establishing equal human and civil rights for depressed classes' was not sufficient in ensuring justice and welfare to them unless it would be accompanied by the legal provisions and safeguards to uphold those rights in the case of its violation and denial. He believed that providing rights to all citizens would not enough because the more powerful, the highly privileged higher classes might be able to deny them to lower strata of society. Law therefore should provide remedies against the invasion of fundamental rights. B.R. Ambedkar said in the Constituent Assembly

that all of us are aware that rights are nothing unless remedies are provided whereby people can seek to obtain redress when rights are invaded. Within this background, constitutional remedies have been arranged in the Constitution of India. Article 32 provides the right to all citizens of the country to approach the Supreme Court, if their fundamental rights and constitutional privileges are violated by any state institution or individual. This is perhaps why B. R. Ambedkar considered this provision as the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it. It is important to note; the Supreme Court later has declared that Article 32 is a part of basic structure of the Constitution.

The caste division can only be changed when it change the mentality. When a child is big and he starts understanding the situation then it becomes difficult to extract the character of caste system because it mixes with the blood. What is necessary is to have a system where the education should be given at a very base level that the caste system should be never taken into consideration. The Brand India that we dream of will be only possible when we are free from this thinking of caste else it will surely be a hindrance. Seeing the current scenario, it can be said that they have moved into the direction where we don't give much importance to the caste but this environment is not prevalent everywhere in the country and our aim should be to touch it everywhere.

### **Sustainable Development**

The world today speaks a lot about sustainable development all academic bodies are evaluated for 'sustainability'. Every administrative body is concerned about sustainable development. The world as such is focused on balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Any plan of action for the betterment of the people, planet and prosperity has environment at its core. Protection of the planet by creating a health hazard free environment and providing dignity and development in harmony with nature is expected. And Dr. Ambedkar is found in this regard to be an inspiring leader and is al so an outstanding example of what Antonio Gramsci called an organic intellectual, that is, one who represents and articulates the interests of an entire social class. The United Nations observed the 125th birth anniversary of Ambedkar in Apri 1 2016 with an intention of focusing on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And the views and guidance extended with great forethought by Ambedkar stands as a testimony for perfect sustainability in all walks of lives in a society which was very badly in need of the same.

### **Water and Community**

The right to the distribution and access to water has been the central concern of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar's Mahad *satyagraha*, asserting

untouchables' rights to take water from the public watering places, was one of the defining moments in Ambedkar's political thought and action which led to massive changes in the outlook and status of the untouchables. Mahad *satyagraha* and the burning of *Manusmriti* are symbolic of Dalits' and Ambedkar's struggles with the right to use water is respective of one's caste. Ambedkar felt that sharing of water with no caste imposed restrictions alone can dilute the menace caused by casteism. This struggle also symbolized a communal link between untouchables, agrarian and environmental ethos and traditions. The centrality of water for untouchables and the abuse and misuse of public water bodies became converging point for divergent traditions, putting forward a humane theory of democratic agrarianism. He reiterated that ours is an agricultural country and our soil is exhausted and that the salvation lies not in increasing the size of farms, but in having intensive cultivation that is employing more capital and more labour on the farms such as we have. Thus Ambedkar stands as a defining force who worked with vigour for the betterment of the nation as a whole

#### Dr. Ambedkar Thought and Dalit Emancipation

Dr. Ambedkar wanted social and political equality for the untouchables. He insisted that they must be secured before the Britishers departed from India. He urged that the country must be placed above community. He issued a call to the Scheduled Castes, telling them that it was the duty of the Scheduled Castes to defend India's hard won freedom and to avoid our independence being put into Jeopardy for a second time and probably be lost forever. It is indeed a tribute to his sagacity, wisdom and legal acumen that the basic philosophy and ideals enshrined in the constitution of India have withstood the test of time and helped in preserving the unity, integrity and democratic fabric of the country. Therefore, he has been aptly described as the Modern Menu [3].

#### Social Justice

The outcaste is a byproduct of the caste system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcaste except the Destruction of the caste system. (B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*) Babasaheb Dr. Bheemrao Ambedkar inherited a society based on the graded inequality and injustice resulting in the deprivation of human rights of millions of his countrymen. He felt the need for reforming and restructuring the Hindu society based on equality, liberty and justice and, above all, social justice for all Centuries old customs, traditions and beliefs cannot be thrown away overnight. To mould the Indian society which comprises several religions, faiths, linguistics, ethnic groups and sub cultures, in to one compact unit was by any standard a herculean task. The sufferings, exploitation and oppression of the scheduled castes will not end unless the caste system is destroyed. It is high time that the caste system which accentuates and heightens social tension, was abolished

and a casteless society based on justice, equality and fraternity established. B.R Ambedkar is one of the major spokesmen of the depressed classes in India. It is a fact that Babasaheb Ambedkar did not discover a profound, specific definition or theory of "social justice [4]."

#### CONCLUSION

The present research has proved that there are not permissible rights entitled by the marginalized people from both locations of the village tanks to access and avail the water from village tanks. However the three are available separate tanks with less and dilapidated conditions for those people from lower caste people. On the basis of the ideas and thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar, these types of social discriminations exist damage the human basic rights and they have waived by severe punishments. All identified persons of the social discrimination in the context of water sharing issues and water disputes between the lower and higher caste people are entitled to take in the court of law and make it clear by legal decisions on the basis of Indian Penal code. The water standing duration of such tanks in almost all villages is 75 days to 150 days. It is observed that in the majority of the sample villages, during the summer season the people from the dominated caste are not allowed even for animals from the marginalized households. It is a splendor mistake made by the people in such village should be given severe punishment and jail imprisonment. On the basis of the Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts an individual must be punished and penalty may be collected from the people those had alleged for this social discrimination. At the outset of the present exercise, it is noted that in a remotest villages, the people of upper caste dominates in all ways of sharing of water resources, especially they have not allowed lower caste people to take water from their ponds and community based tanks. Even in a hamlet, the tank / pond is called public resources of village panchayat, which did not provide water requirement of dalits and they have been used to clean water structures(ponds), opening sluices, removal of silts and unnecessary plants (weeds). But poor people and dalits are not allowed to take the water for drinking, bathing and all sanitation purposes. The present research have also found every citizen of the village should be empowered basic rights to utilize water and water resources of the tanks, ponds and all other water bodies in remotest villages.

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