



Dr. Ambedkar's struggle for the Women's Pride of Modern India

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Ambedkar is known as the architect of Indian Constitution. Very few in this present generation is aware of his actual work and hardship that is privileged to us today. His far vision thoughts made him draft the best constitution for the modern India. There are many educated people who enjoy his birthday as government declared holiday but fail to know his struggle and sacrifice to see his country people free and happy with basic requirements. Dr. Ambedkar wrote various Acts for women. He also strived hard to amend the Acts for the betterment of Indian Women. This paper motivates the readers to know more about the Dr. Ambedkar's Acts specially prepared for the benefits of Indian Women so that they truly appreciate his sacrifice and honour him. The people should spread his good work to the less educated and illiterates of our country and understand the boon they have got being in modern India.

KEYWORDS : Ambedkar's struggle, people's awareness on acts, benefits to modern India

Introduction

'Lost rights are never regained by appeals to the conscience of the usurpers, but by relentless struggle' said Dr. Ambedkar who was aptly true to his words and struggled for approving the Acts for Indian Women. He is known to be the greatest feminist thinker and doer after Lord Buddha, who dedicated his entire life fighting for securing a better world for women giving them legal, economic, political and social rights for their real empowerment in his vision of making an equal India.

An eminent figure known to the whole world, Dr. Ambedkar as the architect of Indian constitution and the god father for the untouchables - who were deprived from their basic needs during the pre and post independence; has been a personality for mere celebration of 14 April every year i.e Birthday of Dr. Ambedkar. Most people just know that it is a holiday from their daily routine and others enjoy the rally for joy and fun. Unaware of his struggle

and persistence for the betterment of India, renowned personalities have become just a symbol for dancing on the tunes of music. We see encroachment in cities of India which gets converted into slums in no time. It carries display board with Dr. Ambedkar's photo for securing themselves without knowing the hardships of this personality, today's society has misused this figure for their selfish means and security purposes.

Problem

Either people don't know Dr. Ambedkar's work or they have forgotten the important work and Acts framed by him for the benefits of Indian women in current scenerio. It is oblivion that we enjoy the benefits today without knowing the person who suffered a lot and strived hard to amend the acts for the future betterment of our country.

Discussion and Analysis

1) Education for masses

Dr. Ambedkar stated, "We shall see better days soon and our progress will be greatly accelerated if male education is persuaded side by side with female education. Education is fruitless without educated women, and agitation is incomplete without the strength of women.

He strongly believed that the progress of a community by the degree of progress women have achieved. He was keen to see Indian woman taking education. He knew that Unity is meaningless without the accompaniment of women. Dr. Ambedkar understood the need to educate the male as well as female who would be responsible to unite the Indians together. "It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain

social status, economic betterment and political freedom".

For him, the value of English language education lay in the employment opportunities it would open up for labouring Dalit masses, as the same way it had for the Brahmans. English would allow lower caste representatives to deliberate on matters in legislatures where all affairs were conducted in English language. And in current scenario, English has gained prominence as international language. In India or any countries, the entry to placement is though English language only. Ambedkar's thoughts provoked the Dalits to take education in English in post independence era and today we find them in high status. Many through reservation system have really made up for their ancestor's loss. Their living style has drastically changed from poverty to mediocre and from mediocre to rich.

Now a days, people aspire to be born in Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe because of the reservation system which is a boon to them. The reservation system has been a great privilege to the poor and downtrodden society of India. But the controversy exists now is that the reservations were meant for the development of the society only for certain period of ten years after the constitution was framed. It seems that the society which was ones poor has got enough time for improving their living status and they have also become financially strong. It is high time that the government should act wisely to give reservations on their economical conditions with changing times.

2) The Equal Remuneration Act 1976

The Act states 'Equal wages for same work done by men or women'. It also ensures increased employment to women. Dr. Ambedkar thought women had to be physically present in the change and formation of the new nation. He believed in society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. He was instrumental in forming the National Employment Exchange Agency in India. This country is male dominated at work bastion but now is being replaced by women. Almost in all the fields, women have taken over because of their intelligent brains, activeness and enthusiasm to do hard work. They express their indigenous thoughts and perform work as men do. Hence, equal wage for women is apt for their services.

Today, we enjoy 8 hours duty which was ones 14 hours in India. It was only because of Dr. Ambedkar who was the chairperson at the 7th Session of Indian Labour conference in 1945, changed the working hours in India from 14 hours to 8 hours.

3) The Special Marriage Act, 1954

This act helps the girl to marry a boy of different religion without changing the religion; if the girl is 18 years old and boy is 21 years old. Dr. Ambedkar underscored that women have been denied the

right to determine their marriage and the age/time for it and to choose their husband too. He opined that a woman is an individual and she has her own rights to be respected. He considered that caste cannot be abolished by inter caste dinners or stray instances of inter caste marriages. Caste is a state of mind of human being.

Inter caste marriage is one of the most beautiful bonds that is tied between two religions to show integrity and love for human being. In country like India, we find various religion, caste, creed, tradition and culture. Rabindranath Tagore's quote in one of his poem states, "Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls". The poet Tagore wished to see his country people happy without barriers. Due to so many variations in our country, it is likely to have fights and differences in opinions leading to riots. But such acts help in prevailing harmonious environment. Special marriages play important role not only to unite people of two religion but also blend different languages, traditions and culture. A person who experiences the combination of two religion enjoys more than his own. Also, the biggest happiness lies in seeing the girl marrying and staying with the chosen partner for the life time.

4) The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961

Dowry remains a part and parcel of marriage even today. The father and the family members along with the new bride suffers lots of injustice from her in-laws claiming for dowry. Though Indians are getting more education, still this part is eluded. More the bridegroom is educated that much his expectations increase. Though the bridegroom doesn't claim for dowry, his parents go ahead stating that they have given dowry in their daughter's marriage so we want it in their son's wedding. On the name of highly educated bridegroom, the girls side is exploited. This doesn't stop till marriage. The story further carry forwards to see the girl being harassed by the in-laws. If the wishes are not fulfilled, this in-laws turn out to be the cruellest beast on this earth. Either the girl is burnt alive or she commits suicide making an end to her struggling life.

It has become the need of the hour to educate the women of India about such acts nor a day will come where will find only men and no women in India. By mere extrapolating the figures placed on record by the government – if in 2016, 20 women are killed every day, 4,68,000 married women have been killed in India due to tortures related to dowry.

5) The Maternity Benefit Act 1961

This act provides payment of maternity benefit at the rate of average daily wage for the period of women's actual absence. With this regard Dr. Ambedkar said, "I believe that it is in the interests of the nation that the mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the pre-natal period and also subsequently. I am prepared to admit this fact because the conservation of the people's welfare is primarily the concern of the Government. And in every country, therefore, where the maternity benefit has been introduced, you will find that the Government has been subjected to a certain amount of charge with regard to maternity benefit. I think, therefore, the benefits contemplated by this bill ought to be given by this Legislature to the poor women who toil in our factories in this Presidency."

In August 2016, Rajya Sabha passed amendments to the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, increasing the period of maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, which is over six months. The amended law also mandates a company to have a creche if they have more than 50 women employees. Though this amendment is only for small section of women currently, we can expect this act to be amended for whole women section in future.

6) The Factories Act 1948

Dr. Ambedkar emphasised to prohibit the employment of women from 7 PM and 6 AM to regulate women safety and welfare. But President Pranab Mukherjee gave his assent to the Maharashtra Factories Bill, 2015, wherein, amongst other amendments, it is allowing women to work in factories in night shifts. Prior to the

amendment, the Factories Act did not allow women employees to work in the factories in night shift between 7 PM and 6 AM. With this amendment it also makes mandatory for factory managements to ensure security of women working in night shifts.

Conclusion:

Ambedkar fought for the emancipation of women. He resigned from the cabinet in 1952 because his Hindu Code Bill was not passed. Women's empowerment in India is the result of Dr. Ambedkar's great struggle and sacrifice. India's government should introduce Ambedkar's work in form of lessons in schools and colleges so that right from childhood everyone acknowledges his praiseworthy work and heartily express the gratitude for the bounty of liberty and benefits bestowed on them to make a revolutionary country. More awareness to the whole country through his work needs to be highlighted and appreciated.

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