



**“STRENGTHENING DALIT WOMEN: AN OVERVIEW OF Dr. AMBEDKAR’S
CONTRIBUTION”**

Dr. Prakash S Ragi, Assistant Professor
Dept. of Sociology, Davangere University, Davangere

Abstract:

“I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress women have achieved”- Dr. Ambedkar

The most disadvantaged sections of the society are women. They constitute almost fifty percent of the human population. Many speeches given by Dr. Ambedkar are obvious in strengthening and enlightening women’s empowerment. The social struggles launched by him were aimed at counteracting the unequal treatment done to the untouchables by the Hindus. Ambedkar provides a powerful source of inspiration to formulate a feminist political agenda which simultaneously addresses the issues of class, caste and gender. Ambedkar was keen to involve Dalit women in all struggles he took up. He was well aware that unless women take part in social movements, desired change could not be sustained. The author found many reviews relevant to the topic. The main aim of this paper is to review and highlight the views of Dr. Ambedkar on Dalit women. Paper examines the social aspects, religious matters and level of education of Dalit women in order to understand holistic approach of Babasaheb to eradicate the issues of Dalit women and empower them with the self-respect. Accordingly, the paper argues, considering Ambedkar as an as essential philosopher of Indian gender discourse provides a further dimension to the feminist perspective.

Key words: Dalit women, upliftment, violence, liberation and



Introduction:

Ambedkar was an eclectic thinker with a clear mission of liberating the excluded humanity. His views on liberation of the Dalit including women differ from that of M.K. Gandhi, who claimed to annihilate caste, eradicate untouchability, and liberate women through reforms in Hinduism. Ambedkar tried to problematize the issues of Dalit and women in connection with the practices of caste hierarchies and hegemonic patriarchies that are aligned with Brahmanism. Consequently, he tried to resolve these problems through the devaluation of religion and depreciation of the authority of Sastras. In the “Women and Counter Revolution” and “The Riddle of Women” Ambedkar portrays the way in which Manu treated women. Many Dalit women participated in Mahad Satyagraha, Kalaram Temple Entry, Poona Pact Satyagraha and other agitations. In particular, his speeches at the time of the Mahad Satyagraha appear to have caused changes in their lives.

Ambedkar focused on elevating the virtue of self-creation that meant for raising self-respect, which was crushed by the Brahmanical discursive construction of Dalit woman as filthy, awkward and amoral. With the intention of turning negative image to positive picture, Ambedkar prescribed certain personal virtues to make the Dalit woman an active agent in transforming the private sphere and he brought women into his struggles for justice in order to realise their potential as agents of change in public sphere. In this context, his language of personal virtues can be understood as strategies of education to bring forth their suppressed agencies' worth in making creative choices.

Objectives, methods and materials:

The current paper aims to review and highlight the analysis of Dr. Ambedkar on empowering Dalit women in the society. To find out the The author has reviewed several works i.e. secondary data collected is certainly the outcome of literature survey and material obtained from Internet, e-journals, e-books and speeches delivered by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in parliament, various conferences and meetings in pre and post independent India.



Analysis and discussion:

Dr. Ambedkar's liberal views on women were motivating force behind this transformation of untouchable women. After Ambedkar's speech a feeling of self-esteem was generated among the women. They were ready to even face prison with their babies in their arms. With the consciousness that they must themselves fight against the injustice inflicted on them and for their own rights, women began to organize meetings, conferences etc.

Ambedkar's views on Dalit women's oppression, social democracy, caste and Hindu social order and philosophy become significant to modern Indian feminist thinking. The violence that Dalit women endure and resist constitutes a major feature of these studies. Reports from the ground on this subject make for a very painful and often shameful reading -- indicting as they do all of us, non-dalits, for our silent complicity in a cruel and unjust social order. It is not that civil society has not protested the more horrific instances of humiliation and violence that Dalits, particularly Dalit women, are subjected to, but such efforts do not in any substantial measure challenge social and birth privileges and the attendant class and political hegemony that go with either (Kejiya Dasari and Matlapudi, 2017).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took risk of challenging the established traditions of Hindu society because he had firm conviction that no society could change positively unless it was challenged. Thus instead of justifying and glorifying it, he felt that the better way to serve Hinduism was through its open criticism. Further, he suggests every Dalit member of the country must educate and develop the critical thinking ability. Education is the ultimate solutions for the majority issues of Dalit community, he said (Ramesh Kamble, 2017).

Babasaheb tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocab Dr. Babasaheb provided several provisions in the constitutions forbole Mahendra Tukaram (2015). To secure this goal, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar has given equal status to women on par with men by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution. To him, sexual discrimination should be root out from the society and everybody should get equal opportunity in the society. (Ahir, D.C 1990)



Conclusion:

Ambedkar's speeches and thoughts have had a great impact on women in those days. The people who received influence by the teachings and activities of Dr. Ambedkar launched different social reformative activities. Throughout his life time, Ambedkar endeavored to bring women into public life in a new role, as builders of Democratic society. Dalit women redefined ideals of both womanhood and educational purpose in terms of counter-hegemonic reconstructions of nation, society and community, and articulated new subject positions grounded in them. Although Ambedkar proved, to be a genius and was known as a great thinker, philosopher, revolutionary, jurist-par excellence, prolific writer, social activist and critic and strode like a colossus in the Indian socio-political scene till the end. Therefore, he tirelessly fought for the inclusion of the rights of women in different spheres of life.

References:

1. Bharati, T(1992)... Ambedkar and Uplift of Women", published in an edited book "Ambedkar and Social Justice-Volume II", pp 264 (1992)
2. Kamble, Ramesh, Dr. Ambedkar & Upliftment of Dalit Women (December 1, 2017). Dr. Ambedkar & Upliftment of Dalit Women, Third Concept, Vol. 31 No. 370, pp 48-51,
SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3080757> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3080757>
3. More, Vijay G (2011)...Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Contribution for Women's Rights", Variorum, Multi- Disciplinary e-Research Journal Vol.-02, Issue-I, pp 1-8
4. Nanak Chand Rattu: 'Little Known Facets of Dr. Ambedkar'. Focus Impressions, New Delhi, 2001, p.115.
5. Sanjeev Kumar (2015) ... Women Empowerment in India and Dr.B R Ambedkar. International Journal in Commerce, IT and Social Sciences. (IJCISS). Vol 2, issue 05 pp71-77.
6. Singariya M.R(2014) ... Dr B R Ambedkar and Women Empowerment in India", Quest Journals Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, Volume 2~ Issue 1, pp 1-4



7. Sushma N Jogan (2017), “A literature review on education for liberation: a Ambedkar’s vision and perspectives”, International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS) Vol. 7 Issue 9, September- 2017, ISSN(o): 2249-7382 pp. 204~208
8. Vaisali Dhanvijay. (2012) DR. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s efforts for women empowerment and present status of women in society”, Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal (EIIRJ), {Bi-Monthly}, Volume-I, Issue II, pp 111-114