



**Epitome : International Journal
of Multidisciplinary Research**

ISSN : 2395-6968

**Dr. B.R AMBEDKAR'S VIEWS AGAINST MANUSMRITI AND
TOWARDS EMPOWERING WOMEN**



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ABSTRACT

Manusmriti is considered as a holy book of the upper caste where the position of the women is degraded. In this study, the focus is primarily on Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's contribution to women's empowerment by mobilizing women against the subjugation they suffer from the caste and gender hierarchies in order to maintain the caste system in place. As Ambedkar realized, women must serve as torchbearers of a new society which is classless and casteless. The companionate relationship he advocated between men and women represents an

alternative to the master-slave relationship in Manusmriti. Manu's thought of a woman was of a subhuman being in need of stringent control by her male relations. This article seeks the answer to the question of why women need to be controlled. As suggested by Manusmriti. The article is based on secondary sources like the internet, books, magazine, and newspaper. Various national and international research papers were reviewed by the researcher to adopt a broad analysis on this subject.

KEYWORDS : Manusmriti, Master - slave relation, Upper caste, Empowerment

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction

I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved – Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

In ancient India women particularly enjoyed more freedom as compared to the 21st century, but this position gradually decreased later. Women were only an object of pleasure to serve men for a specific purpose. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept that involves not just one individual but the whole society. As a result of women's empowerment, they gain a greater share of control over their physical, mental, and financial resources - including knowledge, information, ideas, and money - as well as access to money and control over decisions within the home, community, and nation, as well as becoming more powerful. . From the beginning, women in this land were treated as a kind of thing. In Hindu Shastras, she has been branded like an animal or an object and was used only to seek pleasure from them. Their place in society has never been equal as compared to other genders. She has no basic human rights. She cannot move nor do anything of her own choice. According to Tulsi Das in Ramayana, “Dhol, ganwar, shudra, pashu, naari - Ye sab tadan ke adhikari”, the status of women is clearly reflected in ‘Manusmriti’, the ancient Hindu Codebook. She was treated at the lowest level of humanity as she was paired with animals and a slave by the proprietors. It was such an unfortunate placement that humanity dreads for our mothers, sisters and even great grandmothers. Until and unless we defy the Hindu Dharma-Shastras, Dr. Ambedkar, the father of Indian Constitution, was the principal architect of the Dalit Buddhist Movement, a movement dedicated to the upliftment of Dalits (untouchables) and women which was degraded by Manusmriti.

B. R. Ambedkar is a social reformist who worked tirelessly for their upliftment. He has authored more than thirty books which has been a respected scholar for decades. According to the Country Report of the Government of India, “Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one; of power” This article examines how Ambedkar shifted the status of women within the patriarchal Hindu society in order to disrupt the matrix of caste hierarchy. His advice was that women should educate themselves and lead an enriching life free

from the dependence of their male relatives, such as their father, husband, or son, for this purpose. As a result, he became the pivot around which socio-economic caste structure revolved by fully understanding the reproductive role women played within the existing social hierarchy.

Dr. B.R Ambedkar Towards Empowerment of Women

Dr. Ambedkar himself proved to be a thinker and philosopher who played a crucial role in upliftment of women. Ambedkar's views on women's oppression, social democracy, caste, Hindu social order and philosophy have a significant impact on modern Indian feminist thought because of the systemic and patriarchal aspects of caste, as well as the increasing caste / class divide in feminist political discourse. But being born as an untouchable his thoughts were never taken into consideration by the upper caste of the society. However, modern social realities examine the extensive variety of his topics, the width of his vision, the intensity of his analysis, and the rationality of his outlook and the vital humanity of his hints for realistic action. Hence, for Indian women motion Ambedkar offers an effective supply of idea to formulate a feminist political schedule which concurrently addresses the troubles of class, caste and gender within side the present day sociopolitical set up, which nonetheless continues conservative and reactionary values in lots of respects, especially on gender relations. The writings and speeches of Ambedkar display what values India needs to expand and the way they could modernize its social and political institutions. Ambedkar noticed women, as the sufferers or the oppressive, caste- primarily based totally on an inflexible hierarchical social system. During the round table conference which was held in 1930's Ambedkar made some powerful speeches which favored the upliftment of dalits and women. He was also elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee. He advised people that:

My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize, have faith in yourself. With justice on our side I do not see how we can lose our battle to me is a matter of joy. You must abolish your slavery yourselves. Do not depend on its abolition upon god or a superman.

He additionally indicates techniques for emancipation from oppression. He determined their emancipation in Buddhist values, which supports and promotes equality, self-admire and

education. He also believed that Buddha dealt with women with great admiration and love and in no way attempted to degrade those like Manu did. He taught women Buddhism and spiritual philosophy for their awakening. Ambedkar cites women like Vishakha, Amrapali of Visali, Gautami, Rani Mallika, and Queen of Prasenajjth who approached Buddha, as evidence of Buddha's remedy of women as equals. (Paul, 1993: 383-84) it became specifically the Hindu way of life and social customs, which stood inside the headway of women empowerment. In 1918, Ambedkar demanded separate, reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in share to their population. After fifty years of the running of the Indian Constitution, the Indian women's call for political reservation and the decreased fame of different drawback sections proves that his principle is correct. Ambedkar began his motion in 1920. He began out fierce propaganda in opposition to the Hindu social order and launched a magazine Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahishkrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose. He also burned Manusmriti in kalaram temple as an act of disagreement towards the holy book which was leading to exploitation of women. One of the notable social reforms which supported this claim was Pandita Ramabai, Dhondo keshav Karve, mahatma Jyotirao Phule etc. were the founding members for Samta Sangh for equality.

Dr. Ambedkar championed the purpose of women in addition to the depressing plight of Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes at some stage in his career. He mentioned some troubles of Indian women and looked for their answers in Bombay Legislative Council, within the Viceroy's Assembly as the chairman of the Drafting Committee and additionally within the Parliament as the first Law Minister of Independent India. Dr. Ambedkar was sworn in as a nominated contributor to the Bombay Legislative Council on 18th Feb., 1927. He counseled Indians to take initiatives inside the international war on behalf of the British Government. His arguments at the Maternity Benefit Bill had been pretty applicable to understanding the honor of women. He without any hesitation supported the Maternity Benefit Bill and the Hindu Code Bill which was an empowering step towards development of women.

Ambedkar's Quest For Gender Equality

Dr. Ambedkar always believed that for a developed nation gender equality in the society is crucial. As the chairman of the Constituent Assembly he made several efforts for women to

grab opportunities equal to men. Various articles in the Indian constitution favored equality. Some of them are :

- Article 14 Guarantees That The State Shall Not Deny Equality Before The Law And Equal Protection Of The Laws;
- Article 15 Prohibits Discrimination Against Any Citizen On The Ground Of Sex;
- Article 15 (3) Empowers The State To Make Positive Discrimination In Favour Of Women And Children;
- Article 16 Provides For Equality Of Opportunity In Matters Of Public Employment;
- Article 23 Prohibits Trafficking In Human Beings And Forced Labor;
- Article 39 (A) and (D) Enjoins The State To Provide Equal Means Of Livelihood And Equal Pay For Equal Work;
- Article 42 Enjoins Upon The State To Make Provisions For Securing Just And Humane Conditions Of Work, And For Maternity Relief;
- Article 51a (E) Imposes A Fundamental Duty on Every Citizen to Renounce The Practices Derogatory To The Dignity Of Women;
- Article 243d (3) Provides That Not Less Than 1/3rd Of The Total Number Of Seats To Be Filled By Direct Election In Every Panchayat To Be Reserved For Women, And Such Seats To Be Allotted By Rotation To Different Constituencies In A Panchayat;
- Article 243t(3) Provides That Not Less Than 1/3rd Of The Total Number Of Seats To Be Filled By Direct Election In Every Municipality Shall Be Reserved For Women And Such Seats May Be Allotted By Rotation To Different Constituencies In A Municipality;
- Article 243t (4) Provides Reservation Of Offices Of Chairperson In Municipalities For Sc, St, Women In Such Manner As The Legislature Of A State, May By Law Provide.

Thus it can be observed that Dr. Ambedkar made keen efforts for the oppressed women and people to gain their basic human rights, as excluding these rights will be one of the greatest hurdles for the nation.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Manusmriti is known for enforcing patriarchal norms as well as ridiculing the lower social classes. According to Manusmriti, Indian women are nothing but

sexual objects whose sole purpose is to please their husbands. Not only that, but Manusmriti also states women should not be independent and they should remain in the custody of their husbands after marriage and for their sons when they become widows.

The Manusmriti burning has become a pivotal moment over the years, because Ambedkar was an advocate for equal rights who opposed the text vehemently. Even today, many people still support him and emphasize his importance, despite criticizing him for this act. As a symbol of subordination, the day on which Manusmriti was burned is also known as Stree Mukti Divas. In today's modern world, Manusmriti Dahan Divas are more than ever important to invoke this subordination and humiliation of women as well as lower caste people. Manus is not just in Manusmriti, he is also in our minds. Thus it is important to change the mindsets of people if we want changes in society.

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