

A Study of Dr. Ambedkar's Ideas of Nation-Building in India

Dr. Sambhaji Sopanrao Darade

*Assistant Professor, Head of Department, History, Mula Education Society's, Arts, Commerce & Science College
Sonai, Tal:-Newasa. Dist:-Ahmednagar (M.S)*

ABSTRACT

B.R. Ambedkar's notion of nationalism and his understanding of the Indian national movement have rarely received adequate academic consideration either from the liberal or radical scholars and the historians in India. This study attempts to analyze Ambedkar's self generated vision of nationalism and also evaluate why he and dalits did not participate directly in the Indian national movement as directed by the congress which is a question that needs to be analyzed along with current debate raised by Arun Shourie criticizing the Ambedkar's feeling of nationalism. It is true that Ambedkar never keenly participated in India's national movement, rather he opposed the mainstream national movement, but this kind of attitude indirectly contributed much by laying the broad social foundation on which the present Indian nation state stands.

Keywords: - nationalism, mainstream, generated vision

INTRODUCTION

This study enclosing Ambedkar's self generated idea on nationalism and the social structure and political system and vision of Ambedkar on this particular issue that continues to confront us as critical, will help in unfolding the various dimensions related to the contemporary society and its polity. The canvas of Ambedkar's work is vast but the issues discussed in this study are a modest attempt to mirror the breadth of his idea on nationalism in Indian perspective. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956), the great Indian Constitution maker and „a symbol of revolt“ (as mentioned by Jawaharlal Nehru, The first Prime Minister of India), was one of the leading nation-builders of modern India. The reactions of Dalits (untouchables) to the criticism on Ambedkar's role in the freedom struggle of India and its construction of the national movement have led to a reconsideration of his ideas of nationalism. Ambedkar's thought in general and nationalism in particular is not merely ideas or opinions of a great thinker. These are aspects of a collective ideology which are operating as a motor force, in struggle with other ideologies in the fast changing society. Of all the modern Indian ideologies, it is Ambedkar who alone attempted to elaborate a full-fledged theory of nationalism and sought to apply it critically to the Indian situation. But, it is a pity that theoretical reflections and justifications were virtually non-existent within the nationalist movement in India. One section asserted that India as Hindu has been eternal and the Indian nation is waking up from its long stupor, imposed on it by its external enemies, other section treated it the phase „nation-in-the making“ whenever difficulties arose. As

against this, Ambedkar grappled with this ideology of nineteenth century Europe, deconstructed it as to what is perennial and peripheral in it and showed how it could be critically applied to the peculiarities of the colonial Indian situation.

VISION OF SIR B.R. AMBEDKAR REGARDING NATIONALISM

This section analyses the self generated vision of Ambedkar regarding nationalism critically. Nationalism is an ideology based on devotion to love of one's country either by birth or by choice which focuses upon the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity and actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve some form of political sovereignty. Nationalism, in a wider sense, is any complex of attitudes, claims and directives for action ascribing a fundamental political, moral, cultural value to nations and nationality and deriving special obligations and permissions from this ascribed value. Nationalism in Ambedkar initiated to object internal oppression as well as external domination. He wanted equality and civil rights for those who for centuries deprived of them. Indian society, in view of Ambedkar, was a system which gave no scope for the growth of the sentiment of equality and fraternity which are essential for a democratic form of government. Many people were deprived of the basic human rights.

He wanted constitutional safeguards to protect oppressed. Ambedkar was of the outlook that Indian society was nothing but gradation of caste which consists of ascending scale of reverence and descending scale of contempt. Ambedkar's view was very transparent regarding foreign domination. Ambedkar viewed that inspite of realizing the necessity of removing some social evils which had horrified the lives of down-trodden people; British attitude was indifferent in eradicating some social evils simply because of the reason that its intervention in the-then existing code of social and economic life would give rise to resistance. Ambedkar's spirit of nationalism took a proper shape through the struggle against such British rule although foreign rule had been the potential force in the country like India. Nationalism in Ambedkar stems from his spirit of dignity both for the people and for the country. He had profound feeling for the poor and untouchables which induced him to fight against denial of basic human rights.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on National Integration:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had firm faith in a cohesive society, which he thought would eradicate the evils of traditional systems and assimilation of marginal section of society into the mainstream of national life and thereby helped in promoting national unity and integration. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on associated life and interaction are also reflected in the preamble of our constitution which says, "we the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist, secular, democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political liberty of thoughts and expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity assuring dignity of the individuals and the unity and integrity of the nation.

Constitutional Provision for National Integration:

The Constitution of India, besides dealing with the structure, powers, and methods of functions of a government also reflects the hopes and aspirations of its people as well as the value consequences of its society. The constitution of India, besides dealing with the above is not only

a chart of social, economic, and political Justice but also a model of national unity and integrity. The preamble to the Constitution of India, embody in nutshell, the constitutional problem for national integration. It expressly lays down the resolve of the people of India "to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist and democratic republic, to secure its citizens. Justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality and status and of opportunity and to promote among them fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. The inclusion of the word 'fraternity' in our preamble is intended to foster the spirit of brother-hood, which is a moving spirit of National Integration and the promotion of which is absolutely essential in our country, which is composed of people of many races and religions, keeping the larger objective of National Integration in mind.

Single Citizenship and Single Judicial System:

Single citizenship and single judicial system are also unifying factors as they create common thinking that we are Indians whether we live in any part from Kashmir to kanyakumari. In order to realize this goal our constitution recognizes only single citizenship unlike U.S.A. where a man has two citizenships, that one of the state and the other of the United States of America.

Unity in Diversity:-

Article 1 of the constitution echoes the theme of unity in diversity wherein it declares. "India, that is Bharat, shall be a union of states" and therefore, also portray federal system in India. Federalism is a method, by which, integration is achieved, in political organized societies.

Common Language and Common Culture:-

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar common language, common culture is also conducive for national unity and integration since it strengthens the social cohesion, which is the basis of national unity. In fact, common language and common culture are interrelated and common culture emerges out of common language.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Views on the Regional Integration:-

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was very against of the North-South divide of the nation on any ground. His perception was very pragmatic and quite different than the others. In his opinion, India can be united horizontally by shutting out the regional feeling.

Divisions and Size of States:-

In the first, few decades of the 20th century the Bruisers made provinces like Bihar, Sind, North-West Frontier Province, Assam and Orissa on a linguistic basis. At the time of independence, 500 princely states were merged in India and there was urgent need to restructure the boundaries of different provinces on a rational basis.

CONCLUSION:

Democracy is not only a political doctrine but a social doctrine also. Democracy is, probably, the best way to initiate nation-building in every multicultural, multiethnic or multilingual state. Democracy should guard against the 'tyranny of the majority' to protect minority, whether caste based, religious, linguistic, ethnic. That is why Ambedkar opposed 'tyranny of the majority' and

any concentration of power. It was a major concern of his 'who always emphasized that political democracy would be incomplete without economic and social democracy'

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