



International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Transactions

(A Peer Reviewed Journal)

www.ijmrt.in

Dr B. R. Ambedkar's Contribution for Women Empowerment in India

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DoI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6449048>

Abstract

Women Freedom and Women Empowerment is very important for any country to be developed in all respect. Dr B R Ambedkar is one of the key and most important personality in the Indian History who played a major role in women empowerment in various area of capacity in the framing of the constitution of the India. Hindu personal law (Ambedkar was the one to introduce the Hindu Code Bill), Ambedkar facilitated the legal recognition of women as equal citizens. He granted women the right to divorce, the right to inheritance and he provided for legal recognition of inter-caste marriages. The Main and great contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar towards India is Constitution of India which is one of the most important wonder which is very useful and suitable for the vast country with so much diversity and challenges faced by the country it has kept the great country with united and conducive to all people of different religion which is not seen in any country through out the world. Women are most important in development of any country. They can play a major role in the family activities and contribute to the growth of family financially and emotionally. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has done a immensely great work in creating equality of rights and duties in the Indian Constitution for the development of the women. The fruits of his decision and long vision is seen now in our country. This paper is decent contribution in crating awareness about "Dr B. R. Ambedkar's Contribution for women's Freedom". which can be considered as main force to develop the country as a whole.

Keywords: Women , freedom , Personal Law, Society , Equal , Society, People, Empowerment

Introduction

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (14 April 1891 – 6 December 1956) was an Indian jurist, economist and *Dalit* leader who headed the committee drafting the Constitution of India from the Constituent Assembly debates, served as Law and Justice minister in the first cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru, and inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement after renouncing Hinduism.

Ambedkar graduated from Elphinstone College, University of Bombay, and studied economics at Columbia University and the London School of Economics, receiving doctorates in 1927 and 1923 respectively and was among a handful of Indian students to have done so at either institution in the 1920s. He also trained in the law at Gray's Inn, London. In his early career, he was an economist, professor, and lawyer. His later life was marked by his political activities; he became involved in campaigning and negotiations for India's independence, publishing journals, advocating political rights and social freedom for Dalits, and contributing significantly to the establishment of the state of India. In 1956, he converted to Buddhism, initiating mass conversions of Dalits. When we list our feminist icons here in India, we often overlook Babasaheb Ambedkar. Any mention of Dr Ambedkar and his work is often sought to be confined. He becomes a 'Dalit leader'. While his work in opposing and fighting the caste system is perhaps second to none, such a process of labelling refuses to recognize the other aspects of his work. Aspects of his work which have benefitted every Indian citizen. And yet sometimes, when he is called *Father of the Indian Constitution*, this becomes an exercise in empty tokenism. There is hardly any acknowledgement of the debt every citizen of this country—regardless of caste, gender, religion—owes him for enshrining equality as a fundamental right.

This is a disservice not only to Ambedkar but to the fundamental precepts of the feminist movement, an important part of which is to acknowledge and celebrate contribution—intellectual and otherwise—of those who don't figure in the mainstream hero pantheon. And Ambedkar's contribution towards securing the position of disadvantaged sections is significant. This includes not just lower caste men and women, but also upper caste women.

Laws for Women Empowerment in India

List of some specific laws which were enacted by the Parliament in order to fulfil Constitutional obligation of women empowerment:

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.
- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.
- The Medical termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.
- The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013.



Source:-[wikipedia/images/Dr B R Ambedkar](https://www.wikipedia/images/Dr_B_R_Ambedkar)

Apart from the numerous speeches which drive home his basic belief in the equality of women, Ambedkar's theorization of the interlinked nature of caste and gender-based oppression in India was a pioneering feat. His now oft-quoted 1917 paper called *Castes in*

India shows how in the Indian context, the specific ways in which women and their sexuality are controlled, all hinge on the maintenance of the caste system.

“The Hindu Code was the greatest social reform measure ever undertaken by the legislature in this country. No law passed by the Indian legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to it in point of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code. It is for its sake that I stayed on, notwithstanding my differences.” (241)

But when discussion on the Bill was delayed repeatedly, and then finally the Bill was dropped because of lack of time for its discussion, Ambedkar handed in his resignation because he had *“to be true to himself”*.

That he recognized the equal status of women and that he worked towards securing it legally at a time when barely anyone else was, is beyond question. But whether retrospectively labeling him as a feminist is necessary or sensible is a different question altogether.

“I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.”

Dr BR Ambedkar made this statement in a gathering of over 3, 000 women in 1927. In another speech in 1936, to communities of *Joginis* and *Devadasis* — who typically belonged to the Dalit community — Ambedkar urged these women to fight the regressive religious practice of offering pubescent girls to gods in temples and become “sexually available for community members”.

He said: “You will ask me how to make your living. I am not going to tell you that. There are hundreds of ways of doing it. But I insist that you give up this degraded life.... and do not live under conditions which inevitably drag you into prostitution.”



Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Source:-<https://www.google.com/search?q=Dr+B.+R.+Ambedkars+Contrib>

Indian Constitution and Women's Role

The main privileges granted to women by Constitution of India are as follows:

Preamble of the Constitution

Under the Constitutional law, women have equal rights as men so as to enable them to take part effectively in the administrative of the country.

Equality before law

Article 14 embodies the general principles of equality before law and equal protection of laws.

Prohibition from discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

- Article 15(1) and (2) prohibits the state from discriminating against any citizen only on the basis of any one or more of the aspects such as religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
- Article 15(3) makes it possible for the state to create special provisions for protecting the interests of women and children.
- Article 15(4) capacitates the State to create special arrangements for promoting interests and welfare of socially and educationally backward classes of society.

Equality of Opportunity

- Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
- Article 39 requires the State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)];, and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39(d)].
- Article 39A directs the State to promote justice, on the basis of equal opportunity and to promote free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

Humane Conditions at Work

Article 42 directs the State to make provision for securing justice and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

Fundamental Duty

Article 51A (e) enjoins upon every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Reservation of seats for Women in Panchayats and Municipalities

Article 243 D (3) and Article 243 T(3) provide for reservation of not less than one third of total number of seats in Panchayats and Municipalities for women to be allotted by rotation to different Constituencies.

Article 243 D(4) T(4) provides that not less than one third of the total number of officers of chairperson in the Panchayat and Municipalities at each level to be reserved for women.

Voting rights/Electoral law

- Not less than one-third seats shall be reserved for women. Such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat.
- The office of the chairperson in the Panchayat at the village or any other level shall be reserved for SCs, STs and women in such manner as the legislature of state may, by law provide.
- Reservation of seats for women in Municipalities is provided

To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the state has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women. Although women may be victims of any of the crimes such as 'Murder', 'Robbery', 'Cheating' etc, the crimes, which are directed specifically against women, are characterized as 'Crime against Women'. These are broadly classified under two categories.

Conclusion

Dr B R Ambedkar played a most important role in giving the main freedom and major rights in India. If he would not have been part of this framing of the Constitution the very different picture would have been seen in the country. Women might have been deprived of many rights and other benefits. He wanted women to have greater participation in all walks of life, especially in the political arena. To empower that, as a legislator under the British regime, he was one of the first people to root for the rights of working women. His statements were powerful. Having a worldview like this in the wake of the 20th century, when India was in the eye of a grave political storm, echoes Ambedkar's vision for humanity. All human rights are universal, and inclusivity is key — this is something he knew all too well. Therefore, while rightly venerated as the father of the Indian constitution and a champion of Dalit rights, he was also an ardent feminist.

Acknowledgement

The Author is thankful to all the friends and contributors of this study. All the references used are acknowledged through this.

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