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## DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A BRIEF STUDY

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**Abstract :** *A revolutionary figure, a pioneer of social justice and a true reformer, Dr B. R. Ambedkar's role is significant in shaping the social, political and civic contours of India and fostering the advancement of the society in general and women in particular. His personal sufferings as a Dalit and his exposure to Western ideas and rational thinking built in him the confidence to challenge the orthodox Hindu social order and reconstruct the society along the ideas of equality, liberty, fraternity and respect for the dignity of all including the womenfolk. He held Manu responsible for all plight and agony of women. He also blamed the Hindu social order for assigning a stereotype role to women. He firmly believed that eradication of the iniquitous gender relations and elevating the status of women were the vital requirements of the process of social reconstruction that he aimed at. Through this paper it is tried to verify the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar approach for upliftment of economic, social and political status of women.*

**Key Words:** Women Empowerment, Education, Health, Socio - Economic Status, Crimes against women, Policy implications

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Born in a poor low Dalit caste, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, a symbol of revolt against all oppression of the Hindu social order and a great champion of human rights and social justice, greatly contributed to the cause of women's rights in India in that he not only pointed out to their inferior status but sought to equalize them with men through an extensive inclusion of women's rights in the Constitution of India. His Western education and pragmatism surprised him of the degrading status of women perpetuated by the Hindu social order. His treatises 'The riddle of the women', 'The women and the counter revolution', 'The rise and fall of Hindu women', 'Caste in India: Their mechanism, genesis and development' and his two notable journals *Mook Nayak* and *Bahishkrit Bharat*<sup>1</sup> (Barnwal, 2014, p. 393) unravel the inequitous and artificial construction of gender relations preaching submission to women. His reformative steps in the form of constitutional provisions, Hindu Code Bill and various acts for women were preceded over by a thorough investigation of the root cause of the degrading status of women through an extensive study of the Hindu Shastras and Smritis.

### **A . Status of women India during and after Vedic period :**

Women of specific sections of society (namely Brahmanas and Kshtryiya) during the early Vedic period enjoyed equal status with men in all aspects of life, but such rights were not available to all sections of society due to superstitious and man-dominated scripture of Manu.

The status of women was on declining trend. The reform movements such as Jainism allowed women to be admitted to religious orders, by and large women in India faced confinement and restrictions. The practice of child marriages is believed to have started around the sixth century. Few texts exist that specifically deal with the role of women an important exception is the Stri Dharma Paddhati of Tryambakayajvan, an official at Thanjavur c. 1730. The text compiles strictures on women's behaviour dating back to the Apastamba sutra (c. 4th century BCE). The status represents the position of individual in the group. The word status denotes the position of an individual in a system with attendant rights and duties. It is the position which the individual occupies in the group by virtue of his or her sex, age, family, occupation, marriage and achievement. The status of women refers to her position in the network of social role structure, privileges, rights and duties. It refers to her rights and duties in family and social life.

The status of Hindu women in India has been fluctuating. It has gone through several changes during various historical stages. Historically speaking, women in India have passed through two phases of their life – the period of subjugation and the period of liberation. At times she has been suppressed and oppressed and at times she is regarded as the deity of the home. From the Vedic age till today, her status and position has been changing with the passing of time. The Rig-Vedic society was a free society. The Aryans evidently preferred male child to female child. However, females were as free as their male counterparts. Education was equally open for boys and girls. Girls studied the Veda and fine arts. Women never observed purdha in the Vedic period. They enjoyed freedom in selecting their mates. But divorce was not permissible to them. In the family, they enjoyed complete freedom and were treated as Ardhanginis.

In domestic life women were considered to be supreme and enjoyed freedom. Home was the place of production. Spinning and weaving of clothes was done at home. Women helped their husbands in agricultural pursuits also. Husband used to consult his wife on financial matters. Unmarried daughters had share in their fathers' property. Daughter had full legal rights in the property of her father in the absence of any son. Mother's property, after her death, was equally divided among sons and unmarried daughters. However, married women had no share in father's property. As a wife, a woman had no direct share in her husband's property. A widowed mother had some rights. The woman was regarded as having an equally important share in the social and religious life because a man without woman was considered as an inadequate person. She regularly participated in religious ceremonies with her husband. There were many scholars who composed hymns of Rig Veda. Lopamudra, Gargi and Maitreye were the pioneers among them. Lopamudra, the wife of Agasti rishi, composed two verses of Rig Veda.

Traditions such as Sati, Jauhar, and Devadasi among some communities have been banned and are largely defunct in modern India. However, some instances of these practices are still found in remote parts of India. The purdah is still practiced by Indian women in some communities. Child marriage remains common in rural areas, although it is illegal under current Indian law.

**Sati:** Sati is an old, almost completely defunct custom among some communities, in which the widow was immolated alive on her husband's funeral pyre. Although the act was supposed to be voluntary on the widow's part, its practice is forbidden by the Hindu scriptures in Kali yuga, the current age. After the foreign invasions of Indian subcontinent, this practice started to mark its presence, as women were often raped or kidnapped by the foreign forces. It was abolished by the British in 1829. There have been around forty reported cases of sati since independence.

**Jauhar:** Jauhar refers to the practice of voluntary immolation by wives and daughters of defeated warriors, in order to avoid capture and consequent molestation by the enemy. The practice was followed by the wives of defeated Rajput rulers, who are known to place a high premium on honour. Evidently such practice took place during the Islamic invasions of India.

**Purdah:** Purdah is the practice among some Hindu and Muslim communities requiring women to cover themselves in front of males for the purpose of modesty.

**Devadasis:** Devadasi is often misunderstood as religious practice. It was practised in southern India, in which women were "married" to a deity or temple. The people of the temple used to rape and physically and mentally harass the beautiful girls of lower caste in the name of God. The ritual was well-established by the 10th century A.D. By 1988, the practice was outlawed in the country.

***B. Contribution of Dr. Ambedkar for the upliftment and empowerment of Indian women during British rule and after independence.***

Dr. Ambedkar a determined fighter and a deep scholar has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He was first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He stated that women should be given all round development more importantly social education, their wellbeing and socio-cultural rights. He emphasized that each and every section of Indian women be given their due share and it is a must to maintain and protect dignity and modesty of women.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar always believed in movements led by women. He insisted that every married woman must participate in her husband's activities as a friend. But she must show the courage to deny the life of slaves. She should insist on the principle of equality. If all the women follow it, they will get the real respect and their own identity. He 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". He started a strong movement against the Hindu social order and launched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose. Through its issues he put due stress on the gender equality and the need for education and exposed the problems of the depressed as well as women.

In January 1928, a women's association was founded in Bombay with Ramabai, Ambedkar's wife, as its president. The encouragement of Dr. Ambedkar to empower women to speak boldly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference in 1931. She

said “It is better to die a hundred times than live a life full of humiliation. We will sacrifice our lives but we will win our rights.” Dr Ambedkar believed in the strength of women and their role in the process of social reform. He said, “I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women had achieved. Let every girl who marries stand by her husband, claim to be her husband’s friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. I am sure if you follow this advice, you will bring honour and glory to yourselves.”

The constitution has laid down as a fundamental right the equality of sexes. But the change from a position of utter degradation and subjugation of women in the nineteenth century to a position of equality in the middle of the twentieth century is not a simple case of progress of women in modern era. Revolutionary changes have taken place in the position of women in India after independence. The Constitution of India provided for special steps to be taken by the government to improve the condition of women by separate institutions.

A quick and effective change in the status of women was contemplated through social legislations. The Constitution of India guarantees certain fundamental rights and freedom such as protection of life and personal liberty. Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as the Indian men. Article 14 ensures equality before law and Article 15 prohibits any discrimination. Article 16(a) forbids discrimination in any respect of employment of office under the state on the grounds only of religion caste, sex, descent, and place of birth, residence or any of them.

In the post-independent India we had series of laws passed for the upliftment of women. These legislations have been brought in order to give equal rights and privileges with men, to eliminate discriminations against women, remove inequality between sexes, and remove external barriers coming in the way of their self-realisation and development. The important Acts passed for the upliftment of women are:

- The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955: This Act provided equal rights to women to obtain divorce and also maintenance in certain cases.
- The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956: By virtue of this Act a woman can adopt a boy or a girl as her son or daughter.
- The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act of 1956: This Act provides that a woman is entitled to act as the natural guardian of her minor children.
- The Hindu Succession Act of 1956: As a result of this Act, woman has got equal rights in the inheritance of family property. This Act is a landmark in the history of Hindu law.
- The Hindu Women Right to Property Act of 1973: This Act has given more facilities to women. According to this Act, the daughter, the widow, and the mother can inherit property of the deceased simultaneously. Now women will hold her property absolutely with full right to sell, mortgage, and dispose of as she desires. But according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, woman has only to enjoy her husband’s share in coparcenaries property for her life time without any right to alienate property.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961: According to this Act, taking or demanding dowry is an offence punishable by imprisonment and or fines.

- The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976: This Act does not permit wage discrimination between male and female workers.

### C. Impact of Dr. Ambedkar's Efforts for the Empowerment of Indian women:

Considering the guidelines, recommendations, suggestions and statutes given by Dr. Ambedkar, the Government of India and other State Governments have implemented large number of schemes for the empowerment of women in India. On Dr. Ambedkar's death, in the condolence message in parliament, then Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru said "Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of Hindu society". His dream of society, based on gender equality is yet to be realized and therefore his thoughts are important for the social reconstruction that favours women empowerment.

#### a. Laws for Women Empowerment in India :

Here is the 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.

### Conclusion :

It is not easy to eradicate deep-seated cultural value, or alter tradition that perpetuates discrimination. Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar sacrificed his whole life for the betterment, rights and justice to underprivileged sections of society. He made such provisions and included such articles in the constitution of India which helped a common man to fight against injustice. Woman is treated as source of enjoyment and exploited by man in Hindu culture prevalence during and after vedic period because the society move according to *manusmriti* at that time. Due to Ambedkarite reforms and Ambedkarism, women got independence and learnt to live with honour and pride. With self confidence, women started getting education, employment and become a part of whole system like man. It is only due to the efforts and contribution of Babasaheb that women are self-dependent today and government has initiated many schemes and implemented many laws for the empowerment of women in Indian society. Towards all the women, irrespective of their religion, casts and class, Babasaheb had a particular humanitarianism view.



A revolutionary figure, a pioneer of social justice and a real reformer, Dr B. R. Ambedkar's role is important in shaping the social, political and civic contours of Asian country and fostering the advancement of the society normally and ladies above all. His personal sufferings as a Dalit and his exposure to Western ideas and rational thinking in-built him the boldness to challenge the orthodox Hindu social order and reconstruct the society on the ideas of equality, liberty, fraternity and respect for the dignity of all as well as the womenfolk. He control Manu to blame for all plight and agony of girls. He conjointly damned the Hindu social order for distribution a stereotype role to girls. He firmly believed that demolition of the sinful gender relations and elevating the standing of girls were the important needs of the method of social reconstruction that he geared toward. Through this paper it's tried to verify the connexion of Dr. Ambedkar approach for upliftment of economic, social and political standing of girls. Key Words: girls direction, Education, Health, Socio - Economic standing, Crimes against girls, Policy implications Born in an exceedingly poor low Dalit caste, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, an emblem of revolt against all oppression of the Hindu social order and a good champion of human rights and social justice, greatly contributed to the reason behind women's rights in {india|India|Republic of Asian country|Bharat|Asian country|Asian nation} in this he not solely acknowledged to their inferior standing however wanted to equalize them with men through an intensive inclusion of women's rights within the Constitution of India. His Western education and pragmatism stunned him of the degrading standing of girls perpetuated by the Hindu social order. His treatises 'The riddle of the women', 'The girls and also the counter revolution', 'The rise and fall of Hindu women', 'Caste in India: Their mechanism, genesis and development' and his 2 notable journals Mook Nayak and Bahishkrit Bharat1 (Barnwal, 2014, p. 393) unravel the inequitous and artificial construction of gender relations preaching submission to girls. His reformatory steps within the style of constitutional provisions, Hindu Code Bill and numerous acts for girls were preceded over by an intensive investigation of the basis reason behind the degrading standing of girls through an intensive study of the Hindu Shastras and Smritis. A . standing of girls Asian country throughout and once religious text amount Women of specific sections of society (namely Brahmanas and Kshtryiya) throughout the first religious text amount enjoyed equal standing with men altogether aspects of life, however such rights weren't offered to all or any sections of society because of irrational and man-dominated scripture of Manu. The standing of girls was on declining trend. The reform movements like Jainism allowed girls to be admitted to non secular orders, by and enormous girls in Asian country visaged confinement and restrictions. The observe of kid marriages is believed to possess started round the sixth century. Few texts exist that specifically modify the role of girls a very important exception is that the Stri Hindu deity Paddhati of Tryambakayajvan, a political candidate at Thanjavur c. 1730. The text compiles strictures on women's behaviour chemical analysis back to the Apastamba Sanskrit literature (c. fourth century BCE). The standing represents the position of individual within the cluster. The word standing denotes the position of a personal in an exceedingly system with attendant rights and duties. it's the position that the individual occupies within the cluster by virtue of his or her sex, age, family, occupation, wedding and action. The standing of girls refers to her position within the network of social role structure, privileges, rights and duties. It refers to her rights and duties in family and social life. The standing of Hindu girls in Asian country has been unsteady. it's saw many changes throughout numerous historical stages. traditionally

speaking, girls in Asian country have well-versed 2 phases of their life – {the amount|the amount} of subjugation and also the period of liberation. from time to time she has been suppressed and laden and from time to time she is thought to be the immortal of the house. From the religious text age until these days, her standing and position has been ever-changing with the passing of your time. The Rig-Vedic society was a free society. The Aryans plainly most well-liked teenager to daughter. However, females were as free as their male counterparts. Education was equally open for boys and women. women studied the religious text and fine arts. girls ne'er determined purdha within the religious text amount. They enjoyed freedom in choosing their mates. however divorce wasn't permissible to them. within the family, they enjoyed complete freedom and were treated as Ardhanginis. In domestic life girls were thought of to be supreme and enjoyed freedom. Home was the place of production. Spinning and weaving of garments was done reception. girls helped their husbands in agricultural pursuits conjointly. Husband wont to consult his better half on monetary matters. mateless daughters had share in their fathers' property. female offspring had full legal rights within the property of her father within the absence of any son. Mother's property, once her death, was equally divided among sons and mateless daughters. However, married girls had no share in father's property. As a wife, a girl had no direct share in her husband's property. A unmarried mother had some rights. girl|the lady|the girl} was thought to be having associate equally necessary share within the social and non secular life as a result of a person while not woman was thought of as associate inadequate person. She frequently participated in non secular ceremonies together with her husband. there have been several students United Nations agency composed hymns of Rig religious text. Lopamudra, Gargi and Maitreye were the pioneers among them. Lopamudra, the better half of Agasti rishi, composed 2 verses of Rig religious text.

Traditions like Sati, Jauhar, and Devadasi among some communities are prohibited and square measure for the most part defunct in fashionable India. However, some instances of those practices square measure still found in remote elements of India. The purdah remains practiced by Indian ladies in some communities. kid wedding remains common in rural areas, though it's smuggled underneath current Indian law.

- **Sati:** Sati is associate degree previous, nearly utterly defunct custom among some communities, within which the widow was immolated alive on her husband's pile. though the act was alleged to be voluntary on the widow's half, its apply is tabu by the Hindu scriptures in Kali yuga, this age. when the foreign invasions of Indian landmass, this apply began to mark its presence, as ladies were usually raped or kidnaped by the foreign forces. it had been abolished by Brits in 1829. There are around forty rumored cases of sati since independence.
- **Jauhar:** Jauhar refers to the apply of voluntary ritual killing by wives and daughters of defeated warriors, so as to avoid capture and resulting molestation by the enemy. The apply was followed by the wives of defeated Rajpoot rulers, United Nations agency square measure noted to put a high premium on honour. plain such apply happened throughout the monotheism invasions of India.

- **Purdah:** Purdah is that the apply among some Hindu and Muslim communities requiring ladies to hide themselves ahead of males for the aim of modesty.
- **Devadasis:** Devadasi is usually misunderstood as non secular apply. it had been experienced in southern India, within which ladies were "married" to a spiritual being or temple. The individuals of the temple went to rape and physically and mentally harass the gorgeous ladies of lower caste within the name of God. The ritual was well-established by the tenth century A.D. By 1988, the apply was outlaw within the country.

## **B. Contribution of Dr. Ambedkar for the upliftment and authorization of Indian ladies throughout British rule and when independence.**

Dr. Ambedkar a determined fighter and a deep scholar has created important efforts to guide the society on the trail of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He was initial Indian to interrupt down the barriers within the manner of advancement of ladies in India. He expressed that ladies ought to tend all spherical development a lot of significantly social education, their eudaimonia and socio-cultural rights. He stressed that every and each section of Indian ladies tend their due share and it's a requirement to keep up and shield dignity and modesty of ladies. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar continually believed in movements light-emitting diode by ladies. He insisted that each adult female should participate in her husband's activities as a lover. however she should show the bravery to deny the lifetime of slaves. She ought to put into effect the principle of equality. If all the ladies follow it, they're going to get the \$64000 respect and their own identity. He expressed "We shall see higher days presently and our progress are going to be greatly accelerated if male education is persuaded aspect by aspect with feminine education". He started a robust movement against the Hindu social order and launched a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit India in 1927 for this purpose. Through its problems he place due stress on the gender equality and therefore the would like for education and exposed the issues of the depressed likewise as ladies.

In Gregorian calendar month 1928, a women's association was based in Bombay with Ramabai, Ambedkar "s partner, as its president. The encouragement of Dr. Ambedkar to empower ladies to talk with boldness was seen once Radhabai Vadale self-addressed a conference in 1931. She aforesaid "It is best to die 100 times than live a life filled with humiliation. we'll sacrifice our lives however we'll win our rights." Dr Ambedkar believed within the strength of ladies and their role within the method of social reform. He said, "I live the progress of community by the degree of progress that ladies had achieved. Let each woman United Nations agency marries stand by her husband, claim to be her husband's friend and equal, and refuse to be his slave. i'm positive if you follow this recommendation, you may bring honour and glory to yourselves."

The constitution has ordered down as a elementary right the equality of sexes. however the amendment from a grip of utter degradation and subjugation of ladies within the nineteenth century to a grip of equality within the middle of the 20th century isn't an easy case of progress of ladies in era. Revolutionary changes have taken place within the position of ladies in India



when independence. The Constitution of India provided for special steps to be taken by the govt. to boost the condition of ladies by separate establishments.

A quick and effective amendment within the standing of ladies was contemplated through social legislations. The Constitution of India guarantees bound elementary rights and freedom like protection of life and private liberty. Indian ladies square measure the beneficiaries of those rights within the same manner because the Indian men. Article fourteen ensures equality before law and Article fifteen prohibits any discrimination. Article 16(a) forbids discrimination in any respect of employment of workplace underneath the state on the grounds solely of faith caste, sex, descent, and place of birth, residence or any of them.

In the post-independent India we tend to had series of laws passed for the upliftment of ladies. These legislations are brought so as to provide equal rights and privileges with men, to eliminate discriminations against ladies, take away difference between sexes, and take away external barriers returning within the manner of their self-realization and development. The necessary Acts passed for the upliftment of ladies are:

It is tough to eradicate ingrained cultural worth, or alter tradition that perpetuates discrimination. Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar sacrificed his whole life for the betterment, rights and justice to underclass sections of society. He created such provisions and enclosed such articles within the constitution of India that helped a standard man to fight against injustice. lady is treated as supply of enjoyment and exploited by man in Hindu culture prevalence throughout and once sacred writing amount as a result of the society move per manusmriti at that point. because of Ambedkarite reforms and Ambedkarism, girls got independence and learnt to measure with honour and pride. With self-worth, girls started obtaining education, employment and become a vicinity of whole system like man. it's solely because of the efforts and contribution of Babasaheb that ladies ar self-dependent nowadays and government has initiated several schemes and enforced several laws for the authorization of girls in Indian society. Towards all the ladies, regardless of their faith, casts and sophistication, Babasaheb had a selected humanism read.

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