

**AMBEDKAR'S QUEST**  
**for**  
**INCLUSIVE INDIA**

Editor  
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# Ambedkar's Concept of Social Justice

- K. Bhima kumar

Ambedkar was a multi-faceted humanist, educationist, economist, sociologist, lawyer, social scientist and social reformer. He was also a crusader for the rights of depressed classes. With his speeches, writings, activities, and movements he tried to create awareness among lower classes about self-respect, dignity and freedom. The main reason for Ambedkar's continuous struggle social injustice was due to the fact that he was a victim of many humiliations and social evils.

Social Justice means the removal of inequalities and injustice in the society. In the Indian context the term social justice must be understood in a comprehensive sense so as to include political, economic, cultural inequalities between people. Social justice can be visualized as a three-dimensional concept. These are:

- a) A prime democratic value: The democratic value social justice connotes political equality and freedom, the acceptance of the principle of one man one vote.
- b) A social ethic: It is the rejection of caste and class barriers by clearing the social conscience of the traditional notion of inequality between man and man.
- c) An instrument of social transformation: Social justice provides leverage to the state to check social disparities and imbalances through legislative action.

According to Ambedkar the concept of social justice stands for liberty, equality and fraternity of all human beings. He stood for a social system that is based on right relations between persons in all spheres of life. For a proper understanding of Ambedkar's concept of social justice one has to go through his views on religion, particularly the Hindu religion. His concept of social justice is closely connected with the concepts

of religion and morality. For Ambedkar religion is not an opium. The true religion is that which is rational, ethical, spiritual and humanitarian. The religion which discriminates individuals is a partial religion. The religion which treats crores of its followers worse than criminals is no religion at all. Ambedkar who is a rationalist and a humanist did not approve any type of hypocrisy, injustice and exploitation of man by man in the name of religion. He stood for religion which is based on universal principles of morality applicable to all times, all places, and to all races. He was highly dissatisfied with Hinduism as it gave no support to the principle of social unity. He considered the caste system as the greatest evil of Hindu religion. It was the root for all kinds of inequality and social injustice in the society. He therefore wanted to eliminate the varna system from Hinduism.

Ambedkar took several measures to ensure social justice.

The first steps taken by Ambedkar for social justice were during Pre-Independence era. These included Mahad Tank Satyagraha and Kalaram Temple entry movement. They were major landmarks in the struggle for the establishment of social justice. The Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 culminated in the burning of the copy of Manusmriti. Ambedkar's temple entry movement was unsuccessful but it aroused an awakening in the minds of the depressed classes.

When Simon Commission visited India, Ambedkar submitted a memorandum to the commission and demanded protection for the depressed classes based on their population and social status. He further demanded that the education of the depressed classes should be recognized as the first charge on the revenue of the province. Ambedkar also insisted that there should be unrestricted recruitment of the depressed classes in the Army, Navy and Police for a period of thirty years. Another demand was that the depressed classes must be recognized as a distinct minority separate from Hindu community. The above representations made by Ambedkar resulted in the constitution of state committee by Government of Bombay in 1928 to enquire into the educational, economic and social conditions of the depressed classes. It further recommended necessary measures for the upliftment of the depressed classes. Ambedkar was a prominent member in this committee which recommended scholarships and hostels for the students, recruitment of depressed classes in