



## Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's theory of State Socialism

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### Abstract

*This paper is made an attempt to explore the contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar relating to 'State Socialism' in India. As an economist, he propagated that the state is the owner of the land. To him, the basic industries should be state monopolies. He thought that the state socialism can achieve by state control over land, industries, religions, caste and through an elaborate scheme of constitutional method. According to Ambedkar, caste consciousness hampers the all economic systems. He suggested nationalisation of life insurance and advocated state management and state ownership in industry for the benefit of the poor and down-trodden classes. The concept of state socialism is based on the principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. To him, men are different from each other due to their birth, mental ability and faculty, hereditary and social atmosphere, but they should have right to equal opportunities through the constitutional method. To promote rapid economic development through creation and expansion of infrastructure, promote redistribution of income and wealth, to create more employment opportunities, promote financial resources, to promote small- scale industries etc. are the objectives of the public sector or state-owned industries. The state is the owner of the land. It is the duty of the state to redistribute the land to those people who are poor farmers of the society. He wanted to abolish the Zamindars system.*

**Keywords:** State, socialism, land, industries, agriculture, farm, liberty, equality, fraternity, farmers.

### Introduction

The term 'Socialism' is a modern doctrine and its origin in western country. Some writers have traced that the term socialism is originated from the Old Testament. Plato's 'Republic' is very often cited as the best example of ancient socialism. The term 'socialism' was used in 1827 in England to understand a person who rejected the laissez-faire theory. There are several types of socialism such as Utopian Socialism, Scientific or Marxian Socialism, Fabians Socialism, Syndicalist Socialism, Guild Socialism, Democratic socialism, Gandhian Socialism, State Socialism etc. State Socialism or Collective Socialism arose as a reaction against extreme individualism of the 19th century. The principles of the State Socialism is found in the works of Eduard Bernstein in Germany, Jean Juarez in France, Karl Branting in Sweden, Eduard in Belgium and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in India. The State Socialism does not want to abolish the state but stands for removing the evils of capitalist discrimination and inequality. State Socialism stands for the idea of a welfare state. The State Socialists believes that the State alone can remove exploitation and promote General welfare. The means of production should be nationalised. The worker should be given equal pay for equal works. The workers or depressed classes can enjoy liberty and equality both in political and economic spheres. The State Socialists are against the abolition of the state.

### Dr. Ambedkar's theory of fundamental rights in State Socialism

The theory of State socialism in India has developed by the contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He submitted a

memorandum entitled on 'State and Minorities' to the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation in the year 1946. In the memorandum he has pointed out that the born or naturalised citizens of India should be treated equally. Any privileges or extra privileged arising out of rank, birth, person, family, religion or religious usage should be abolished. All citizens of India without caste, creed, religion, race, birth etc. should be treated by equality before law and equal protection of law. The state should be played a crucial role to protect the fundamental rights of Indian citizens. No religion is to be state religion. They have rights to reside any part of territory of India. The citizenship certificate should be provided by the state. Every citizens should have right to vote. The State shall be given guarantee of liberty to every Indian citizen without discriminations on the basis of caste, creed, religion etc. Right to religious association of the citizens shall be given by the state. One man one value is the principle of Dr. Ambedkar's socialism. No citizen shall be disqualified on the basis of birth or race. All citizens shall have equal access to all institutions, conveniences and amenities maintained by or for the public. The State Socialism should prescribe by the law of the Constitution. The right of a citizen to vote shall not be denied on any ground other than immaturity, imprisonment and insanity. No law shall be made abridging the freedom of speech press, form of association and assembly except for consideration of public order and morality. The state shall guarantee to every Indian citizen liberty of conscience and free exercise including right to worship, right to form of religious association and its spread. The state shall not recognise any religion as state religion. Every religious association shall be free from state religion<sup>1</sup>.

## Remedies against invasion of Fundamental Rights in State Socialism

In his Memorandum State and Minorities Ambedkar propagated that the judicial power of the state shall be vested in the Supreme Court of India. The fundamental rights of Indian citizens are justifiable by the court of law. The Supreme Court has been made the special guardian of the rights, guaranteed by the Constitution. Judicial protection of the people should be given by the Constitution against executive and legislative tyrannies. In this connection the High Court and Supreme Court shall have the right to writs such as Habeas Corpus, Quo Warranto, Prohibition, Certiorari and Mandamus<sup>1</sup>.

## Democracy in State Socialism

According to Dr. Ambedkar, to interest of the individual freedom the dictatorship should be abolished and it is essential to insist the Parliamentary Democracy through proper way. The objective of the individual shall be established the state socialism with Parliamentary Democracy. Dr. Ambedkar's State Socialism is based on parliamentary democracy. To establish State Socialism, totalitarianism, tyrannise and dictatorship should be abolished from society. To him, to establish socialism, retain Parliamentary Democracy and avoid Dictatorship. Political Democracy rests on four premises which may be set out in the following terms: i. The individual is an end in himself. ii. That the individual has certain inalienable rights which must be guaranteed to him by the Constitution. iii. That the individual shall not be required to relinquish any of his constitutional rights as a condition precedent to the receipt of a privilege. iv. That the state shall not delegate powers to private persons to govern others<sup>1</sup>.

His socialism is based on "a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economics and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed"<sup>2</sup>. Parliamentary Democracies will assure the liberty, equality and fraternity. In his article entitled on "Failure of Parliamentary Democracy Will Result in Rebellion, Anarchy and Communism" said that "If Parliamentary Democracy fails in this country, the only result will be rebellion, anarchy and communism"<sup>2</sup>. Dr. Ambedkar in his work "Annihilation of Caste" pointed out that "Make every man and woman free from the thralldom of the Shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the Shastras, and he or she will inter-dine and inter marry without your telling him or her to so"<sup>3</sup>. It is the duty of the state to destroy the all Hindu Shastras like Vedas, Upanishad, Purans and others.

## Safeguards for the Schedule Castes in state socialism

Indian society is based on caste and sub-castes. Poverty is an evil system of Indian society. Ambedkar's idea of socialism

attacked on poverty because poverty is responsible for diseased bodies and frustrated lives. To him, poverty and socialism cannot co-exist. For this reason he pointed out in his memorandum "States and Minorities" that the Scheduled Castes people shall be enjoyed the reservation seats in legislatures, executives, local bodies, in the Union Services and in the Municipal and local Board Services, in the States and group Services for their upliftment of the Depressed Classes<sup>4</sup>. To him, the State would be taken the greater responsibilities for socio-economic and political upliftment of the down trodden classes. To him, adequate opportunities shall be given to all.

## State socialism is based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

The aims and objectives of his State Socialism are to remove the extreme inequalities and evils castes system from the society. The concept of State Socialism is based on the principles of justice. To him, men are different from each other due to their birth, mental ability and faculty, hereditary and social atmosphere, but they should enjoy equal opportunities for their upliftment. The individual has the right to economic development from both public and private enterprises under the guidance of state control. The individual shall be enjoyed the economic liberty under the State Control. The state should take initiative for the maintaining the trinity principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. He advocated the inter-caste marriage, inter-dining system to eradicate discrimination from Hindu society and he embraced Buddhism. Indian society is caste based society. Castes and sub-castes system of Hindu society is an anti-democratic and anti-humanity. In his essay entitled on "Philosophy of Hinduism" Dr. Ambedkar has described relating to fraternity. To him, "I and my neighbours are we all brothers, are we even fifteenth cousins, any I their keeper, why should I do right to them"<sup>5</sup>. Fraternity is another name for fellow feeling. In his another essay entitled on "The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Principle" has pointed out that the concept of fraternity as one of key essential element of a just society. In this essay he said that "fraternity is the name for the disposition of an individual to treat as the object of reference and love and the desire to be is unity with the fellow beings"<sup>6</sup>. To him, collective liberty is 'Real' liberty<sup>7</sup>.

## Marxian Socialism and Ambedkarite Socialism

The Scientific Socialism propounded by Karl Marx (1818-1883) based on class-struggle. The State Socialism in India propounded by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956) based on peaceful and Constitutional method of law. He did not believe in class struggle. Both were very much concerned about the problems of the exploitation of humanity. Karl Marx was very much concerned about the problems of the proletariat class in European countries. On the same way, Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was very much concerned about the problems of the down-trodden classes in India. In India, downtrodden classes are proletariat community. He had better

experiences regarding the depressed classes because he faced the evils of caste system for his every step of life. Karl Marx's conception of socialism is based on stateless because he wanted to abolish the state as an instrument of exploitation. To him, the state will wither away. Dr. Ambedkar's conception of socialism is based on state because he does not recognise the abolition of state. To him, the public and private enterprises should be controlled by the state. According to Karl Marx, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle". Indian society is also basically a caste society. Indian history is obviously the history of caste and communal struggle. Unfair and injustice among the four Varnas of Hindu society had been existing in Indian society from the very beginning. The Brahmins refused to perform the 'Upanayana' of the 'Shudras' as such the Shudras who were Kshatriyas and became socially degraded. Lastly fell below the rank of the Vaishyas and thus came to form the fourth Varna.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the problem of the Scheduled Castes or Depressed Classes is not only political but also economical. On the same way, Marx's opinion was that the problem of the proletariat is economic. The caste system of Hindu society creates the sense of superiority and inferiority in relation between man and man. The problem of the down-trodden classes is basically social problem rather than politics. Self-respect and self-dependent is the motto of Dr. Ambedkar's conception of class-struggle. According to Marx, the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar suggested the same that the Scheduled Castes must first acquire the political power. According to Marx, the religion is opium. He does not believe in any religion. Dr. Ambedkar does not believe in Hindu religion. In 1935, he stated that he will not die as a Hindu. He denounced Hinduism and embraced Buddhism because to him the Buddhism is basically rational based on liberty, equality and fraternity. As a Buddhist, Dr. Ambedkar believed in atheism. Karl Marx also believed in atheism. Buddhism is based on rationality and morality. Indian society is characterised as a caste-economy because economic system dominated by the Brahmins classes.

According to Marx, base (economy) and superstructure (art, literature, law, court, police) of the society are used by the rich classes. To Marx, the state is an instrument to exploit the oppressed classes. Dr. Ambedkar believed in State as an instrument of social change and social welfare. He does not favoured anarchism. Actually Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to establish a balance between State ownership and private enterprise. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish the Parliamentary Democracy based on social, economic and political justice of proletariat. Dr. Ambedkar opposed to dictatorship, but communists are believes in dictatorship to establish the communism. Dr. Ambedkar's State Socialism believes in Constitutional method through peaceful establishing a socialist society. In his article 'Buddha or Karl Marx' Ambedkar advocated state control private property of the individual<sup>8</sup>. His concept of State Socialism demanded the nationalisation of

agricultural land and collective farming. Dr. Ambedkar believed in mixed economy. The Democratic Socialism propounds by Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish the State Socialism through the Constitutional method, not by bloody revolution. In State Socialism, according to Ambedkar, the depressed classes would be enjoyed the fundamental rights. There is no discrimination in his concept of State Socialism. His State Socialism envisages a classless and casteless society in which every human being is entitled to liberty, equality and fraternity. Individual welfare, morality and justice are the basic postulates of Dr. Ambedkar's State Socialism.

The means of production should be equally distributed by the state among the people. To him, in economic field the state intervention is essential for economic efficiency. Unemployed and employed persons and their fundamental right and liberty should be protected by the constitution. Individual liberties should be protected by legislature which is approved by law of the Constitution. His concept of State Socialism is free from capitalism. To him, the state is not an evil institution. His concept of State Socialism can easily bring justice, leisure, fairness, humanity, morality and honesty into society. The aim of his concept of State Socialism is safeguards the individual liberty. His socialism demands for social justice for whole society. Socialism stands for concentration of power or centralisation of power. Democracy stands for decentralisation of power. Dr. Ambedkar wanted to establish an ideal society in which individual can enjoy liberty through democracy and social welfare. To him, socialism and democracy may be preserved at the same time for the welfare of the people. Without individual liberty social welfare is impossible and without social welfare emancipation of Dalits would be very difficult. Individual liberty is the precondition of welfare society.

### **State Control over Agriculture, Industries and Property**

Dr. Ambedkar has pointed out that the key industries shall be owned and would be run by the state and the industries which are not key industries shall not be run by the state or co-operative. Insurance shall be a monopoly of the state. Agriculture shall be State Industry. To him, the nationalised insurance shall be given to individual greater security than private insurance. The proposal in his memorandum prepared by him was submitted to the Constituent Assembly in the year 1946, that the State ownership in agriculture with a collectivised method of cultivation and a modified form the State Socialism in the field of industry.

He stated that there is no bar on private property. To him, private property may exist in the form of small scale and cottage industries, personal saving, domestic animals etc. He admitted both public and private enterprise in industries. Both private and public enterprises shall be controlled by the state. According to

Dr. Ambedkar, State Socialism is essential for radical change to society. Each person shall have the right to hold any public offices or excises without any discrimination like caste, creed, religion, sex or social status. The agricultural firm shall be cultivated as a collective farm. The farms shall be cultivated according to the rules and directions by the state. The collective farms shall be obliged to the state. The water, seeds, draft animals etc. would be supplied by the collective farms. The state shall be entitled the levied from the agricultural farmers. The insurance of the people shall be a monopoly of the state. Agriculture shall be state industry.

State Socialism is vital for rapid industrialisation in India. Private enterprise cannot do it. To him, private enterprise means inequality of wealth. Nationalisation of insurance gives greater security to the people and it also gives the state resources. In clause 4, Article II of his memorandum entitled on "States and Minorities" submitted to the Constituent Assembly recommended that: i. Agriculture shall be a state industry, ii. Key and basic industries shall be owned and run by the State, iii. Nationalisation of Insurance policy shall be compulsory and monopoly of the state for every citizen, iv. The State shall acquire the subsisting rights in such industries, insurance and agricultural land held by private individuals, v. The State shall divide the land acquired into farms of standard size, vi. The farm shall be cultivated as a collective farm, vii. The farm shall be cultivated in accordance with rules and directions issued by Government, viii. The tenants shall share among themselves in the manner prescribed the produce of the farm left after the payment of charges properly liveable on the farm, ix. The land shall be let out to villagers without distinction of caste or creed, x. There will be no landlord, no tenant and no landless labourer, xi. The collective farms shall be distributes the water, draft animal, implements, manure, seeds etc., xii. The State shall be entitled the levy on the following charges produce by the farms: i. a portion for land revenue, ii. a portion to pay the debenture-holders, iii. a portion to pay for the use of capital goods supplied<sup>9</sup>.

## Conclusion

Discrimination is a culprit of the spirit of socialism. His main aim was to destroy all kinds of social discriminations. As a socialist, he advocated abolition of all kinds of social discriminations. According to Ambedkar, the present social system, economic system, political structures and moral conditions are not suitable to establish a socialist society. It is essential to radical changes in all spheres of society. The caste system of society is harmful for socialism. The caste system divides the society into four classes which is based on injustice. Therefore, various castes and sub-castes should be abolished. Immorality and inequality are harmful to establishing a socialist state. To establish a state control society based on morality,

justice, peace, liberty, equality and fraternity, it is needed to apply all kinds of principles of equality in all fields i.e. economic, social, political and religious.

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