

## **AMBEDKARIAN PERSPECTIVE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction:**

India's economic growth rate is running very fast most of the macro indicators look positive. Such as (GDP) Gross Domestic Product is approaching to 10 percent, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is increased a record high, capital market is also moving to upward direction. Real estate demand for flats and land shows growing fast at high rate. Demand for car is also increasing from rich class. All this shows that people's purchasing power have been increased. But this only half side story the other side shows us that, 26 percent people are living below the poverty line and near about 50 percent people are just struggling to survive on poverty line. Therefore, it is clear that only 24 percent people are sharing the national economic growth. Depressed classes SC, ST and OBC and Minorities have strong feelings that they are being excluded from the process of economic growth and they are denied their share in national income. So they oppose New Economic Policy at large extent. Since the beginning of NEP 1991 Government of India, continuously reducing its share from the public sector industries. It creates number of issues related to the life of depressed classes as the issues of unemployment and uncertainty. It was told that government will increase the expenditure on social over heads particularly education and health. However, government data shows that this is not happening. On the contrary government expenditure on social over head is grossly inadequate to the needs. Therefore, it creates income and wealth inequality, unethical activities, demoralizing the youths, violation etc. This is surely not good for long term smooth economic development of any country. We believe that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's economic philosophy focuses on the golden path of development. His philosophy maintains that balance in both the sectors public and private systematically.

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Therefore, this is the need of the time to study and understand Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's economic philosophy for the better future of India.

### **State's Role in Democratic Society:**

Ambedkar believed that, State can play important role in economic development of people. His book "States and Minorities", this was as much an economic manifesto as a social one. It proposed a united States of India without right of secession. It called for separate electorates, separate village settlements and strong measures against social boycott of untouchable and put forth a program for what Ambedkar called 'State Socialism', the nationalization of basic industries, and the nationalization of land and its organization in collectives<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, under the States Socialism following principles will be followed.

- a) Active role of state in the planning of economic life of people
- b) Emphasis on increase the productivity and production by providing physical capital and Human capital
- c) Freedom to private sector to plan and manage their industries and trade except in selected areas
- d) Equitable distribution of National wealth and income among all sections of society irrespective of castes, creed, gender, region and religions.

India being inequitably graded society Dr. Ambedkar recognized the need for a three fold strategy:

- a) Provision of equal rights (overturning the customary framework of caste system based on principle of equality and denial of equal rights, particularly, to untouchables).
- b) Provision of legal safeguards against the violation of these rights in terms of laws.,
- c) Pro-active measures against discrimination for fair share and participation in legislature, executive, public services, education and other public spheres for discriminated groups (in the form of reservation)

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<sup>2</sup> Gail Omvedt, Ambedkar towards an enlightened India, penguin Viking, New Delhi, 2004,p 116.

In his views, the real solution lies in removing the structural inequalities caused by past exclusion and isolation in more fundamental ways and put forward the policy of structural equalization<sup>3</sup>. It was necessary because of Hindu Social Order which is responsible for unequal distribution of National Wealth in India. Accordingly shudras were not allowed to acquire any sort of property such as land, fixed capital assets or a gainful trade. Therefore, to restructure the Indian society based on Liberty, Equality, Justice and Fraternity Dr. Ambedkar suggested some of the very important measures; one of them is Nationalization of land. In his important book “States and Minorities” he has given a complete plan. How to implement his plan in modern time and what are the advantages. ? Let us discuss in brief. The first thesis of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on agriculture problem namely “Small Holdings and Their Remedies”(1918) he rightly points out that the low productivity and production of agriculture sector was due to lack of inadequate inputs available to producers and non availability of alternative jobs to laborers there is a high presser of excesses labor force on agriculture sector. Therefore he has suggested increasing the industrial base to absorb these surplus labors. He also demands the abolition of Khoti land holding system to protect the tenant from Khots suppression and exploitation in 1937. However, Dr Ambedkar knew that such measures will not solve the root cause of sorrow of landless labors and small and marginal farmers. So, in 1946 he demands collective methods of cultivation. There are number of advantages of collective farming for our understanding we can classify these in two part as follows.

#### **Economic advantages**

- a) Total production and productivity will increase due to plan production and available of inputs such as fertilizers, capital, equipments and skill workers, and those who will work in agriculture sector will get all benefits as other workers in industrial sector.
- b) Maximum utilization of available land
- c) Irrigation facilities to all farmers
- d) Use of modern technology at a large extent.

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<sup>3</sup> Sukhdeo Thorat, Reservation in private sector , Rawat Publication, New Delhi, P 19, 2005.

### **Social advantages**

- a) Social harmony will prevail, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other land less workers will not be exploited by land lords.
- b) Justice and equity will remain maintained in rural India.
- c) Mobility of surplus labor force from agriculture to industry sector will increase at large extent.
- d) Income inequalities and social conflicts will reduce.

These are some of the important advantages of nationalization of land in India. Therefore, this is the issue that Ambedkarin thinkers should have to take at fore front at their movements. If the policy makers of this country would have accepted the demand of Dr. Ambedkar well in advance to nationalize the agriculture and reorganized the agriculture sector then such recent suicide of farmers in Maharashtra would not have been incurred.

The another important source of capital assets accumulation is industries, therefore Dr. Ambedkar suggested that key industries should nationalize. This was reflected in the industrial policy of India, as per the industrial resolution of 1956 major industries were nationalized. However, since the beginnings of new economic policy in 1991, government of India is gradually reducing its share from these industries and transferring these industries to the private sector. The results of such unethical transfers are multiple and most of these results are affected adversely on the life of depressed classes particularly, in respect of employment. These industries are now restructuring the pattern of production to increase the level of profit. To earn the profits is not a crime itself but if it is earned by reducing the employment then it becomes serious concern to Dalits as they have no other alternative source of livelihood. Economic times of India recently published a report of one of the expert committee on the share of employee's in the total production. According their report the share of labors in total industrial product in 1990-91 was 11 per cent and in 2000-01 the labors share reduced to 5.6 per cent .it indicate that though the industrial production is increasing but the labors share is decreasing.

## **Government Expenditure on Education and Health**

Education play very important role in the processes of development. Dr Ambedkar considered education as most powerful agent for bringing about desired changes in society and a it is a prerequisite for organized effort for launching any social movement in the modern times. For him education was an instrument to liberate the masses from illiteracy, ignorance and superstitious and thus enable them to fight against all form of injustice, exploitation and oppression. Therefore, he gave the highest priority to education in his struggle for the liberation of dalits from the age old oppressive character of the caste ridden Indian society. Being the main architect of the Indian Constitution Dr Ambedkar impose the responsibility of providing education to all citizens irrespective of caste and gender on government. The Fathers of the Constitution of India decided that education should be available free of charge and that attendance in schools should be compulsory for all children up to the age of 14 years as incorporated in Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State policy. This provision in Article 45 of the Directive principles of State policy reinforces Article 24 which reads “no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory mine or engaged in any hazardous employment. The Constitution also directs that children cannot be abused or forced to work and to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength” through article 39(e) and (f).

Keeping in mind the need to combat the educational and economic disadvantage of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes along with other disadvantaged sections of society in the past, special emphasis was given to their needs in article 46. This article makes a commitment to protect these groups from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. All the above provision indicates a clear commitment to giving Indian children in this freedom and dignity and recognizing their essential contribution to building a democratic nation.<sup>4</sup> However, the proportion of public outlays that goes to finance the education sector is indicative of relative importance assigned to that sector. While these figures are indicative of the relative lack of public commitment to developing the education system, education is being increasingly looked on as a

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<sup>4</sup> Shantha Sinha, Emphasising Universal principles towards Deepening of Democracy Actualizing children’s right to Education, EPW June 18, 2005 p 2569-2575. VOLIXLNO25

‘market’ for major national and multi-national corporations. Where, immense profits are to be made instead of public service<sup>5</sup>. Social investments are required for sustained economic growth. In China public spending on education is 2.3 percent of GDP while that on health is 2.1 percent GDP. The outcomes for human development are clear. Literacy stands at 84 percent, infant mortality rate at 32 per 1000 live births and under five mortality rates at 40 per 1000 live births.

India, in contrast, has traditionally had lower spending levels. Health spending stands at 1.3 percent of GDP (Central and States Governments combined). Spending on education has increased significantly, from 0.8 percent of GDP in 1950 to 3.2 percent in 2003, though it still falls short of the government target of 6 percent of GDP. Human development indicators for India remain much lower than for China. Literacy stands at 65 percent, infant mortality at 68 per 1000 live birth, and under five mortality rates at 96 per 1000 live births<sup>6</sup>. Dr Ambedkar vehemently criticises the British Government fiscal policy for impoverished India through irrational taxation methods, through a land tax that prevented agricultural prosperity and heavy customs at internal excise duties that injured its industry. It was clear, he argued, that the British government was running India in the interest of British manufacturers. Similarly, he criticized the British government’s expenditure policy because most of the expenditure was on defence, administration and other non- development work and grossly neglect social sector particularly education and health.

After independence it was told by the authorities at that time that Indian Government will spend more money eradication poverty, education to all and health facilities at low cost or free to the poor, employment generation and number of other promises

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<sup>5</sup> T Ravikumar, vijender sharma, Downsizing higher education an emerging crisis, EPW, February 15, 2003 Vol xxxviii no7

<sup>6</sup> Human Development Report 2003, oxford university press, New Delhi ,published for the united nations development program (UNDP)

were given to Indian people. Therefore let us see the educational condition of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in India.

### **Educational Conditions SC/ST**

Basic education continues to remain a privilege enjoyed by some and there is tremendous variation among the social groups. Universal primary schooling is still a distant goal, particularly for females amongst the socially disadvantaged groups, ie the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward castes and Muslim in remote rural areas and urban slums. As per the report of ministry of HRD government of India 1998-99 the literacy level among the SC females was 23.76 and for ST females it was 19.18 and for others 44.81 percent and male literacy rate was 49.91 for SC and 40.65 for ST and 69.53 for others. It shows the literacy disparity and urgency to take steps to spread the education among the SC/ST. further if we observed the rural areas literacy rate then the condition is worst. Literacy rate among the SC females in rural areas shows that 19.46 percent and for ST 16.02 and for other 35.38. With such a vast illiteracy how can we compete with the global economy and what will be the position of dalits . Therefore, a firm commitment to the widespread and equitable provision of basic education is the first requirement of rapid progress in eradicating educational deprivation in India. Low levels of education in India reflect both the low duration of schooling for children who are enrolled at some stage and a large proportion of children are never enrolled at all<sup>7</sup>. This is not the only story of India, but the scarce resources are also spent disproportionately as more on higher education and less on primary education. The result of such spending is that , those who are already educated they get more benefits of government's expenditure policy on education and those who are disadvantaged people they are affected adversely. So, it is clear that, relatively well to do class get better advantages of government's expenditure policy on education than disadvantaged classes.

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<sup>7</sup> Jean Dre'ze , Amartya Sen, India Economic Development and Social opportunity, Oxford University Press, 1995, Delhi, p. 111.

Similar position is for health expenditure of government of India last year's budgetary provision for health services was 0.95 percent of union budget. Therefore, public hospitals do not have adequate medicine in the hospital and poor people are dying without basic health facilities. Why this is happening in India after 60 years of independence.

**Remedial measures:**

If we think deeply we get sources of pitiable conditions of depressed classes in modern India. India experienced many political changes after independence. However, the basic organization and structure of the society has not change. Different political parties have formed their government at Centre and States levels such as Congress, BJP, Janata Dal, Communist etc but the ruling class remained the same from the upper strata of the society ie Brahmins, Baniyas, land Lords and capitalists. They are utilizing the political power, administrative powers and judicial powers to build up their economic strength and to increase their welfare by adopting policies to their favor and to maintain the status as it was in the feudal time. Therefore, most of their organizations such as RSS, Bajarang Dal, Shiv Sena etc. they are creating the illusions among the Bahunjan Samaj on the name of religion, castes, regions and rule the masses without interruption. I do not blame them; they are doing it for their people's welfare and to maintain their supreme power over depressed classes. The question before me is what depressed classes should do. This is the important question before us. I think we have to divide our objective in two parts, the first part deals with short term objectives and second part deals with long term objectives.

**Short Terms Objectives:**

- a) Welfare policies of government: we have to see that welfare policies of government should be implemented timely and properly. These include education policy, health and family welfare policies.
- b) Infrastructure facilities: we have to observe that government spent on infrastructure such as sanitation facilities, roads, electricity, safety for life, it help indirectly to poor to boosts their energy.
- c) Allocation of funds: we have to see that allocated funds are not diverted to ulterior motive by the vested interest people.



d) Monitoring the scheme : government should appoint a permanent monitoring body to see that there is no mismanagement , or Dalits among them selves should creates an organization to monitor the scheme. These monitors will organize regular awareness programs among the marginalized people and will give the detailed information about the government welfare schemes.

e) To built up educational trust or societies for spreading education among them.

Similarly create awareness about Human Rights. Find out the sources and make them available of legal information, the rights of livelihood towards the government, and other public authorities. Develop the entrepreneurial abilities and provide adequate facilities to dalits.

**Long term programs:**

The long term objective of depressed classes is to total transformation the existent structure of society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said that, until we get political power in our hands we can not the existing oppressive system.

a) To capture the political power we have to remove the illusion from the mind of depressed classes about the concepts of Hindutva and such other type of concepts and make them aware about their present positions.

b) Continuous efforts to minimize the enemies of dalits and make more true friends

c) To build up strong political organization

d) To reconstruct the Indian society based on freedom, equality, justice and fraternity

The task look difficult but if it plan properly and work together restlessly, I have no doubts in my mind that this is not impossible. What Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar dreamed New Global India is possible to build up in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

