

RELEVANCE OF STATE SOCIALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CURRENT SCENARIO

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Introduction:

State Socialism of Dr.Ambedkar presents the blueprint of the model of economic development. It advocates for nationalisation of key industries, basic industries and of agricultural land. In his concept of State Socialism Dr.Ambedkar maintained equilibrium between individual liberty and State control. He was not opposed private sector of the economy. Dr.Ambedkar attempted to establish State Socialism in the Democratic setup by the law of the Constitution and to make it unalterable part of the Constitution. He thought to incorporate State Socialism in the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution as part III of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights, so that no parliamentary majority can amend, suspend or abrogate it. But Constituent Assembly turned down his notion on grounds that the provision did not relate to Fundamental Rights. Instead, India adopted policy of Democratic Socialism, which assigned the job of implementing socialist policy to the will of the legislature, i.e., to the parliamentary majority.

Concept of State Socialism

'States and Minorities' is a memorandum which Dr.Ambedkar prepared and submitted to the Indian Constituent Assembly, on behalf of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation. It presents the blueprint of Dr.Ambedkar's Model of Economic development. His model of economic development represents a modified form of socialism. In his model Dr.Ambedkar stood for the principle of State intervention in moulding the economic life of the people in the country, for which he suggested the model of State Socialism. Dr. Ambedkar said "The main purpose behind the clause is to put an obligation on the State to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth." In State Socialism, views of Dr. Ambedkar differs from Marxian concept of socialism. A Marxian view goes against private enterprise and stands for complete socialisation of economy and State monopoly.

Dr.Ambedkar is against complete monopoly of the state, but he favours state ownership in the field of agriculture, land, industry and insurance with the provision to safeguard the socio-economic interest of all the people. He observes that it is the primary function of the state to put an effective check on socio-economic exploitation of its people. The plan of State Socialism has two special features as explained by Dr.Ambedkar "one is that it proposes State Socialism in important fields of economic life. The second special feature of the plan is that it does not leave the establishment of State Socialism to the will of the legislature. It established State Socialism by the Law of the Constitution and thus makes it unalterable by any act of the Legislature and the Executive."

Dr.Ambedkar observes that it is the primary function of the State to put an effective check on socio-economic exploitation of its people. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the notion of minimum State intervention in economic and social affairs. He was of the opinion that the "liberty from the control of State is another name for the dictatorship of private employer." While advocating for the socialist structure of the economy,

In case of industry, Dr. Ambedkar does not favour nationalisation of all the industries of the country. He advocated for nationalisation of the key and basic industries only. He was not opposed private sector of the economy. Dr.Ambedkar realized that the private enterprise cannot bring about rapid industrialisation of Indian economy because of its motives of maximum profit. Even if it attempts to industrialise the economy it would produce inequality, exploitation of workers. It is evident from the statement of Dr.Ambedkar "State Socialism is essential for the rapid industrialisation of India. Private enterprise cannot do it and if they did it would produce those inequalities of wealth which private capitalism has produce in Europe and which should be a warning for Indians." According to Dr.Ambedkar nationalisation of key industries is essential from the point of view of public welfare and progress of national economy. Dr.Ambedkar further advocated for the nationalisation of Insurance. He suggested that the State should compel every adult

citizen to take out a life insurance policy. He advocated for nationalisation of insurance with a view to give greater security to the individuals and adequate funds to the State for financing economic plans.

State Socialism under Democracy

How to establish State Socialism was a very important question before Dr. Ambedkar. After a careful scrutiny of the alternative methods which can be adopted, he advocated for the change through a democracy or a change through a parliamentary form of government. In this concern Dr. Ambedkar stated "It is an attempt to establish State Socialism without abrogating Parliamentary Democracy and without leaving its establishment to the will of the Parliamentary Democracy." Regarding Ambedkar's policy of Democracy and Socialism Dongre M.K. rightly observed that Dr. "Ambedkar maintains that democracy is a means to achieve an end --the socialism." Dr. Ambedkar finds that an absence of socio-economic relationship in India is a danger to democracy. Democracy does not simply assure equality of political right but also stands for equality of social and economic opportunities. Caste distinctions, untouchability and other social barriers such as, division of labourers into watertight compartments and their economic dependence, social injustice and economic exploitation etc. are enemies of democracy. Therefore democracy in India cannot neglect social and economic emancipation of people. Therefore Dr. Ambedkar rightly stated that, "political democracy cannot succeed where there is no social and economic democracy." Dr. Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism can be termed as 'Constitutional State Socialism with Parliamentary Democracy'.

State Socialism in Indian Constitution

Dr. Ambedkar desired that his plan of State Socialism should be incorporated in the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution as Part III of the chapter on Fundamental Rights. In his memorandum 'States and Minorities' he incorporated the concept of State Socialism while suggesting remedies against invasion of Fundamental Rights. He was of the view that along with Fundamental Rights, the remedies against invasion of Fundamental Rights must be provided with, otherwise mere provision of Fundamental Rights, would be of no avail. In order to avoid the dictatorship of private employer and exploitation of poor, he suggested the remedy of State Socialism. Dr. Ambedkar thought to incorporate State Socialism in the Fundamental Rights in order to put an obligation on the State to plan the economic life of the people and to interrupt the parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. Thus Dr. Ambedkar thought to make the plan of State Socialism an inseparable part of the Constitution. He was of the opinion that, it would come through the Constitution and not through bloody revolution. In this concern M.L. Kasare rightly observed that "From the review of the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity, three tenets of parliamentary democracy advocated by Dr. Ambedkar emerged as the mean point between capitalism and communism. Dr. Ambedkar desired to incorporate good points from both the economic system in the Constitution itself, so that the future rulers would no option but to implement the economic plan inserted in the Constitution." Dr. Ambedkar demanded not only the inclusion of State Socialism under the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution but also suggested to enforce it within a period of ten years from the date of promulgation on the Constitution.

Conclusion

Several economic policies adopted in India after independence consist traces from Dr. Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism. The economic philosophy advocated by Dr. Ambedkar seems close to that of the idea of mixed economy. But a very important element, i.e., of nationalisation of agricultural land is not in existence in present structure of the Indian economy.

Dr. Ambedkar's economic development plan strongly suggested structural changes in the Indian economy. His model of State Socialism is similar to the Mixed Economy model in respect of coexistence of public and private sector. But both these models differ in respect of their structural formation. Dr. Ambedkar strongly advocated to establish State Socialism by the law of the Constitution, so that no parliamentary majority can amend it. But the mixed economy model which has adopted by India assigned its establishment and implementation in the hands of the legislature, i.e., parliamentary majority can amend or suspend it.

Dr. Ambedkar advocated to make State Socialism an inseparable part of the Constitution, i.e., to incorporate it in the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution as part III of the chapter on Fundamental Rights.

Dr. Ambedkar suggested to incorporate State Socialism in the main body of the Constitution, so that it will be beyond the reach of parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it.

Socialistic ideology of Dr. Ambedkar differs from Marxian ideology in three respects. First, Marxian idea of socialism stands for revolution and not for reformation. On the contrary, Dr. Ambedkar disliked violent methods of change and believed that Constitutional provision and democratic means should be relied upon for the desired reformation. Second, Marx advocates revolutionary methods for overcoming the opposition of capitalists for establishment of dictatorship of the proletariat. On the contrary, Dr. Ambedkar as a champion of democracy was against dictatorship in any form. Third, Marx stated that, State is the temporary institution that will 'wither away' in course of time. Whereas, Dr. Ambedkar did not believe in Stateless society. He maintained that, the state would continue to exist as long as human society survived. Indian agrarian economy is still facing a problem of landlessness, fragmentation and subdivision of land, declining size of holdings after six decades of planning. In this concern it is relevant to reconsider Dr. Ambedkar's model on nationalisation of Indian agriculture.

A careful observation of the state of Indian agriculture indicates that 41 per cent of households in rural India do not own any land. The estimates of land and livestock survey of NSSO for the year 2003-2004 shows that about 41.6 per cent of households in rural India did not own any land other than homestead land. Therefore in order to solve the problem of landlessness and for equitable distribution of rural resources it is relevant to reconsider Dr. Ambedkar's model of nationalisation of Indian agriculture.

India's poorest households still struggle for access to rural land and land tenure security. In the rural sector land is the principal source of income. If land benefits only minor fraction of the rural population, the whole structure of land ownership fails to meet the ends of social justice. The best course of bringing a reduction in inequality of income is to bring about a reduction in inequality of land ownership. In this context, there is a great need to reconsider Dr. Ambedkar's model to meet present day needs of the poorer section of rural society.

The practice of caste based discrimination still exists in the rural India. The backward castes of rural India are still deprived of rural assets. The rural resources and assets have been concentrated in the hands of the dominant castes in rural India. Land is central to the rural economy, society and polity. It is not merely primary means of production, but also confers on the holder, economic security, social status, power and even identity. According to Dr. Ambedkar's model, after the implementation of nationalisation of agriculture land equal land is assigned to every individual which will be helpful in bringing social and economic equality in rural India.

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