Abstract
During the time of Ambedkar the hierarchical order of the society based upon caste was most predominant. Though born an untouchable in a caste ridden Hindu society he is known for his ceaseless struggle for equality and justice. The status of women had been lowered over the years. Religious traditions barred women from several social roles and imposed stringent prohibitions upon her. There are only a few examples of the shackles to which women have been tied for centuries. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a name to be reckoned with in the sphere of socio-legal reforms and the making of India’s constitution. He was a symbol of revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society. He was a torch bearer in the direction of social upliftment of society and caste and women in the particular. Ambedkar fought many struggles for social equality- at Mahad for injustice on the use of water of lake, at Kala Ram Mandir at Nasik, and many more. The reforms introduced by Ambedkar through ‘Hindu Code Bill’ have been adhered to and have been accepted by and large. By codifying “Hindu Law” in respect of marriage, divorce, adoption and succession and right to property he earned the good will. The credit goes to him for bringing constitutional provision to end bias against women.

1. Introduction
Ambedkar’s chief concern in life was to meet the challenge of wrongly idealized social relations which threatened the wade of human existence and shook the foundations of a
moral and just social order. He attached more importance to society than to the state. He endeavored to strike a balance between the central authority of the state and the liberty of the individuals, though individual freedom should not affect adversely the best interests of a society and state. Societal concerns propel us towards a just social order necessitating equality of gender, status, opportunity and steers away from inequality in all its dimensions. Women issues relate to the core of our human society, economic and political structure and relationship. Most importantly they relate to attitudes and long held prejudices and to the functional stereo types to which women are often reduced by quoting Hindu shastras.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was very much disturbed to observe the male-dominated society which conditions the mind of the women so completely that she is unable to look beyond and becomes almost a slave to the husband in the family. If we reflect a little deeper these dehumanizing gender-values were always present in our society dominated with varying degrees of intensity at different times our, collective psyche, women were always its victims. With his efforts growing social awareness was able to help reduce the rigours of the atmosphere of prejudice against women.

Ambedkar opined that spread of literacy and education as well as growing social awareness would help reduce the rigours of the atmosphere of prejudice against women. He was aghast at the sheer persistence of prejudices against women.

2. Objectives
The main theme of the paper pertains to study the discriminations in the socio economic system prevalent in the late 19th and early 20th century India and Ambedkar’s contribution by the way of according place to these issues as constitutional provisions, and the objectives are mentioned below:

I. To study Ambedkar’s views on Social discrimination
II. To study Ambedkar’s Contribution towards Social Upliftment
III. To study Constitutional Provisions aiming at Social Equality

Accordingly the paper is divided into three sections devoted to each of the above mentioned objectives.

3. Ambedkar’s Views on Social discrimination
3.1 Caste Discrimination
During the time of Ambedkar the hierarchical order of the society based upon caste was most predominant. Although the Hindu culture preached the ideals of non-violence, love, tolerance, peace and service to humanity, the Hindu social life was full of contradictions. In real life the ideas of freedom, equality and justice were not available for the people of the oppressed and so-called ‘low castes’. They suffered from all kinds of discrimination and humiliation. Ambedkar was of the opinion that a society was composed of classes based upon social, economic and intellectual factors. An individual in the society was always a member of a particular class. But in the Hindu society the class was developed into castes. In due course large number of castes was constituted through imitation and
excommunication. Usually, social classes may be created on the basis of division of labor and this system provides for mobility and flexibility. But the caste system of Hindu society made the caste structure irrevocable and irreversible. As a result of the caste system and the consequent rigidity of the caste structure, social stratification on the basis of occupation proved to be dangerous for the Hindu society. (Das, 2005, p.335)

The individual who is the crux of the society lost his importance and became a slave to the irrational social order upon caste, irrespective of his talent or merit. The ‘varna’ or class structure of the society provided originally for four classes, but subsequent it became five with the addition of the untouchables. This group was also known as ‘Pancham’ (the fifth), and was outcaste. (ibid, p. 336)

Ambedkar’s main battle was a battle against the caste system. Caste had made Hindu society stagnant. Due to the caste system, Hindu society is unable to accommodate outsiders.

3.2 Gender Discrimination

Ambedkar believed that no society can claim for itself to be progressive until and unless it has moral standard rather a compass for all its members, men and women equal in all respects. In addition he had a view that a gender inequality results in brutalization and hence discrimination and exploitation was an eye sore to him. The feminine values in the society that softens its rough edges made it more peace loving & nonviolent.

Ambedkar believed in egalitarian society. He believed in the equality of males and females in all respects. He was critical of the preaching’s of Manu and Hindu Shastras and held these scriptures responsible for discriminations between men and women. Ambedkar felt strongly that to remove the evil practices of the society, women should be safeguarded by providing provisions in the constitution and that is what he did.

On 26th January 1950 Ambedkar put forth his views before the constituent Assembly: On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into life of contradiction. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote and one value.

In our social and economic life we shall by reason of our social and economic structure continue to deny equality in our social and economic life. If we continue to deny it for long we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril.

Ambedkar cautioned that contradiction must to be removed at the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of democracy which this constituent assembly has so laboriously built up.

He further added that we must not forget that it is our sacred duty not merely to preach equality but to practice it also. Neither mere resolutions are achievements nor are hopes accomplishments. There are so many laws that we have framed but do we practice it? Whether we are Buddhist or Hindus it is immaterial but important part is are we united?
Ambedkar did not go against Hinduism but he has heavily criticized Hinduism orthodoxy, superstition cast monopoly etc. He was so fed up with his religion that we went to the extent of changing his religion and becoming a Buddhist. Dr Ambedkar was perturbed over the sad plight of women and he felt that they were victim’s profane thinking and superstition throughout their life till death. Unfortunately a kind of blight overtook us and we subject women to disabilities which they donot deserve as an act of repentance and was set right by this effort of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Right from infancy they are fed with wrong notions through base fewer traditions and misinterpreted teachings of shastras.

4. Ambedkar’s Contribution towards Social Upliftment

Ambedkar was a great writer. His first writing on untouchability was in the form of a paper presented in an anthropology seminar at Columbia University in 1916. In this paper he tries to analyse the origin of caste in Hindu. He reflected the racial or the colour basis for the creation of caste system and made the emphatic statement that in spite of the composite make up of the Hindu population there is a deep cultural unity. This thesis is in consonance with Nehru’s concept of unity in diversity. He was highly critical of Hindu social order and started a journal Mook Nayak in 1920 and Bahiskrit Bharat in 1927 for this purpose.

In his book titled “ The Untouchables; Who Are they?” discussed the origion of untouchability and saaq— Hindu civilization could hardly be called a civilization. It is diabolical contrivance to Supress and enslave humanity. (Kuber, 1973 p.38).

In Maurya period, the chaturvarnya of caste system was completely annihilated. The Shudras became the rulers of the country. Ambedkar called Maurya period in history as a period of freedom, greatness and glory (Ibid. p. 51) He commented that caste has become very essential in the case of Hindus overtime and opined, “there is no integrating force among the Hindus to counterface the disintegration caused by caste.” (ibid, 52)

He attacked Brahminism and expressed that Hindu scriptures were almost entirely the creation of he Brahmins (ibid, 57). He remarked that the doctrinal basis to Hindu religion must be in consonance with liberty, equality and fraternity, in short, with democracy. Ambedkar fought many struggles for social equality- at Mahad for unjustice on the use of water of lake, at Kala Ram Mandir at Nasik, and many more.

Ambedkar was a believer in women’s progress. He measured the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women achieved. He fought for human rights equality for both men and women. He advised women to learn to get educated instill ambition into them. He believed that women were entitled to an equal status with the men and that they must have the right to education. He lamented that the Hindu religion had deprived women of the right property. In the Hindu Code Bill which he prepared, he took care that women should get a share of the property. While he organized the untouchables, he
always called upon women of the untouchable community to come forward and participate in social and political movements.

As early as 1920 Dr Ambedkar took up the issue of female education. In his view accelerated progress can take place only if male education is pursued along with female education. In his famous book “Pakistan and partition of India” He expressed his serious concern about Muslims Women. With regard to wearing of veil, their marriages, divorce etc. Irrespective of their religion Dr. Ambedkar had an immense humanitarian view. He always raised his voice against all sorts of injustices meted out to women. Ambedkar views on Socialism:

**AMBEDKAR ON SOCIALISM**

- Condemnation of present Social order and Economic inequality
- Advocacy of one order, one value, one vote
- Belief that this ideal is realizable in State socialism and parliamentary democracy
- Conviction that immorality of established order is traceable to the attitude of Hindus and to corrupt social institutions
- A programme of Action to be achieved through constitutional Means
- A Revolutionary will to change the Social and Economic order

Ambedkar did not agree with Karl Marx’s theory on Socialism. Marx’s viewed that suffering in the country are not due to economic exploitation but also due to social exploitation and degradation. To eliminate it, he advocated State Socialism, characterized with a democratic base/ state ownership of land and other mean of production. (Lokhande, 1978)
According to Ambedkar- To get economic equality it is necessary to compete, bargain or fight, but caste prejudices breed jealousies, rivalries and ultimately result in vested interest and monopoly of only one or two higher castes.


Though born an untouchable in a caste ridden Hindu society he is known for his ceaseless struggle for equality and justice. The major contributions of Ambedkar are The Hindu Code Bill and other Constitutional Provisions.

The Hindu Code Bill, the most formidable legislative measure of modern India, sought among other reforms, to put an end to a variety of marriage systems prevailing in India and legalise only monogamous marriages. The Code also sought to confer on women the right of property and adoption which had been denied by Manu. It put men and women on an equal level in all legal matters. Dr. Ambedkar said, “I should like to draw attention of the house to one important fact. The great political philosopher Burke who wrote his great book against the French Revolution said that those who want to conserve must be ready to repair.

The Hindu Code Bill concerning women was introduced in the Constituent Assembly on 11th April 1947 by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar with the intention to liberalise the personal law concerning the freedom of individual and the equality of men and women in the social setup. Bill had eight sectionsThe bill was also referred to select committee on 9th April,1948. The debate continued for four years in parliament. This was the longest discussion on any single bill in the parliament after independence. Dr. Ambedkar was quite apprehensive about the role of Congress leaders with regard to passing of Hindu Code Bill. He even tendered his resignation to Sh. Jawahar Lal Nehru on 27th September,1951 from the cabinet but he was persuaded by Sh. Jawahar Lal Nehru to continue for participation in the parliament debate till 10th October,1951. The President of the constituent Assembly Dr. Rajinder Prasad was against the bill. Mr. Ayyangar was also against Hindu Code Bill.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar being kind, generous and social activist was worried about the poor, pathetic and lowly placed status of women in the society. He was immensely interested in the social upliftment of women in the society. Dr. Ambedkar left an unforgettable impression on our constitution, social life, women empowerment. He was a great believer in democracy. He was very anxious to preserve democracy and show up always against injustice of any kind. He was rebellions on certain issues and did not hesitate and to revolt against social practices humiliation to which large number of people were subjected to in the name of certain religious scriptures. In 1955 the laws relating to marriage, guardianship, adoption, maintenance, divorce were passed subsequently in parliament. Such as defining “Hindu” to be negative category that would include all those who did not identify as Muslim, Jew Christian or Parsi.

The bill covered right to property, marriage, adoption, guardianship, succession maintenance, divorce, policy on joint family property policy regarding women’s property. It allotted portions of inheritance to daughter’s while giving widows complete
property rights where they had previously been restricted. The reforms introduced by Dr. Ambedkar the “Hindu Code Bill” have asserted the equality in law of men and women. By codifying this law with regard to marriage, maintenance, adoption, succession divorce have asserted the honour and dignity of women. It was one of best conceived ideas of Social engineering visualizing absolute equality between men and women in our daily and public life.

He was the Prime Architect of our Constitution. He was a towering personality. He had the wisdom and understanding to realize that not removing inequality between men and women we cannot rightfully claim ourselves to be true representative to democracy. The Provisions provided in the constitution for bringing social equality are below.

- **Article 14** - Equal rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres.
- **Article 15** prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex. Article 15(3) enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- **Article 39** – Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.
- **Article 42** – Human conditions of work and maternity relief.
- **Article 46** – The state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of weaker section of people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation
- **Article 47** – The state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on.
- **Articles 243D (3), 243T (3) & 243R (4)** - provide for allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System.
- **Article 51 (A) (C)** – Fundamental duties to renounce practices, derogatory to the dignity of women.

### 6. Conclusion

Ambedkar constantly responded to contemporary issues. Therefore, his propagation of separate electorates or reservations, his views on linguistic state, women empowerment etc. have a specific context. Ambedkar steadfastly held the image of society free from injustice and exploitation. Therefore, he repeatedly announced that an ideal society will be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. Casteism and communalism on the one hand and economic exploitation on the other continue to provide strength to the prevalent inequality in the Indian society. Ambedkar fought for a society free from caste-domination and class-exploitation. So long as these two machines of exploitation-caste and class-are in existence, Ambedkar’s thought would be relevant as an inspiration in the fight against them. Women comprises almost half of the human population of the world and no development can be thought without their help and support. Women are also often the strongest voices for peace and non-violence. Women’s leadership and conflict resolution styles embody democratic ideals and they tend to work in a less hierarchical, more participating and more collaborative
manner than their male counterparts. The women’s contribution is crucial to building a strong and vibrant nation.
7. References


