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Deconstructing Social Hierarchies: Ambedkar's Philosophical Amendments to Plato's *Kallipolis*

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Theorizing the idea of justice has been a commendable task which laboriously engaged the great minds of human history from ancient to the present. This paper attempts primarily to analyze and compare the approaches of Plato and Ambedkar to the conception of justice. Plato, in a way, justifies the existing social system which is hierarchical in form and shares his idea of a Utopian society which is the manifestation of an ideal one built upon justice, as a state adhered to the social order where people are categorized into different sections. Whereas, in the Indian context Ambedkar tries to abolish the existing system, which is an extension of the hierarchical and highly stratified caste system or Chaturvarana, for establishing a social order built upon democracy which is adhered to equality. The paper explores the ways in which Ambedkar provides answers to the questions left behind in Plato's Utopia.

Key Words: Theorizing justice, Utopia, social hierarchy, Caste system, Ambedkar, Plato

Introduction

"Fiat justia, et pereat mundus" was the motto of Ferdinand I, Roman emperor (1556-1564). This Latin phrase is translated as "Let justice be done, though the world perishes" (Fellmeth and Horwitz, 2009, p. 107). There are "institutes of Justinian", a codification of Roman Law where justice is defined as "the constant and perpetual will to render to each his due" (Caesar, 2013, p. 1). Hammurabi, in

The Code of Hammurabi, (1904) proposes law of retribution, a form of retaliatory justice, under this system thus: “If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye” (Hammurabi, 1904, p. 73) . In his *Genealogy of Morals* Friedrich Nietzsche argues that Justice, originates in interactions between parties that hold approximately equal power (Nietzsche, 2003).

From ancient to the present, justice has been observed through various perspectives. Generations of great philosophers tried to define it precisely, still it remains enigmatic and cryptic. Etymologically the word justice derived from the Latin word *justitia* which means justice or uprightness and in Greek the term *dikaosune* which means righteousness is used instead. Justice, generally believed to be the string by which the otherwise scattered society is bound together, is occasionally defined as an opportunity for people to get what they deserve. It simply means attainment of a fairer situation. It is the foundation stone of all the modern nations.

Plato’s approach to justice is rooted in his vision of a hierarchical society, which he outlines in his concept of Utopia. In this ideal society, individuals are categorized into different classes based on their abilities and roles, and justice is achieved through adherence to this social order. Plato’s framework suggests that a just society is one where everyone fulfills their designated role, thereby maintaining harmony and order. In a totally different socio-political context of pre-independent India, Ambedkar critiques the existing hierarchical social structure in India, particularly the caste system (Chaturvarana), which he views as unjust and oppressive. He advocates for the abolition of this hierarchical system and promotes the establishment of a democratic society founded on principles of equality. Ambedkar’s vision seeks to empower all individuals, regardless of caste, and to create a more equitable social order.

Although Plato could expose the defects in the conception of justice by his fellow debaters and it is obvious that he was almost successful in leading majority of them to agree on his definition of justice. The defects Plato accuses of his fellow debaters in a way comes in Plato’s own argument about justice and his *Kallipolis*, the ideal state proposed by him, is also affected by these shortages. The

paper studies how reading Ambedkar along with Plato helps to better understand the concepts of both these philosophers though both voice from different sociopolitical space and time. The incompleteness of Plato's conception of justice is better comprehended. Ambedkar's ideas address and resolve the limitations, and unanswered questions present in Plato's Utopian model; Ambedkar's model of new state can deconstruct the hierarchy, that is built on an unscientific and unjust foundation, which is the characteristic of not only Plato's ideal state but also all the ancient societies including the Indian society. While Plato's vision may provide a theoretical framework for justice within a hierarchical society, Ambedkar's approach challenges that structure and seeks to create a more inclusive and just society for all individuals, which would otherwise be doing injustice towards one part of the society for unending times. The article is also an attempt to analyze how reservation is an essential part of Indian democracy. Along with all other strategies Ambedkar introduced for restructuring Indian state to be inclusive for all, the idea of reservation or representation, the controversial element in the Indian constitution which is still a debatable subject even among the democrats, serves as the supporting system to make India more democratic. The paper investigates the major arguments by the interlocutors and Plato's counterarguments discussed in Plato's *Republic*. The major arguments in Plato's Utopia are on justice will be discussed in the second part of the paper and the last section focusses on the ideas of Ambedkar.

The theoretical framework of the paper is primarily based on the theory of genealogy proposed by Frederich Nietzsche and Micheal Foucault which supports to critically analyse the celebrated ideas or values by attempting to find out their uncelebrated origins. This paper undertakes a critical and comparative analysis of the concept of justice in the works of Plato and B.R. Ambedkar, employing methodologies such as critical discourse analysis, historical contextualization, and genealogical critique. Discourse analysis is employed to examine the various definitions of justice as articulated by different individuals in Plato's *Republic*. Similarly, this methodological approach is utilized to reanalyze ancient scriptures, including Manu Smriti, with the aim of critically reassessing the caste-based hierarchy inherent in Indian

society. By placing their ideas within their distinct historical and socio-political contexts, the study explores the power structures, discursive practices, and cultural narratives that inform their visions of justice. The primary texts of the research are *Republic* of Plato and some texts of Ambedkar including *Annihilation of Caste*, *The Philosophy of Hinduism*, *The Hindu Social Order*. Through a close reading of these texts, the research seeks to uncover the complexities and contingencies underlying their thought, challenging dominant definitions of justice and contributing new perspectives to contemporary discussions on justice, equality, and human rights.

The arguments of the major Interlocutors

In *Republic*, Socrates is the main interlocutor, the protagonist, who serves as the spokesperson of Plato himself. Hence, he tries to define justice by undertaking the task of challenging the views presented by Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and Adeimantus, who argue that there are situations where being unjust may be more advantageous than being just. Plato aims to demonstrate that this perspective on justice is flawed. He categorizes goods into three classes, each representing different types of value and significance, which serves as a foundation for his argument about the intrinsic worth of justice compared to injustice.

The discussion on justice begins with Cephalus in *Republic*, who claims that his wealth has enabled him to live justly by fulfilling obligations and paying debts, defining justice as telling the truth and returning what one owes. Plato challenges this simplistic definition by presenting a scenario about returning arms to a friend in an irrational state. Cephalus then passes the argument to Polemarchus, who shares his view on the repayment of debts. Eventually, Cephalus excuses himself from the discussion, recognizing his inability to engage with the deeper philosophical complexities, marking a shift from conventional views of justice to the more nuanced arguments that follow in the dialogue.

For Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus and a friend of Socrates, justice is giving what is owed to each person, emphasizing the importance of treating friends well and enemies poorly. Thus, a person's level of justice is accorded with his character on how

appropriately he is treating his friends and enemies. For this Plato replies that a just person cannot make others unjust, by justice, by punishing them as punishment is harmful and humans are worse and less just when they are harmed. Therefore, it is not the duty of a just person to harm anyone. He argues, “Then if a man says that justice consists in the repayment of debts, and that good is the debt which a just man owes to his friends, and evil the debt which he owes to his enemies, to say this is not wise; for it is not true, if, as has been clearly shown, the injuring of another can be in no case just” (Plato, 2010). Plato gradually convinces Polemarchus that justice is a virtue which is beneficial to all individuals.

Thrasymachus enters the platform of the debate by directly striking the definition of Plato which provides a cover of virtue to the idea of justice. As representative of Sophist philosophy, he proclaims that justice is nothing but the interest of the stronger. He is totally skeptic towards the idea of justice and abolishes Plato’s conception of it. Thrasymachus presents a cynical view of justice as a product of power dynamics and self-interest, challenging the idea that justice is an objective moral ideal. He asserts that justice is the advantage of the stronger which is used to rule and control the society as per one’s interest. He proclaims: “Listen, then, he said; I proclaim that justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger. And now why do you not praise me? But of course, you won’t” (Plato, 2010, p. 121).

The discussion has taken a different direction steered by Thrasymachus as he did refute the moral base of the idea of justice which Socrates put forward throughout the discussion. For Socrates, even their definition of justice was incomplete, the other two interlocutors were not a threat to the idea that justice is a virtue, but Thrasymachus was not ready to consider it as a virtue at all. In his opinion, shrewd and cunning individuals would consistently act unjustly, and as a result, they would tend to be more successful and satisfied in life than those who are just.

As a response to the skeptical proclamation of Thrasymachus, Socrates prioritizes the truth of the argument over its significance, acknowledging a mutual agreement that justice relates to some form of interest. However, he expresses doubt about the claim that justice

is specifically the interest of the stronger party, like proposed by Thrasymachus, and indicates a need for further examination of this idea. Socrates argues that rulers, being human, are prone to making mistakes in their legislation, which can inadvertently benefit their subjects rather than themselves. He suggests that these errors can lead to laws that do not serve the rulers' interests. However, Thrasymachus challenges Socrates' argument, deeming it invalid because he believes Socrates overlooks the core of his position regarding the nature of power and justice. The situation becomes more complicated here as justice, the highest of human morals, depends on the mistakes of the rulers.

T. Y. Henderson in his article "In Defense of Thrasymachus" defends Thrasymachus by arguing that he maintains a consistent position on justice throughout the dialogue, asserting that Socrates' criticisms do not effectively refute or undermine Thrasymachus' argument. "Not only do I believe that Thrasymachus is consistent in essentials throughout the dispute with Socrates over the nature of justice, I shall also argue that Socrates' most vigorous attacks fail completely to refute, or even seriously to damage, Thrasymachus' position" (Henderson, 1970,). Thrasymachus' argument remained unanswered except for a counterargument that portrays justice as something solely dependent on the errors of the rulers who otherwise rule for their own benefit. The presence of Thrasymachus and his argument is evidence that there were people, contemporaries, or predecessors of Plato, in history, who could question the power structure, by moving beyond the mainstream attitudes towards the moral ideas. Thrasymachus thus himself proved to be the predecessor of genealogical philosophers including Frederick Nietzsche and Michael Foucault. The discourse then focusses on the next interlocutors, Glaucon and Adeimantus.

Glaucon and Adeimantus are brothers, the latter one is Plato's student, and they are part of the discussion. Glaucon revives Thrasymachus idea of justice that it is nothing but the interest of the stronger. Yet, he does not wish justice to be defined in a skeptic way, rather he expects it in more positive way, and he thinks Socrates is the best person to do it. He poses a challenge to Socrates, demanding

him to demonstrate that justice is inherently good and desirable, irrespective of its outcomes. Adeimantus contends that individuals are naturally inclined toward injustice if they believe they can escape the consequences. He suggests that the primary motivations for acting justly are the fear of punishment and the desire to maintain a good reputation.

Until this point in the discussion, Plato, through the voice of Socrates, did not present his definition of justice but he explores the imperfection of the definition of other interlocutors. But the argument presented by the brothers compelled Plato to address justice more precisely, this led the discussion to Plato's conception of justice. He begins this task by explaining his idea of a just person. But the discussion is restricted on the just state, the republic or *Kallipolis*, rather than the individual on the assumption, as Socrates said, that a larger entity gives clearer insights. He clearly argues in the second book, "... then in the larger the quantity of justice is likely to be larger and more easily discernible. I propose therefore that we enquire into the nature of justice and injustice, first as they appear in the State, and secondly in the individual, proceeding from the greater to the lesser and comparing them" (Plato, 2010, p. 220).

Plato's *Republic*: The stratified polis of social hierarchy

Plato defines state as the place where people of different occupation cooperatively live together. "Then, as we have many wants, and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper for one purpose and another for another; and when these partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation the body of inhabitants is termed a State" (Plato, 2010, p. 221). The principle of specialization is fundamental to Plato's concept of social justice, which posits that each citizen should engage in the role for which they are naturally suited. This principle defines "one's own" as the job and social role that align with an individual's abilities. A just society, according to Plato, is one where the population is divided into three classes — rulers, soldiers, and producers — each fulfilling their civic responsibilities based on their class, natural inclinations, and training. Plato's detailed description of his ideal political structure invites examination of both its organization and the mechanisms behind it,

raising the question of whether his proposed institutions and policies ensure a fair distribution of duties and benefits, a key aspect of social justice theory.

Plato believes that people are born with inborn capacities which are unalterable. Hence, he defines the state as a just one when it arranges the life of the people based on these natural capabilities. David Johnston argues:

Unlike Smith and many other modern thinkers, Plato appears to have believed that people are born with dramatically and unalterably diverse capabilities. For him, it followed that a well-ordered city would compel its inhabitants to cultivate these distinctive capabilities and would prevent them from wasting their efforts by going in other directions (Johnston, 2011, p. 148).

Plato argues that the ruling class, composed of philosopher-kings, should govern the city-state. These philosopher-kings are individuals who possess wisdom, knowledge, and a deep understanding of the Forms (abstract ideals or essences). According to Plato, their knowledge of the Forms allows them to grasp the ultimate truth and act in the best interests of the society as a whole. The ruling class is also known as the guardian class "... and perhaps the word 'guardian' in the fullest sense ought to be applied to this higher class only who preserve us against foreign enemies and maintain peace among our citizens at home, that the one may not have the will, or the others the power, to harm us" (Plato, 2010, p. 271). For Plato, the guardian class is responsible for protecting the city-state from external threats and maintaining internal order. They are trained from an early age to be courageous, disciplined, and selfless.

Bertrand Russell, totally skeptic toward this categorical implementation of the ruling class, questions the form of constitution which will give the government to the wise thus:

But even if we suppose that there is such a thing as "wisdom," is there any form of constitution which will give the government to the wise? It is clear that majorities, like general councils, may err, and in fact have erred. Aristocracies are not always wise; kings are often foolish; Popes, in spite of infallibility, have committed

grievous errors. Would anybody advocate entrusting the government to university graduates, or even to doctors of divinity? Or to men who, having been born poor, have made great fortunes? It is clear that no legally definable selection of citizens is likely to be wiser, in practice, than the whole body (Russell, 2004, p. 107).

For Plato the question of justice and injustice would emerge from where the people interact with one another. Yet, he does suggest that the philosopher king who is from the guardian class must be secluded from the society when it is corrupt. It is very relevant to ask whether it is possible for any society to exist uncorrupted. At this point, his own disciple Aristotle does stand against him. Aristotle rejects Plato's idealistic view of politics, particularly the concept of the philosopher king who remains detached from corrupt society. He argues that philosophers should engage with society rather than stand aloof, as this detachment can exacerbate issues of corruption. Aristotle believes that negotiating forms of justice within flawed political systems is a significant achievement, and promoting legality and justice is essential for leading a meaningful life. (Kraut, 2002, p. 101).

In ideal state, the second class, referred to as auxiliaries, consists of soldiers who support the ruling class, previously called the guardians. This name change was made to avoid confusion with the rulers, "The young men whom we before called guardians may be more properly designated auxiliaries and supporters of the principles of the rulers" (Plato, 2010, p. 271). Auxiliaries are tasked with upholding the principles set by the philosopher-kings and must remain obedient, without private property or family ties, to prevent conflicts of interest. The third class, known as the producing class, includes craftsmen, farmers, and other productive members of society. Their role is to provide essential goods and resources, and they are expected to focus on their work without pursuing excessive wealth or power.

The first category in a way holds the power to rule, to create laws, they are permitted to lie to the public, even though the fictional writers are banished from the state on the ground of spoiling the youth. So that this first section who are mentioned as the guardian class is capable of controlling the destiny of other members of the society, whereas the third class remains sans power and wealth.

A cursory reading of human history gives us the insight that the social hierarchy was implemented in the human society at least after the agricultural revolution; slavery and servitude was part of human evolution but not for the development of the entire population but for the easy flow of the power, justifying it, knowingly or unknowingly, in the name of justice would delay the process of reformation of the society. Yuval Noah Harari explores how humans organized themselves into mass-cooperation networks after the agricultural revolution, despite lacking the biological instincts for such organization. He explains that humans created imagined orders and scripts to fill this gap. However, these networks often perpetuated inequality, dividing people into hierarchical groups where the upper classes enjoyed privileges while the lower classes faced discrimination and oppression. An example is Hammurabi's Code, which established a social hierarchy of superiors, commoners, and slaves, highlighting the disparities in treatment and resources among these groups (Harari, 2014, p.142).

However, the incompleteness Plato accuses of the other characters in their definition of justice is also applicable to his own definition as he is loyal to the existing social order which is controlled by power dominance. Asking questions about power dominance is not impossible even at that time because Thrasymachus' definition that justice as nothing but the interest of the stronger, shows the picture of justice as the tool in the hands of the stronger among the people who exploits it to control the society as he wishes. So, the question about the power dominance and the attempt to see things and moral ideas in different ways were altogether possible during that period. Hence, it can be concluded that Plato's definition of justice or his conception of ideal state does not stand as distinguished as it is not free from the defects from which the protection was not impossible.

Ambedkar's Critique: Unpacking the injustices of the Caste system

Ambedkar's conception of ideal state starts from where Plato did complete his Utopia, categorizing people into different classes. In the Indian context, the society is built on graded inequality as revealed in Ambedkar's words "it must be recognized that Indian society is

gradations of caste forming an ascending scale of relevance and a descending scale of contempt” (Ambedkar, 2014e, p. 167) and he further argues that any type of injustice can easily be justified in the name of rituals and sacred beliefs. The injustice in the form of inequality would never be recognized so. For Ambedkar, caste is the most essential thing to be encountered and eradicated in the Indian society. This is only another way of saying that, turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path. You cannot have political reform, you cannot have economic reform, unless you kill this monster (Ambedkar, 2014a, p. 47).

In his undelivered speech the *Annihilation of Caste* Ambedkar criticizes Plato for categorizing people into classes where they are destined to be there infinitely. He says,

The chief criticism against Plato is that his idea of lumping of individuals into a few sharply marked-off classes is a very superficial view of man and his powers. Plato had no perception of the uniqueness of every individual, of his incommensurability with others, of each individual forming a class of his own. He had no recognition of the infinite diversity of active tendencies and combination of tendencies of which an individual is capable. To him, there were types of faculties or powers in the individual constitution (Ambedkar, 2014a, p. 60).

He further adds to it that modern science supports the view that such rigid classifications are inadequate and incompatible with the variable qualities of individuals. Hence, Ambedkar observes both Plato’s Republic and the concept of caste system, which is the extension of Chaturvarnya, as flawed, as it is impossible to accurately categorize people into fixed classes, a fact evidenced by the evolution of four original classes into thousands of castes.

According to Ambedkar, the first and the fundamental one of the three principles which support the current social order of Indian society is the “principle of graded inequality”. This principle not only encloses the possibilities of free flow of human communications but also incarcerate the human beings in the darkened closets sans light of hope. In Ambedkar’s own words: “the Brahmin is placed at the first in rank, below him is the Kshatriya and below the Kshatriya is

the Vaishya. Below the Vaishya is the Shudra and below the Shudra is the Atishudra or the untouchables. This order of precedence among the classes is not merely conventional. It is spiritual, moral, and legal” (Ambedkar, 2014d, p. 107).

The second principle is the “the fixity of occupation” which forces every member of the particular caste to follow the work assigned to his or her class. There is no scope of choice for individual in this society where the behavior against these norms would be prevented by punishment. The third principle of Hindu social order is the fixation of people in their respective classes which further emphasizes that “every person’s status or class status was decided by birth — not on one’s ability” (Massey, 2005, p. 157).

The discussion of injustice in Indian society is exceptionally complex because it can only be engaged with when people recognize and experience the presence of injustice within the society. The problem in Indian society is that it is structured in a way that it naturalizes the caste system. Both the suppressing and the suppressed classes do remain to be the victim of it. Harari in *Sapiens* points out the condition of caste system in India thus:

Hindus who adhere to the caste system believe that cosmic forces have made one caste superior to another. According to a famous Hindu creation myth, the gods fashioned the world out of the body of a primeval being, the Purusa. The sun was created from the Purusa’s eye, the moon from the Purusa’s brain, the Brahmins (priests) from its mouth, the Kshatriyas (warriors) from its arms, the Vaishyas (peasants and merchants) from its thighs, and the Shudras (servants) from its legs. Accept this explanation and the sociopolitical differences between Brahmins and Shudras are as natural and eternal as the differences between the sun and the moon (Harari, 2014, p. 143).

Then the hegemony of the upper caste is maintained through the rituals which are part of the spiritual life of the community. The life of the Shudras is limited to the rigid boundaries of the system which restrict their occupation on to those duties which were considered as low by the common folks. The only possible way to the freedom for a community is through the attainment of knowledge, but

for the untouchables this door was also closed by the rule. The Sanskrit and the scriptures were forbidden to them by rule.

And if he listens in on a Vedic recitation, his ears shall be filled with Molten tin or lac; 5 if he repeats it, his tongue shall be cut off; 6 if he commits it to memory, his body shall be split asunder. 7 If, while he is occupying a seat, lying on a bed, speaking, or walking on the road, he seeks to be their equal, he should be beaten (Dharmasutras, 1999).

They are oppressed by the law, which prevents them from integrating into mainstream life by denying them access to education. In the *Manu smriti*, it is explicitly said that a Shudra must be kept away from any sort of education, the verse 80 of chapter 4 of the same scripture goes on like this:

Let him not give to a Sudra advice, nor the remnants (of his meal), nor food offered to the gods; nor let him explain the sacred law (to such a man), nor impose (upon him) a penance. For he who explains the sacred law (to a Sudra) or dictates to him a penance, will sink together with that (man) into the hell (called) Asamvrita(Manu, p. 76).

This injustice, which has victimized these people, is not merely a relic of the past but continues to exist in the modern society as well. Ambedkar had to point his finger to his contemporaries and to oppose them, who are renowned leaders of India, as they try to defend caste system on the ground that it is only a labour system which is necessary for the development of an improving society or state. Ambedkar says in *The Annihilation of Caste*,

It is a pity that Caste even today has its defenders. The defenses are many. It is defended on the ground that the Caste System is but another name for division of labour and if division of labour is a necessary feature of every civilized society then it is argued that there is nothing wrong in the Caste System (Ambedkar, 2014a, p. 94).

Indian history is replete with defenders of caste system. Notable ones among them are Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who are renowned for being more secularists than any leaders in

Indian politics. Gandhi's justification for the need for a 'varna system' from 'ancestral calling' in "A Vindication of Caste" is a perfect example. Gandhi wrote:

"The callings of a Brahmin—spiritual teacher—and a scavenger are equal, and their due performance carries equal merit before God, and at one time seems to have carried identical reward before man. Both were entitled to their livelihood and no more. Indeed, one traces even now in the villages the faint lines of this healthy operation of the law" (Gandhi). After many decades, Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd argues that "Gandhi was not a caste abolitionist. He was an abolitionist of untouchability. Gandhi was against abolition of caste and varna order because he knew that the caste/varna institution is the soul of Hinduism" (Shepherd, 2019).

Nehru, the first prime minister and the renowned secularist to whom the country is indebted for his unique contributions to the making of modern India, was compelled to consider caste system as relief for the otherwise subjugated and suppressed classes. He explains it in *The Discovery of India*:

Thus at a time when it was customary for the conquerors to exterminate or enslave the conquered races, caste enabled a more peaceful solution which fitted in with the growing specialization of functions. Life was graded and out of the mass of agriculturists evolved the Vaishyas, the agriculturists, artisans, and merchants; the Kshatriyas, or rulers and warriors; and the Brahmins, priests and thinkers who were supposed to guide policy and preserve and maintain the ideals of the nation. Below these three were the Shudras or laborers and unskilled workers, other than the agriculturists (Nehru, 1985, p. 85).

For Ambedkar, these views are quite unacceptable because the caste system cannot be considered as a mere division of labours, but it is a division of labourers which in turn would prevent the establishment of a modern nation.

Ambedkar's philosophy: an inclusive approach for a just society

When the existing system is unjust it must be deconstructed in a way that ensures justice for all the members. Social reformation

is the only way that aids in achieving a just society for Ambedkar. He suggests that the political movement for reformation is useless until there is a movement for social reformation. In his view, it is clear that without altering the existing social order, meaningful progress is unattainable. A community cannot be effectively mobilized for any type of progression, nor can it construct anything substantial on the basis of caste. Building a nation or a moral framework is impossible when rooted in caste divisions. Any efforts made on such foundations will ultimately fail and remain incomplete.

An alternative based upon justice has two principles in its core: the first one being that individual is an end in himself, and the aim of the society is the growth of the individual. The second principle focusses on that associated life between members of society which should be based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Ambedkar, 2014d, p. 95).

At this point Ambedkar presents the term democracy but with a new dimension; for him democracy means a mode of associated living.

There should be varied and free points of contact with other modes of association. In other words, there must be social endosmosis. This is fraternity, which is only another name for democracy. Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen. Any objection to Liberty? Few object to liberty in the sense of a right to free movement, in the sense of a right to life and limb (Ambedkar, 2014a, p. 57).

His vital presence, with his significant ideas, in the drafting committee did reflect throughout the constitution, even the preamble of the constitution ensures to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity
and integrity of the Nation;(The constitution of India, 2024, p. 28)

He traces the genesis of democracy in India in Buddhist Sangha. Speaking in the constituent assembly, on 25 November 1949, Ambedkar said: “it is not that India did not know parliaments or parliamentary procedure. A study of Buddhist Bhikshu Sangha discloses that not only there were parliaments — for the Sanghas were nothing but parliaments— but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of parliamentary procedure known to modern times” (Ambedkar 2014b, p.978).

While in the caste-based society an individual has no place, the ideal society which is proposed by Ambedkar puts individual as the end. In the caste-based society there is no room for individual merit and no consideration of individual justice. Ambedkar points out that:

The first is that the individual is an end in himself and that the aim and object of society is the growth of the individual and the development of his personality. Society is not above the individual and if the individual has to be subordinate to the society. It is because such subordination is for his betterment and only to the extent necessary (Ambedkar, 2014d, p. 95).

Reservation is the essential tool Ambedkar introduced to reconstruct the political system of India. Even though reservation is one among the most debatable topic in Indian Political history, it is still proved to be the most necessary element of modern India. It is the only way to make the marginalized participate in the State and the power mechanisms. In his *States and Minorities* Ambedkar puts it clearly:

The Scheduled Castes shall have minimum representation in the Legislature — Union and State — and if there be a group Constitution then in the group Legislature equal to the ratio of their population to the total population. Provided that no other minority is allowed to claim more representation than what is due to it on the basis of its population. (Ambedkar, 2020, p. 32)

On a peripheral look in to general context, in to other modern nations, reservation can be considered as an obstacle for equality, the desired objective of the modern states, but in the Indian context where

inequality has been internalized for ages, where segregation of some sections of the society has been ritualized since ancient times, reservation does act as an aid to protect democracy. Reservation is that perfect tool which can be used to upgrade the lives of the suppressed, it opens them a door to education from which they were kept away; it provides them with opportunity to be part of the governing power which was beyond their reach for ages. It is not about wealth, even though it is a definite consequence of reservation, but it stands as the only way of making Indian community democratic.

The other tool Ambedkar believes to be essential to reconstruct the caste-affected Indian society is the idea of “Intermarriage”. It serves as the bridge for mingling of different castes and religions since it collapses the claim of purity of blood. That is strictly a practical way of attempting to eliminating segregation inherent in Indian community. Ambedkar Argues;

I am convinced that the real remedy is inter-marriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount the separatist feeling — the feeling of being aliens — created by Caste will not vanish. Among the Hindus inter-marriage must necessarily be a factor of greater force in social life than it need be in the life of the non-Hindus (Ambedkar, 2014a, p. 67).

Conclusion

Ambedkar has attempted to collapse the hierarchical system which is not only unscientific and illogical but also built on pillars of injustice. This system is as old as India itself, the interpellation is rooted in its soul, so that the folks would consider the apartheid as natural as human beings, that some are inferior to others. After exposing the unjust system, Ambedkar could explicitly explain the ways to reconstruct an inclusive society with the help of the concepts of democracy as an association of living and the idea of reservation which is another name for representation for all. The hegemony is questioned; the unjust system is exposed. All these help in identifying Ambedkar unarguably as a Gramscian “organic intellectual”. Gramsci’s concept highlights the importance of intellectuals being connected to

and serving the interests of specific social groups, especially of the suppressed social classes, rather than being the tool to protect the interest of the dominant class. Gramsci introduced the term in the Western context, but this term is also applicable to Ambedkar in Indian context, like his own term “Subaltern” is applicable to the concerned group throughout the world.

Plato’s approach to justice is strictly rooted in his vision of a hierarchical society and the challenge raised by Thrasymachus exposes the hegemony and the power dominance of one class over the other. The discourse on justice has always triggered the thoughts of philosophers of both West as well as the East of all time. Though Plato’s philosophy of an ideal society is rooted in a stratified and hierarchical society, the interlocutions have opened new thoughts and perspectives on justice. Theorizing justice in the present context cannot avoid the contributions and philosophy of Ambedkar. Though he has the advantage of the age he was born into, the advantage of living in an age after the Enlightenment era or getting foreign education does not simply inspire anybody to deconstruct the structures of unjust system. His contemporaries, including Gandhi and Nehru, especially with their views on caste and Varna, substantiate this argument. It does not mean that these great men of twentieth century, including Gandhi and Nehru, were absolutely unjust or unscientific, or this fact does not refute their indisputable contribution for modern India; but it means that the naturalization of caste system was deeply internalized through generations of this nation into that length where even the intellectuals of the society were enforced to justify it. Not all the system can be abolished and neglected by the time flow, not all the rituals can be easily eradicated from the society since it is internalized into the normal life of the society. Deconstructing it demands insights and great efforts; this makes Ambedkar a great democrat with excellent diplomacy.

His contributions to global justice theory extend far beyond the Indian context, offering vital insights into human rights, social equity, and egalitarian justice. His vision centers on the principle of equal treatment for all, closely aligning with John Rawls’ concept of “justice as fairness.” Ambedkar’s critique of entrenched social hierarchies

underscores the necessity of addressing social inequality as a foundation for achieving genuine political and economic justice. He emphasized the importance of legal rights and institutional mechanisms in protecting marginalized communities and promoting justice. Ambedkar's approach is inherently intersectional, addressing interconnected forms of oppression such as caste discrimination, patriarchy, and labor exploitation. His work holds lasting global relevance, particularly in areas like affirmative action, gender equality, labor rights, and economic justice. Thinkers such as Nancy Fraser, Charles Taylor, and Judith Butler contribute further depth to these discussions, highlighting the need to address both economic redistribution and cultural recognition in the pursuit of justice. Ambedkar's role as an organic intellectual, grounded in the lived experiences of the oppressed, exemplifies the necessity of both theoretical engagement and practical activism in striving for equality.

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