Some Economics Thoughts of Ambedkar

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Abstract:
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was accomplished and trained economists. He was multidisciplinary academicians too. He had at his credit many pioneering theoretical contributions in Sociology, Anthropology, History and Culture. His work was multifaceted and focussed on upliftment of downtrodden and erstwhile untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar turned into accomplished political economist. His thoughts on Indian economy and Indian agriculture in particular are focusing his life-time mission and restricting Indian society on the principal equality, fraternity and liberty.

Introduction:
Twentieth century India witnessed number of towering personalities who led foundation of modern India. The contemplations and aspirations of these leaders is imbibed in their writings and actions. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is no exception to this. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was dynamic accomplished economist as well as thinker of twentieth century. Among his life time missions to provide socio-economic justice to his fellowmen was one of the prime mission. He strived for it to his last breath. His approach to the socio-economic institutes of modern India was holistic and aimed to provide justice to the depressed and downtrodden people. Dr. B. R. Ambe kar experienced untouchability in his private life. He also experienced the misery that common untouchable people faced. Raising the life standard of his fellowmen and eradication of untouchaility was main focus of his life. Even in such circumstances providing relief to the other exploited, down trodden other than untouchables was sought by Dr. Ambedkar. Ambedkar himself was great social-scientist, legislator, lawyer and an expert of constitution and democratic institutions and its functioning. Every piece of his writing, speech and thoughts are well contemplated and intended to build modern India on modern principles of equality fraternity and liberty. Individual liberty and democracy were prime points of concern for Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar’s economic thoughts were based on some moral values. These values intended welfare of people. 3

In caste ridden society Ambekar contemplated to build modern India on modern democratic principles. Dr. Ambedkar’s thought on Indian agriculture and land reforms therefore are intended on same principles which are enumerated above. Ambedkar
advocated economic democracy for fulfillment of political democracy. One cannot find Dr. Ambedkar’s thoughts on Indian agriculture in one single text. However, his thoughts are surfaced in due events. We have to collect thoughts of Ambedkar on Indian agriculture through various sources. Higher and technical education department of government of Maharashtra published almost all literature of Dr. Ambe kar entitled ‘Writings and Speeches of Dr. Ambedkar’. These sources are valuable sources for researcher to describe and analyze the views of Dr. Ambedkar on Indian agriculture. One can find logical continuity and under-laid philosophy in his thoughts without any contradictions. In this regard we have to take note of his thoughts on Khoti, Mahar Vatan, Co-operative farming, Land reforms, Landholdings, Irrigation plans and Food security.

**Village Economy and Agriculture**

Indian economy during first few decades after independence was primarily agricultural economy. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar through his writings and speeches as well as through legislative debates put his views on Indian agriculture. Land being the prime source of income up to first half of twentieth century; ownership of land created disparities in the people. Ownership of land and the extent of land holding also determined the caste and social hierarchy in village community. Extent of land holding determined the caste hierarchy lower castes had very meager land holdings. He noticed that the peasants at countryside are against social equality. The high-caste Hindus are not ready to give away the age-old traditions. The peasants at country side though using modern machines and technology in their farm were not ready to give away their age-old traditions. There are two villages within one village one of high-caste Hindus and another of untouchables.

**Thoughts on land reforms**

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4 Mungekar B.L. thoughts of Dr. Ambekdar, (thoughts on Indian agriculture) Mungekar B.L. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar felicitation book Et al Daya Pawar Maharashtra Rajaya Sahitya Sanskruti Mandal Mumbai 32 1993 (Marathi) p.387 Dr. Ambedkar stressed that national property and income should not be used to entangle poor people. It would also disastrous to increase national income by exploiting poor people. (in the article of Bahiskrit Bharat 23rd December 1927 quoted by Pantawane in Journalist Ambedkar book Pratima Publication 1996 p.219

5 S.D.Tupe Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar felicitation book Et al Daya Pawar Maharashtra Rajaya Sahitya Sanskruti Mandal Mumbai 32 1993 (Marathi) pp401-407 landholdings

The ownership of land and fixing of revenue these are two problems of Indian agriculture. P.402 lead to caste system higher castes have higher land holdings. Majority are tenants on landlords land. Small landholdings,

6 Kharat Shankarao ‘The letters of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’ (Marathi) Indrayani Publication Pun March 2008 Pp.218-219
Dr. Ambedkar in first instance saw agriculture as prime sector for economic development of India. He advocated treating agriculture as industry for first time in the history of modern India. To increase the national income of India, there was need to increase the income from agriculture was the case put forth by Dr. Ambedkar. To increase the income from agriculture he stressed for rapid land reforms in India.\(^7\) In latter stage he forcefully put the case for rapid industrialization. He saw industrialization as panacea for India’s every problem including untouchability and caste system.\(^8\) He told his fellow men to get educated. He also advocated for abolition of Mahar Vatan, self-sufficiency of villages and agriculture based economy. He attributed rigidity of village community to these aspects. This also created ardent need for land reformers. As suggested by Dr. Rajkrishana there are four types of land reforms consisting of organizational, developmental, emancipating and redistributing. As suggested by Dr. Rajkrishanan Dr. Ambedkar advocated three types of land reforms which include emancipation, redistribution and organizational measures.\(^9\) Dr. Ambedkar stressed on emancipation of cultivators. He pointed out that the condition of landless untouchable labors was miserable due to zamindari system and ownership of land. Ambedkar showed the injustice of charging income tax on agricultural income. He stressed that there should be income-tax on agricultural produce as per income tax rules. He stressed on abolition of zamindari and Mahar Vatan. For very meager livelihood Mahar Vatandars were serving tirelessly to the government and civilian. Ambedkar preached to his fellowmen to give away this vatan which was making them idle. Ambedkar thought this was the hurdle in the progress of untouchables.\(^10\) Giving away the services and balluta in lieu of Vatan land was demand of Ambedkar. Mahar

\(^7\) Pantwane Gangadhar Journalist Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar (Marathi) Pratima Publication 1996 Pune p.222

\(^8\) Kuber V.N. ‘Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’ Kesari Publication Pune (Marathi) 1972 Industrialization and agro based industries could lead to abolishment of rural employment of both the types seen and hidden. pp.291-292 cff. Ambedkar stressed on the industrialization due to that the excess labor will be absorbed, it will reduced the burden on agriculture, labor will not survive on the cost of other labor, it will increase the national income, it will decrease the tendency of division of land increase in land size is essential. Mungerkar B.L. Dr. Ambedkar Felicitation volume Rajya Sahitya Sanskruti Mandal (Marathi) 1993 Daya Pawar et al. p.383

\(^9\) Kuber V. N. Kuber ‘Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’ Kesari Publication Pune (Marathi) 1972pp.292-293

\(^10\) Pantwane Gangadhar Opp. Cit. pp114-119 cff. Kharat Shankarrao Indrayani Publication Pun 6\(^6\) March 2008 Mahar Vatan is slavery of modern age. The members of Maharashtra Vatan holder has to perform each and every duty of village community. He was bound to work around the clock. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar introduced the bill to abolish Mahar Vatan system in the year 1927 in council. P.118
Vatandars should give away services for vatan land and bulluta as well as government wages for the services they have provided. However, the Vatan land should be kept with the old holders and they should be charged with land tax was the demand of Ambedkar.\textsuperscript{11}

**Ambedkar on Khoti tenure**

Dr. Ambedkar was against the exploitation of tenant. He advocated rapid land reforms. Abolition of zamindari will lead to increase in the yield was his contention. He therefore strongly advocated abolition of Khoti system prevailing over some districts of Konkan region. In Khoti system of tenure Khots were exploiting whole family of tenants like bounded labors. Khots were extracting jackfruits to domestic fowls from their tenants. The khots exploitation was not only economical but was also social. Khots made compulsion on the peasants and their wives to wear inferior clothes.\textsuperscript{12} C.K. Bole and Dr. Ambedkar tried hard to abolish this system by law. They also tried to enact law on it. Many news papers of Brahmin leaders oppose Dr. Ambedkar’s such type of activities.\textsuperscript{13} Dr. Ambedkar initiated a bill for abolishment of Khoti in following words.

“The khoti system is one of the minor land tenures in the Bombay Presidency. It is found mostly in Ratnagiri district and in some parts of Kolaba and Thana districts. The terms of the khoti tenure in some cases regulated by law, in some by custom and usage and in the rest by grant. In the Ratnagiri district the terms are regulated by Bombay Act I 1880, in Kolaba district the terms are regulated by custom and usage, and in the Thana district by grant. The Khoti tenure differs from the ordinary Raytwari tenure in as much as in the latter the government collects revenue directly from the those who are in occupation of the land while in former the government is required to employ the services of the Khot for purpose of collecting revenue.

The system of khoti tenure, while it binds the khot to pay revenue to the government, leaves him free to do what he likes to the inferior holders, and this freedom has been so grossly abused by the Khots that the inferior holders are not only subjected to all kinds of exaction but they have been reduced to a state of abject slavery. In recent years, the inferior holders have been carrying on a great agitation against the khots and have been demanding the abolition of Khoti system. The relations between the Khots and the inferior holders have been so strained that three Khots were murdered by them.

While the khoti tenure may have the advantage of facilitating the collection of revenue, its disadvantages are so great that the tenure cannot be allowed to continue hereafter without grave disturbance to the peace and tranquility of the presidency. It is therefore imperative to abolish the system.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid Loc.Cit.
\textsuperscript{12} Pantwane Opp.Cit. pp.219-221
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid Loc. Cit.
The Bill aims (1) To abolish the Khoti system and to establish direct relationship between government and those who are in possession or occupation of the land which is under the management of beneficial enjoyment of the Khot (2) to make provision for the payment of reasonable compensation to the khot for the loss of rights and (3) to give those inferior holders who are in actual occupation of the land and the status of occupation within the meaning of the land revenue code and to (4) to provide for other incidental purposes.”

A member of legislative assembly Mr. S.L. Karandikar opposed the move on ground that Revenue minister assured that the whole question of land revenue policy of Bombay presidency would be taken up therein. However, Dr. Ambedkar argued that the provisions in the bill he had introduced were of better and if the assurance provided by revenue minister provides better provisions than Ambedkar he would withdrew the bill. However, Karandikar was not able to give answer and finally the bill was introduced.

**Some thoughts on Landholding, Capital and labor**

Dr. Ambedkar had observed that the landholding size of various parts were as Mumbai Presidency average landholding size 25.1 acres, Pimplae Saudagar one to two acres and Ratnagiri 20 Ares (guntas) divided into 3 parts.

There was debate on less productivity of Indian agriculture due to division of land in India. Ambedkar commented that; not hereditary rights but the population pressure on land was major reason of division of land. The division of land took place because there are no any other alternatives for survival. As well as there is no any other means than farming which will be more beneficial other than agriculture. According to Ambedkar it was difficult to maintain specific size of holding of agriculture. Ambedkar pointed out that as the agriculture is enterprise in production it would not be appropriate to label the profitable and unprofitable holding based upon the smaller or larger size of the holdings. Instead of holding size all inputs required for production including land is important. Thus according to Ambedkar landholding, capital and labor are equally important (in appropriate proportion i.e optimum) in production of agricultural produce. Availability of capital is important and not size of holding or division of land. Savings leads capital formation. Capital formation helps in increasing production and production in turn raises savings. Per capita land under cultivation is very low in India

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was one acre in 1895 it was 8.90 in USA and 5.60 in USSR Italy 1.75 in France 2.30. He pointed out that less land under cultivation results into disguised employment or superfluous employment. That means unnecessarily large scale people remain unemployed which were engaged in agricultural sector. Ambedkar introduced the concept of wasted or unutilized labor. He pointed out that even on unutilized labor expenses are incurred to feed it. This unutilized labor is national calamity. This labor survives on the national income this in turn reduces already small national income. In case of unutilized capital this never happens though unutilized capital did not produce anything. Instead of traditional cultivation if the techniques of intensive and capital intensive farming introduced it will lead to more disguised unemployment.

F.G.H. Anderson introduced small holders’ relief bill in October 1927 in Bombay legislative assembly. Anderson put suggestion that there should not be further division of land and he banned to divide land after specific size. Second measure he suggested was to sale out single large land. Ambedkar criticized Anderson and put forth that the main problem of Indian agriculture was shortage of capital. (Writings and speeches vol.2 pp.129-137) He pointed out that by adopting Anderson’s measures lot many people will be unemployed or jobless. He praised Hindu succession act for equal rights of successors on predecessors land. It provided opportunity of income through land. As the religious and social rights are concentrated in the hands of few people this succession act provided relief; this was the argument of Ambedkar. He therefore opposed to put limit on hereditary rights. As per Anderson’s provision there was provision of punishment to tillers i.e. whoever cultivate the small landholdings. This in turn was encroachment on right to property. He suggested cooperative farming for that sake. Ambedkar stated in draft to constituent assembly that political democracy for state and minority is essential. He argued that least interface of state if envisaged can exposed individual liberty at the stake of private capitalist. It will be mastery of the private capitalists. According to Ambedkar there should be state run basic industry including insurance and agriculture. In cooperative farming system he envisaged inclusion of all members and sections of society. He suggested equal distribution of agricultural produce among all members of villages. He proposed tax on such income.

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16 Ibid p. p.382
17 Ibid Pp.385-83
18 Ibid P.384
19 Ibid P.385
20 Ibid P.388
State Socialism

Ambedkar suggested state socialism, parliamentary democracy and opposed autocracy. The state socialism should be embedded in such a manner in constitution that even if the political party with inclination to oppose state socialism will come to power would not be able to do it. Economic equality was important to Ambedkar.

Conclusion:

Thus one can see the consistency and logical extension of Dr. Ambedkar’s socio-political and economical thoughts and philosophy through his thoughts on Indian agriculture.

References:

1. Kuber V.N. ‘Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’ Kesari Publication Pune (Marathi) 1972
5. Pantwane Gangadhar Journalist Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar (Marathi) Pratima Publication 1996 Pune p.222
6. Kuber V.N. ‘Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’ Kesari Publication Pune (Marathi) 1972
8. Dr.B.R.Amdkar’s speech in Bombay legislative Assembly vol.1, pp.1087-89 dated 17th September 1937
Ambedkar was a keen student of economics. He got his MA for his thesis on 'Ancient Indian Commerce' and MSc (London) for his thesis on 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India' and DSc for his thesis on 'The Problem of the Rupee'. He was a Professor of Economics in Mumbai’s Sydenham College in the early 1930s. See more ideas about b r ambedkar, photo album quote, thoughts. Adding some beauty to your feed. Shop 24/7 online with {{Session.Rep.Name}}, your local Avon Representative! Download Wallpaper Hd Hd Wallpaper Wallpapers Jokes Images Hd Images Galaxy Pictures New Pictures Indian Constitution London School Of Economics. Dr. B R Ambedkar best quote and thoughts in Hindi with image also read more Hindi quotes by famous personalities of world - आंबेडकर जयंती पर बाबासाहेब के सर्वश्रेष्ठ विचार. History Major World History Lessons American History Lessons History For Kids History Projects Women In History History Jokes History Timeline History Facts. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (April 14, 1891 – December 6, 1956), commonly known as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (Marathi: बाबासाहेब Babasaheb "Respected Father"). He was an Indian polymath: jurist, economist, politician, philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist, educationist, editor, journalist, historian and writer. He pioneered revival of Buddhism in India and inspired the modern Buddhist movement. He was the champion of human rights, independent India’s first law minister, the architect of the Constitution of