



P r i n t i n g

Special Issue

Area

April-2018

International Multilingual Research Journal



ISSN 2394-5303



ISSN: 2394 5303

Impact
Factor
5.011(IJIF)

*Printing Area*TM
International Research Journal

April 2018
Special Issue

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आंतरराष्ट्रीय बहुभाषिक शोध पत्रिका

प्रिंटिंग एरिया

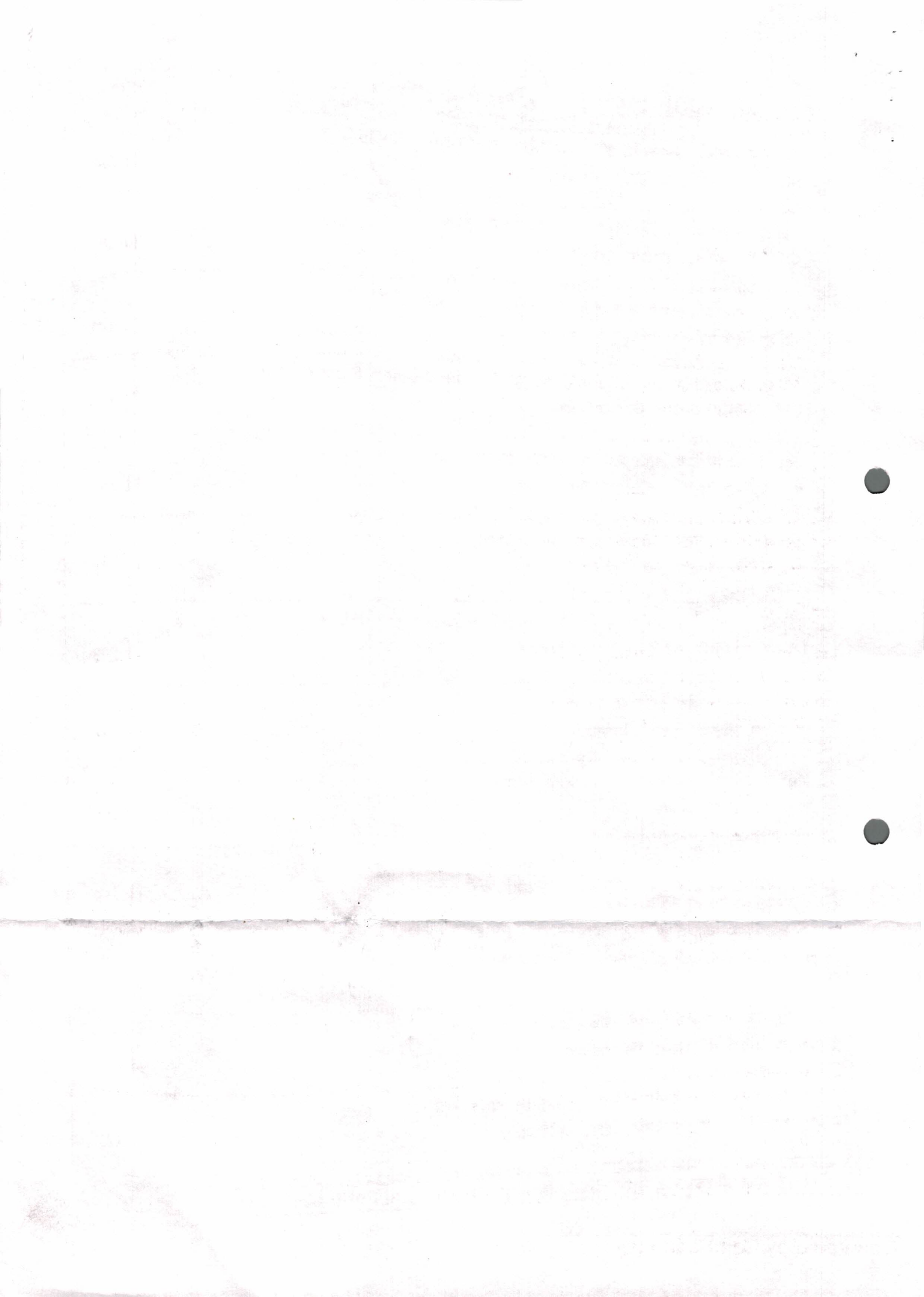
Printing Area International Interdisciplinary Research
Journal in Marathi, Hindi & English Languages

April 2018, Special Issue

The Nation Builder :
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

<http://www.vidyavarta.blogspot.com>
<http://www.vidyavartajournal.com>
<https://sites.google.com/site/vidyavartajournal>

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Dr. Ambedkar and Empowerment of Indian Women: From A Philosophical Point of View

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ABSTRACT :-

Dr. Ambedkar was first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. The present paper is an attempt to highlight Dr.Ambedkar's view on women problems in pre and post independent India and its relevancy in present scenario. Dr. Ambedkar started his movement in 1920. He started fierce propoganda against the Hindu social order and launched a journal 'MookNayak' in 1920 and 'Bahiskrit Bharat' in 1927 for this purpose. Through its issues he put due stress on the gender equality and the need for education and exposed the problems of the depressed as well as women. Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and devdasi system. Dr. Ambedkar tried an adequate inclusion of women's right in the political vocabulary and constitution of India.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Hindu code bill, perfect equality, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dr. B.R Ambedkar was among the most outstanding intellectuals of India in the 20th century in the word. He made significant efforts

to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Ambedkar was not only the father of Indian Constitution; he was a great freedom fighter, political leader, philosopher, thinker, economist, editor, social reformer, revivalist of Buddhism and was first Indian to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by codifying the common Civil Code for Hindus and other sections of the Indian society. He stated that women should be given all round development more importantly social education, their well-being and socio-cultural rights. He emphasized that each and every section of Indian women be given their due share and it is a must to maintain and protect dignity and modesty of women. Dr.BabasahebAmbedkar always believed in movements led by women. He also added that if the women from all walks of life are taken in to confidence, they may play a significant role in the social reforms. They have played very massive and active role to eradicate the social abuses. He insisted that every married woman must participate in her husband's activities as a friend. But she must show the courage to deny the life of slaves. She should insist on the principle of equality. If all the women follow it, they will get the real respect and their own identity.

II. Hindu Code Bill for Empowerment of Women:

The Hindu Code Bill introduced by Br. B.R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly on 11th April, 1947. The property including both movable and immovable property should be acquired by a woman. The acquisition of property should be made by a woman before and after marriage even during the widowhood from her parents or husband. Dowry system would be paid as a condition and consideration. The share of the property of each unmarried daughter shall be half that of each son and the share of each married daughter shall be one-quarter of that

of each son. His Hindu Code Bill covered with the i) right to property, ii) order of succession to the property, iii) maintenance, marriage, divorce adoption, minority and guardianship.¹

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has suggested modify the Hindu law relating to women i.e.

- i) The Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850.
- ii) The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856.
- iii) The Indian Succession Act, 1925.
- iv) The Native Convert's Marriage Dissolution Act, 1866.
- v) The Transfer of property Act IV of 1882 as amended by Act XX of 1929.
- vi) The Indian Majority Act, 1875.
- vii) The Guardian and Wards Act 1890.
- viii) The Transfer of property (Amendment) supplementary Act XXI of 1929.
- ix) The Hindu Gains of Learning Act, 1930.
- x) The Hindu women's Rights to property Act XVIII of 1937.²

The widow, the daughter should be given the same rank as the son in the matter in inheritance. The daughter should be given a share in her father's property. The Mitakshara or the Dayabhag system of law between men and female should be abolished from Indian society. Under the Hindu law a wife is not entitled to claim to her husband if she does not live together in his house. The Hindu law does not recognised the wife if she wants to live separate from her husband. Dr. Ambedkar pointed out in his Hindu Code Bill that the wives should be given to live separately from her husband freely. Dr. Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill recognises the two types of marriages. The first is called "Sacramental" marriage and the second is called "civil" marriage. To him, the present Hindu law recognised only "sacramental" marriage but does not recognise the "civil" marriage.³ The registered marriage must be register through proper way. The existing law requires identity of castes and sub-castes for a valid sacramental

marriage. His bill described that the marriage will be valid irrespective of the caste or sub-caste of the parties entering into the marriage.⁴ The Bill was moved for referring to the Select Committee on 9th April, 1948. The parliamentary debates continued for more than 4 years. This was the first longest discussion on any single Bill in the free India's Parliament. Dr. Ambedkar felt that the Government. i.e. the Congress were not no eager to clear the Hindu Code. He tendered his resignation on 27th September, 1951 to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. On the request of the Prime Minister he continued to participate in the Parliamentary debates till 10th October, 1951. To provide equal rights to the women as enjoyed by men he produced the Bill in the Parliament. The orthodox Hindu and the President of the Constituent Assembly Dr. Rajendra Prasad was against the Bill. Anathasayanam Ayyangar, the speaker of the Constituent Assembly was also against this Hindu Code Bill. Dr. Ambedkar resigned from the Nehru's Cabinet. In 1955, the laws relating to marriage, adoption, maintenance, divorce etc. were passed in parliament.

III. Constitutional Provisions for Empowerment of Women:

As a Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, he has given equal status to women compare with men by providing many provisions in the Constitution which provided the socio-economic and political justice for the women such as-

Article 14: The state guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law to all its citizens within Indian union.

Article 15: The state shall not discriminate to any citizens on the basis of caste, creed, religion, race, sex, place of birth etc.

Article 16: There shall be no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion, sex, place of birth in the government services. There shall be equal opportunity in the government services.

Article 17: The state shall be positive step

to eradicate the untouchable based on caste, creed, religion sex etc. All shall be treated equal opportunity to entry into temple, hotels and other places.

Article24: Prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years factories, mines or any other hazardous employment.

Article39: The state shall provide to all adequate means of livelihood.

Article39 (d): The state shall provide equal pay for equal work both for men and women.

Article41: The state shall provide the right to work, equal employment, education and public assistance both for men and women.

Article42: The state shall provide the maternity leave for women workers.

Besides these, he introduced and got passed the four acts which strengthened the position of women in the society which were incorporated in the Hindu Code Bill. These are:

- i. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- ii. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
- iii. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956.
- iv. The Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956.⁵

IV. Voting Rights To All Indian Women:

Even I don't know how many Indian Women's know the contribution of Dr.BabasahebAmbedkar who fought for equal rights for women and for their voting rights. Today our constitution granted voting rights to all Indian women as a right because of him. But before Independent India, it is not easy task for everyone 'right to vote' even men also. Mostly the Right to vote was given only to those the rich, the landed and the tax payers.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Dr.BabasahebAmbedkar expressed his views on the state of life of all women. He stated that women must be treated equally and given equal prestige. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly. He also insisted and evoked all the parliamentary members to help

to pass the bill in parliament. Eventually, he resigned for the same. The teachings and thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar are useful not only women but also all the Indian even today. His deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from his each sentence and word. In his last speech in Indian Parliament we can know his feelings and respect showed towards women. He quoted the famous thoughts of an Irish Patriot Daniel O Connal as, "No man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity. And no nation can be grateful at the cost of his liberty." In his famous book 'Pakistan and partition of India' he expressed his views about Muslim women and their religious traditions, about wearing veil, their marriages and so on. Muslim women were suppressed under various religious traditions. Towards all the women, irrespective of their religion, casts and class, Babasaheb had a particular humanitarianism view. He frequently raised his voice against all sorts of injustice towards women.

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