CHAPTER – V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Man is, by nature, a unique kind of being, who desires to live in an open environment so that he could exploit the natural resources for his benefit. All the human beings, however, are not able to do so, in the sense that individuals suffer from one or the other inferiority complex. As a result of this inferiority feeling, either he remains peaceful or thinks of some violent outbursts in order to compensate for his failures. This tendency drives man towards violence or opposite to natural, desire of living peaceful. From this begins injustice that manifests itself into coercion, oppression slavery and maltreatment of others. Injustice is the distorted form of human relations that begin with natural feeling of fellowship. Injustice is the violation and oppression of what is good as inherent in justice. In a situation of this kind, only those, who are weak, become the victims; but to protect the interests and lives of these weaker sections of society, is the main purpose of justice. Thinkers like Thrasymacus did not accept it and declared that justice is the interest of the strong, who can maintain law and order in society. Thinkers like Socrates, however, refuted such an idea of justice, for the coercion and suppression of the interest of the weak itself becomes a form of injustice.

In fact, justice is a form of right relations between man and man. Idea of justice is in itself an abstraction. Its manifestation is possible only through the concrete steps of social justice. Justice is a thought of a social order; whereas social justice is its practice. Justice basically points towards the social justice, because justice is the identification of judiciousness of relations between two or
more than two persons. Where two or more than two individuals come together, there the things, just or unjust, assume the form of social justice. Thus, social justice, right from the beginning to the present day, has been a perennial problem of human society. Though the great thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle saw justice as a virtue of the soul, or an excellence of an individual, to define it is not adequate in this way. Rather, it would be more judicious, if we say that justice is a virtue of an excellence of social relations. Justice is basically the social justice in whatever way we take it and think of any of its aspect in a broader perspective.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle also linked justice with social order, and visualized social justice with the system of human relations. The same idea of justice and human relations was portrayed in varna vyavastha. The vedic social theory and Plato’s scheme classified human beings into definite classes, and the strict rules of social regulation were imposed in both of them. They regarded social stratification as natural, being based on human nature but all that has proved wrong and harmful. Though neither the Varna Vyavastha, nor Plato’s social scheme, exists anywhere, yet it may be asserted that both of them suffered and ultimately failed due to their in-built social inequality and unnatural gradation of human beings into water-tight compartments. Instead of doing justice, they turned into instruments of oppression and exploitation. Therefore, in the absence of right human relations, based on equality and freedom, no social justice can be possible.¹

Moreover, justice or injustice is manmade, and to attribute it to divine grace or divine wrath, as was done in ancient and medieval times, does not carry
any meaning in the field of social justice. To link it with God, as the giver and maintainer of justice, or an Karmadhyaksha, too, does not seem a practical proposal. Since justice or injustice is man’s creation, only he can improve and reform the system of human relations. If justice is a difficult exercise in the present world, how then, can it be guaranteed in the next birth? So justice, after man’s death, is nothing but a blatant joke or a myth. That is why the great humanists like Buddha and Ambedkar emphasized its need, its implementation, in this world. Again to relate social justice to the kingdom of God, is a hoax to deceive mankind. It was a concept well-suited to the whims of the fendale lords, priests and vested interests. So any concept of justice, if linked with God, Karma reward, supernatural power or miracles, can hardly be accepted by modern man. For human relations today are regulated and maintained by the rule of law, and the constitutional provisions. Thus, in the existing situation, a potent agency of social justice is not God but the constitution and the agencies as authorized by it.

Thinkers, or the makers of India’s Constitution, like Nehru, Lohia and Ambedkar, emphasized the need for social justice. It was Ambedkar, who highlighted the social cause and visualized the dignity of the individual, equality of all citizens, the inner strength of man’s character, and courage to uphold the cause of justice, that could make our nation great and strong in order to realize the ideal of fraternity, the cosmic heart of the social justice. He emphasized the need for democracy as a way of life so that people could rule themselves by the laws made by their chosen representatives, and also have a right to dissent and challenge what they felt as illegal, unjust and inhuman. These are the hallmarks of a living democracy; only in this kind of democratic set-up the cause of social justice can be highlighted by its friends. In Dr. Ambedkar’s considered opinion,
once the feelings of fraternity in a democratic order are strengthened, along with an abundance of human values, it will give boost to social justice, national character, based on integrity and unity of all citizens. In brief, in fraternity are inherent the ingredients of social justice, distributive justice and humanist values, being its supporting elements.

Social justice is a complex process, a multifaceted edifice, and includes in its structure as well as functioning innumerable things that we can hardly visualize for all the generations to come. So it must be studied and implemented in the context of existing circumstances. Though this is an age of science and technology, an age of material pursuit and abundance, yet social justice cannot be limited to all this; it goes beyond; since it is a constant stream of right human relations, a continuing movement, it can be maintained and made prosperous by humanist values: freedom, equality, fraternity, friendship, compassion, wisdom, judiciousness and devotion to one’s duties toward family, village and the nation as well. Law, or legal process can also make it effective; but it has to be made easily and cheaply available. There are persons, who do not need gold, material things to live with, but respect, dignity and equality in life. Material things create conflicts among people; but human values bring them together in cohesion in order to develop right relations. If there exist right relations among the people, nobody will life others to die due to hunger, disease, or paucity of clothes and houses.

Social justice is an endless movement, where all the samatagra his will always remain engaged in fight against the anti-forces. In order to facilitate its movement and to save it from subversive elements, it is necessary to identify its
enemies, and also to find out its true friends, who could cause the events move in the direction of social justice and equality. The agencies of social justice have to play a decisive role in the midst of its anti-forces. Among them the governmental agencies are most powerful, for they have basic legitimate authority to make social justice an effective process. It needs wise legislature, honest executive and prompt judiciary. The judiciary is the most corrective agency, if things go wrong in the field of social justice. However, the painfully slow wheel of justice entangled in procedural complexities, over-burdened judges, lawyers strikes, antiquated bail system, and similar other things that crop up every day, have attracted severe criticism of our judicial system. For lakhs of persons, who are languishing in jails without trials for a long time, law has become an instrument of injustice. So the callousness of the legal and judicial system has to be removed, if social justice is to be administered in the right perspective.  

Apart from the governmental agencies, there are non-governmental, public and independent, agencies of social justice. The important among them are Dharma and related institutions, education and educational institutions, morality and moral values, political parties and financial institutions, social groups and organizations or institutions, enlightened persons and intellectuals, writers and artists, and a host of others that in one way or the other, contribute towards the movement of social justice. If these agencies are just, olegal, co-operative and cohesive, they can create a very favourable environment in its process of implementation. In India, the legally binding force is only one, i.e., the Constitution; but there also exist innumerable forces such as Dharma, Mazhab, Sects and institutions, which make achievement of social justice an uphill task.
However, all this needs an integrated view and approach to benefit the citizens in the larger interest of the nation.

The possibilities of social justice have undoubtedly increased a lot, but the blind pursuit of power and pelf, hankering after material abundance, increasing number of the weak and helpless poverty-ridden masses and the like, do not augur well for a new era of social justice. Yet some devoted persons come forward, become samatgrahis who are, well-educated, well-organized and committed to the cause of social justice; through their activism not only anti-forces could be checked, but the prospects of a new social order could also be increased. The Sanatagrahis, imbibed with the humanist values like justice, freedom, equality, fraternity, spirit of national unity and dignity of human personality; committed to education, organization and agitation, and adorned with knowledge, duty and fellow feelings, can realize the innermost meaning of social justice. They can easily identify its enemies and friends; and thus, they can remove such destructive forces that intend to obstruct the movement of social justice. It is the bounden duty of all the agencies to help the Samatagrahis, who are devoted to the cause of the poor, lowly and the weak.

In a situation of this kind, the role of youth of coming up generation, can be decisive. They have to understand the true meaning, process and scope of social justice; they have to know the self-contradictions or conflicting ideologies of social justice; and they have also to distinguish between the dynamic forces and the obstructive elements. On the one hand, we have Veda, Manu-Smriti, Ramayana and Gita that propagate the deterministic social order based on Varnashram Dharma, niskam karma, divine governance and birth-based
prestige; and on the other, we have the Constitution and new laws, which intend to bring about a new dynamic social order based on the ideas of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, emphasizing the need for democracy, socialism and secularism. This new social order recognizes the efficacy of human effortivity, dignity of man and equal reward for equal karma in this world. The judicious awareness of the youth, both male and female, including that of the general masses, is the key to a vibrant and living social order as enshrined in the Constitution as also the awareness of what ails the nation, what are the ills that pollute the environment of democracy and justice, and what are remedies best suited under the prevailing situation.

We have a number of alternatives that the people of India, especially that of new generation, have to choose, that is, the alternatives either of the Manu-Smriti or of the Constitution; both of them provide us with two different systems of social justice; one brings us back to the Varnashram Samaj, and the other leads us towards the Samata Samaj. The enlightened young persons have to identify what are the rights and obligations of the citizens under both of these traditional and modern social orders. To be honest and true, the alternative, as enshrined in the Constitution, seems to be the best one under the prevailing environment, because it brings all the citizens together into common relations without superficial and unnatural compartmentalization of human beings.3

The right to human dignity, development of personality, social protection, right to rest and leisure, opportunity to education and advancement are some of the fundamental human rights that India’s Constitution bestows upon all its citizens. Rights to health and security are an integral fact of meaningful right to
life, to have not only a meaningful existence but also to enjoy with all vigour and vitality. The Constitution is a unique social document as it grants the rights to life and livelihood. If the rights to life and livelihood were not treated as a part of the constitutional set-up, it would not have been different from the traditional social code of Manu-Smiriti. The constitutional set-up as the maintainer of human dignity, encompasses, within its fold, some of the finer facts of human civilization which make the life of Indians, especially of the weaker sections of our society, worth living. The expanded connotation of life would mean freedom and equality in all spheres of social life. The rights to life and dignity include the quality of life as understood in its richness and fullness within the ambit of the Constitution. Is such an alternative not worth living for the up coming generation? However, a faithful exercise of the rights and obligations, that we have got in the constitution, will contribute towards the common good and well-being of all citizens, and this is what the spirit of social justice strives for.

Contrary to what some historians and thinkers maintain, it is difficult to blandly suggest that there exists abstract and natural antipathy among different racial and caste groups, which is responsible for tensions amongst them. The earliest Aryan society in the Indian subcontinent discriminated between groups on the basis of ‘varna’ which literally meant ‘colour’. At this stage, there was a great deal of inter-mixture with the dasyus, for instance, though at the same tune such inter-mixture was not encouraged. The Rigveda does not indicate development of a strict caste hierarchy in Aryan society. Caste rigidity became of feature of the Aryan society in later times when attempts to bypass the caste system were seen as sacrilegious especially as the inflexible system had been authenticated by Hindu sacred scriptures including the Puranas, the epic
literature and the Dharmashastras. It was the expectation that the political and economic factors that emerged with the growth of civilization, the rise of big cities and prosperous trade and commerce activities could lessen the caste system but the so-called modernity played a major role in strengthening of the caste system. It was in the interests of the Brahmins to keep another group—the sudras—suppressed in society in order to ensure their social and economic superiority.

Under the British, in the Indian subcontinent, the caste system became clear-cut, with each caste having its place in the caste hierarchy; and so, caste differences became sharper and more easily questionable. A few western-educated Indian scholars, for instance, begun to question the evils of the Indian caste system and advocate social reform to rid the society of untouchability and caste-based exploitation.

Throughout the decades of the twentieth century, there have been efforts worldwide to emphasise equality between all men and human rights for all. The crusade against race and caste discrimination intensified with great leaders and thinkers coming to the forefront to disapprove its practice in society.⁴

Jyotibha Phule’s offensive against Hindusim, especially the Brahmin dominated Hindu social system and culture, was in sharp reaction to particular historical, social and political situation. There is no doubt that it was justified. Towards the end of the Peshwa regime and subsequent British rule, the importance of Brahmins increased in Maharashtra and social inequality became more pronounced, causing much concern to other reformers too, like Lokahitavadi, M.G. Ranade, Agarkar and Tilak.
After Jyotibha Phule’s death the Satyashodhak movement in Maharashtra was reduced to a Brahmin versus non-Brahmin conflict. Much of Jotibha Phule’s rationalism and belief in universal brotherhood was lost. In the post-Independence era, while democracy has been transferred into power in the hands of non-Brahmins, the threat of inter-religious conflicts looms large. Jyotibha Phule’s ideology can diffuse this potential danger. His message that truthful (righteous) conduct is the only true religion stands as a powerful guiding light for all.

The present democratic civil life demand independent thinking on the part of the citizens. Without this essential accompaniment, self-government through democracy will prove to be a house of cards. Hence Jyotibha Phule ideas more relevant to us in the present context.⁵

The greatness of Jyotibha Phule lies in the fact he practiced what he preached. By this teachings and example, he brought about a revolution in society, which had a great impact on the life of millions of people. In the present days of tension between different castes and classes of society, Jyotibha Phules teachings has an especial significance and value.