**Question: Discuss Ambedkar’s views on Social Democracy.**

**Answer:** Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who campaigned against social discrimination towards the untouchables (Dalits), while also supporting the rights of women and labour. He was independent India's first law and justice minister, the architect of the Constitution of India, and a founding father of the Republic of India.

Ambedkar argued that the reason why India faces many problems like illiteracy, corruption, unemployment, poverty, dogmatism and intercommunity conflicts, is that there have been no efforts to distribute wealth and the burden of responsibility among the citizens on the basis of social justice. Secondly, citizens are not made aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities, nor have they internalized social values like liberty, equality and fraternity. Ambedkar contributed to the first task through his role in drafting the Indian constitution. He contributed to the second task by presenting and propagating his philosophy of social democracy.

As the President of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar made social democracy the guiding light of his project. Democracy in general consists in the removal of political inequalities through the concept of ‘one man one vote.’ This was achieved in India after independence through universal adult suffrage. However, Ambedkar was not satisfied merely with this political dimension of freedom. His primary push was in the direction of social freedom, which was to be achieved through social democracy.

In Ambedkar’s view, social democracy stands for organization of society based on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity. Its greater emphasis is on the principle of equality, both social and economic, and fraternity with a view to create such human social conditions that ensure free and fair development of all human beings. This is why it emphasizes annihilation of caste and caste-based social exclusion. As such, the concept of social democracy sometimes requires unequal or preferential treatment for certain sections of the population, which have been deprived of certain values for ages, with a view to bring them on an equal footing with other sections of the population.

Ambedkar stood for a social system in which man’s status is based on his merit and achievements and where no one is noble or untouchable because of his/her birth. He advocated the policy of preferential treatment for the socially oppressed and economically exploited people of the country. The Constitution of India, which was drafted under his chairmanship, contains a number of provisions that enjoins the state to secure to all its citizens, justice (social, economic and political), along with liberty, equality and fraternity. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution declares untouchability as abolished. He enshrined the principles of reservation for improvement of SCs/STs to enable them to progress educationally, economically and socially, by providing extra support to them in the form of reservation and concessions to uplift them to the level of the advanced classes. It is the result of Ambedkar’s constant efforts that today there are significant numbers of members of parliament (MPs), members of the legislative assembly (MLAs), The Indian Administrative Service (IAS)/The Indian Police Service (IPS), professors and doctors from among these castes and tribes.

To conclude, Ambedkar judged correctly that any genuine democratization process can be started in India only through social democracy. He made tireless efforts to ensure that excluded groups were politically and socially empowered, that workers were fairly treated, and that every person had access to education. As a blueprint of his vision for independent India, the Constitution was remarkable in its refusal to discriminate on the grounds of caste, creed, religion or gender.