

MAHIS 2.2



**M.A. HISTORY
SEMESTER - II**

**(REVISED SYLLABUS
AS PER NEP 2020)**

**PERSPECTIVES OF
AMBEDKARISM**

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Course Outcome:

- a) To understand the conditions of Depressed Classes in India and develop awareness about constitutional safeguards and Reservation policy.
- b) To analyze Dr B.R. Ambedkar's views and Ideas on Socio-Religious and Educational Issues.
- c) To create awareness about Constitutional safeguards among the students.

MODULE I: (2 Credits)

Unit 1: Political and Economic Perspective of Ambedkarism

- a) Concept of Democracy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
- b) Broken men theory, Reservation Policy, Labour Policy
- c) Aims, Objectives and Achievements: Independent Labour Party, All India Scheduled Caste Federation and Concept of Republican Party of India.

Unit 2: Socio-Religious and Educational Perspective of Ambedkarism

- a) Civil Rights Movement: Mahad Chavdar Tank Satyagraha, Kalaram Temple Entry Movement
- b) Perspective on conversion to Buddhism
- c) Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, The Peoples Education Society

MODULE 2: (2 Credits)

Unit 3: Perspective on Human Rights of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

- a) His writings and Speeches on Human right issues.
- b) Hindu Code Bill and Women Empowerment
- c) States and Minorities: Future Model of Indian Constitution

Unit 4: Legal and Constitutional Perspectives

- a) Indian Constitution: Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy
- b) Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Castes.
- c) Constitutional Safeguards for Women, Labour, and Minorities

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MODULE - I

1

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF AMBEDKARISM

a) Concept of Democracy and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Definition of Democracy
- 1.3 Democracy as A Mechanism of Social Transformation
- 1.4 Democracy and Constitutional Morality
- 1.5 Democracy and Buddhism: A Spiritual Continuum
- 1.6 Political Democracy
- 1.7 Social Democracy
- 1.8 Economic Democracy
- 1.9 Constitutional Morality
- 1.10 Democracy and Caste System
- 1.11 Summary
- 1.12 Questions
- 1.13 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand and explain Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's multifaceted concept of democracy, including its political, social, economic, and moral dimensions.
2. To analyse the philosophical underpinnings of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic thought, especially the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity.
3. To critically assess the relationship between political democracy and social justice in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings.
4. To evaluate the role of constitutional morality in sustaining a democratic society and preventing majoritarianism.

5. To explore Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's critique of the caste system as antithetical to democratic ideals and his strategies for its annihilation.
6. To examine Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on economic democracy, including land reforms, labor rights, and equitable distribution of resources.
7. To apply Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic principles to contemporary issues such as caste discrimination, economic inequality, and threats to constitutional values.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a prominent social reformer, had a profound and unique understanding of democracy. His vision extended beyond the conventional notions of political democracy and encompassed social and economic dimensions. He believed that democracy is not just a form of government but a way of life based on liberty, equality, and fraternity. His ideas on democracy were deeply influenced by his experiences of social discrimination, his extensive study of political theory, and his commitment to social justice.

1.2 DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed democracy as a system ensuring human dignity and justice. According to him, "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 fellow men." (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 1936)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that democracy is not just about electoral processes and governmental institutions but about fostering a society where all individuals are treated as equals.

This chapter seeks to explore and critically examine Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's definition of democracy, its philosophical underpinnings, and its application within the socio-political realities of India. By contrasting Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas with those of both Western and Indian political thinkers, we highlight his unique contribution to democratic theory and practice.

Democracy as a Way of Life

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's most widely quoted definition of democracy states:

“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 fellow men.”

This definition encapsulates Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's broader philosophical approach to democracy—not as a mechanical process of elections and representation, but as a moral and ethical framework for structuring society. He viewed democracy as an evolving social ideal, wherein individuals participate in shared experiences with mutual respect and dignity. Democracy, therefore, was not confined to the ballot box but was present in the everyday interactions of individuals across caste, class, and gender boundaries.

The Triad of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity

At the heart of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic vision lies the trinity of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Drawing inspiration from the French Revolution and Buddhist philosophy, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that these values must operate in tandem to uphold democratic life.

- **Liberty** entails not only political freedoms but also intellectual and spiritual autonomy.
- **Equality** implies the removal of social and economic hierarchies, particularly those perpetuated by the caste system.
- **Fraternity** fosters a sense of solidarity and shared humanity, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar regarded as the most crucial precondition for social cohesion.

In his speech during the final session of the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar cautioned against the contradictions between political and social life: "We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy."

This contradiction—of having formal equality in law but widespread inequality in society—was, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the greatest danger to the success of Indian democracy.

1.3 DEMOCRACY AS A MECHANISM OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of democracy was shaped by his mission to eradicate caste-based discrimination and untouchability. In this context, democracy was not merely a political system; it was a revolutionary tool for social transformation. It served as an ideological and institutional framework to empower the Depressed Classes, now recognized as Scheduled Castes, and to achieve social justice.

Unlike many liberal theorists who advocated for individual freedoms within a relatively stable social order, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that true democracy required a radical restructuring of the social order. He demanded affirmative action, reservations, and proportional representation for marginalized communities—not as charity, but as a matter of justice.

Influences from Western Political Thought

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic philosophy was significantly shaped by John Dewey, under whom he studied at Columbia University. Dewey's conception of democracy as "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" deeply influenced Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding. However, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar adapted Dewey's idealism to the Indian context, marked by deeply entrenched caste hierarchies and social exclusions.

While Dewey spoke of democracy in terms of education, participation, and communication, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar added the dimension of struggle—struggle against caste oppression, social stigma, and structural inequality. In doing so, he localized and expanded the Western democratic ethos to address India's unique civilizational challenges.

1.4 DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar placed great emphasis on constitutional morality, which he defined as the adherence to the principles enshrined in the Constitution, rather than mere compliance with procedural norms. He warned that majoritarian rule, without constitutional morality, could turn into mobocracy, jeopardizing minority rights and social stability.

He wrote: "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it." This insight remains deeply relevant in contemporary times, where electoral victories are sometimes used to justify authoritarian tendencies or the suppression of dissent.

The Centrality of Education in Democratic Life

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, education was the foundation of democracy. He saw it as the means through which the oppressed could rise in society, gain self-respect, and participate meaningfully in democratic processes. His often-quoted slogan—"Educate, Agitate, Organize"—summarizes the method by which democracy could be internalized and institutionalized.

He firmly believed that without an informed and rational citizenry, democracy would degenerate into a tyranny of ignorance. Education was, therefore, not merely a personal good but a social and democratic imperative.

1.5 DEMOCRACY AND BUDDHISM: A SPIRITUAL CONTINUUM

In 1956, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism, which he described as a religion of reason, morality, and equality. He viewed

Buddha's Dhamma as inherently democratic, promoting the values of non-violence, compassion, and universal brotherhood.

In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote that Buddhism was "the most scientific religion" and provided the moral basis for a just society. Thus, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, democracy was not just a secular-political arrangement but also a spiritual and ethical mission to build a society based on karuna (compassion) and samata (equality).

1.6 POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

Political democracy, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was an essential but insufficient condition for true democracy. He outlined three fundamental principles for a successful democratic system:

1. One Person, One Vote; One Vote, One Value – Political democracy must be based on universal adult suffrage and equal participation in governance.
2. Rule of Law – There must be a framework that ensures justice and protection of fundamental rights.
3. Accountability and Representation – Democratic institutions should function transparently and be accountable to the people.

While he championed parliamentary democracy, he also warned against its limitations, especially if social and economic inequalities were not addressed. His understanding of political democracy was deeply shaped by India's socio-religious realities, particularly the oppressive caste system, and by his engagement with Western political philosophy, especially the ideas of thinkers like John Dewey, J.S. Mill, and the French Enlightenment.

This chapter explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's theoretical and practical contributions to the idea of political democracy, placing them in the context of both Indian society and global democratic thought.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Definition of Political Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar defined political democracy in its most basic form as:

"A form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people and are accountable to them." However, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, this definition was not sufficient. He insisted that political democracy must be undergirded by social and economic democracy. In his speech to the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949, he cautioned: "We must not be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well." Political democracy, therefore, was not an end in itself, but a means to a more comprehensive democratic life rooted in liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Core Principles of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Political Democracy

1. Sovereignty of the People

At the heart of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of democracy lies the principle of popular sovereignty. The idea that power originates from the people and must serve their interests is a cornerstone of democratic governance. This belief is manifested in the Indian Constitution's opening words: "*We, the People of India...*"

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar firmly believed that citizens must have the ultimate authority to elect, question, and remove their representatives. Political democracy, therefore, ensures universal adult suffrage, parliamentary accountability, and institutional checks and balances.

2. Equality Before Law and Equal Access to Justice

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered legal and political equality as essential to democracy. A government cannot be democratic if it upholds discriminatory laws or practices. Through constitutional mechanisms such as Article 14 (equality before the law) and Article 17 (abolition of untouchability), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar institutionalized the idea that democracy must eliminate all legal distinctions based on caste, religion, or gender.

In the Indian context, where Brahminical patriarchy and caste hierarchy had historically denied large segments of the population access to rights and justice, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision was revolutionary. Political democracy, for him, meant dignity and justice for all—not just formal equality, but substantive equality.

3. Constitutional Morality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar introduced the concept of constitutional morality, a term borrowed from George Grote, to stress the need for adherence to the spirit and values of the Constitution. He distinguished it from mere constitutional procedures, arguing that moral integrity is crucial for a functioning democracy.

"Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it."

Without constitutional morality, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar feared that democracy could be derailed by majoritarianism, mobocracy, or executive overreach.

4. Protection of Minority Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was acutely aware of the dangers of majority tyranny. In pluralistic societies, political democracy must include institutional safeguards for minorities, including religious, linguistic, and social groups. As a member of a marginalized community himself, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued for reservations in education, employment,

and political representation as necessary mechanisms to ensure genuine equality and participation.

In his early writings, including *Annihilation of Caste*, and later as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that the test of democracy lies not in how it treats the majority, but in how it protects the rights of minorities.

Political vs. Social and Economic Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's most enduring insight was the interdependence of political, social, and economic democracy. He warned of a profound contradiction in Indian society:

“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life, we will have inequality... We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy.”

Thus, political democracy without social reform and economic justice is unsustainable. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political democracy required:

- Annihilation of caste
- Land and labor reforms
- Universal education
- Access to resources and opportunities

He envisioned a State actively involved in social transformation, not just a passive protector of rights.

Education and Political Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar regarded education as the foundation of political democracy. Only an educated and aware electorate can meaningfully participate in democratic governance.

“Educate, Agitate, Organize” was his clarion call to the oppressed.

He founded institutions and campaigned for free and compulsory education, particularly for Dalits and marginalized communities. Without education, he argued, citizens become vulnerable to manipulation, corruption, and exploitation.

Democracy as a Moral Ideal

In contrast to purely institutionalist models, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed democracy as a moral and spiritual ideal. Influenced by Buddhist ethics, he believed that democracy should be a way of life governed by compassion, cooperation, and fraternity.

This moral basis of democracy implied:

- Respect for others' rights
- Tolerance of diversity
- Commitment to justice and mutual upliftment

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, true democracy begins in everyday human relationships, not just in the realm of politics.

1.7 SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strongly argued that political democracy would be meaningless without social democracy. He defined social democracy as:

"A way of life which recognizes liberty, equality, and fraternity as the principles of life." (*Speech on the adoption of the Indian Constitution, 1949)

His concept of social democracy was aimed at eradicating caste-based discrimination, untouchability, and social hierarchies that fragmented Indian society. Without social democracy, he believed that the democratic system would be hollow and unstable.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Concept of Social Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and one of the most influential socio-political thinkers of modern India, offered a deeply transformative vision of democracy. While political democracy is often associated with electoral systems and representative government, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar insisted that political democracy must be grounded in social democracy—a way of life that recognizes the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, social democracy was not merely a theoretical ideal but a practical necessity in a society like India's, which was deeply fractured by caste, class, religion, and gender hierarchies. His emphasis on social democracy was an attempt to reconstruct Indian society on the basis of justice and human dignity.

This chapter explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conceptualization of social democracy, its foundational principles, and its significance in the broader context of Indian constitutional and social development.

Defining Social Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar described social democracy as: "A way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life."

This definition was presented during his concluding speech to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, where he warned that political democracy without corresponding social democracy would be

both fragile and hypocritical. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that democracy is not just a form of government; it is a form of associated living, of conjoint communication and mutual respect among individuals in a society.

Context: The Indian Social Order

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's emphasis on social democracy must be understood in the context of India's rigid caste system. Indian society, according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was not democratic in structure but rather deeply hierarchical and exclusionary, characterized by:

- Brahminical hegemony
- Caste-based discrimination
- Untouchability
- Gender inequality
- Denial of basic human rights to large sections of society

Thus, mere political rights would be meaningless unless accompanied by social transformation. A society built on caste cannot practice genuine democracy because it denies the basic moral and ethical preconditions of democratic life.

Foundational Principles of Social Democracy

1. Liberty

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed liberty not merely as freedom from state interference but as a social and psychological condition that enables individuals to grow, express, and develop their potential. For a society to be democratic, every individual must enjoy:

- Freedom of thought and expression
- Freedom to practice religion
- Freedom from discrimination and oppression

He critiqued the Hindu social order for denying liberty to the lower castes and argued for a restructuring of society where liberty was not a privilege but a universal right.

2. Equality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered equality as the cornerstone of social democracy. In Indian society, the caste system institutionalized inequality at every level—social, economic, and cultural. Therefore, a democratic society must:

- Guarantee equality before the law
- Ensure equal opportunities for education, employment, and public participation
- Dismantle the caste-based division of labor and status

He asserted that political democracy cannot succeed if social inequality remains intact, famously stating:

“On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter a life of contradictions... In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality.”

3. Fraternity

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed fraternity was essential for maintaining social harmony and national unity. It refers to the spiritual and emotional bond that binds citizens together, making them feel part of a common moral community.

He warned that the absence of fraternity in a society divided by caste and religious differences would prevent the emergence of true democracy. Fraternity fosters:

- Compassion
- Social cooperation
- Recognition of common humanity

This idea was also influenced by Buddhist values, especially *karuṇā* (compassion) and *mettā* (loving-kindness), which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar internalized deeply in his later life.

Social Democracy and the Indian Constitution

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in embedding the ideals of social democracy into the Indian Constitution. Several provisions reflect his commitment:

- **Preamble:** It declares India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic and promises justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity to all citizens.
- **Fundamental Rights (Part III):** Provides for equality before the law, abolition of untouchability, prohibition of discrimination, and freedom of speech and religion.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):** Lay the foundation for economic and social rights, such as education, health, and livelihood.

- **Reservation policies:** Instituted as a corrective mechanism to ensure social justice and representation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.

Through these constitutional instruments, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to institutionalize social democracy in post-independence India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Critique of Hindu Social Order

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a vocal critic of the Hindu varna and caste system, which he believed to be the antithesis of democracy. In his seminal work *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), he condemned the Manusmriti and the Brahmanical ideology that perpetuated inequality.

He argued that Hindu society was based on the principle of graded inequality, where:

- The Brahmin occupied the highest status
- The Shudras and Dalits were condemned to servitude and social death

He held that social democracy cannot exist in a society governed by divine law that legitimizes inequality. His eventual conversion to Navayana Buddhism in 1956 was an act of protest and a step toward building a casteless and democratic society.

Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar placed paramount importance on education as a means of empowerment and social emancipation. He famously declared:

“Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence.”

Education, according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was essential for:

- Breaking caste barriers
- Awakening political consciousness
- Creating a moral foundation for democracy

His efforts in establishing hostels, schools, and scholarships for Dalit students were part of his broader vision to create a socially democratic and just society.

Social Democracy as a Moral Order

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of social democracy was also deeply ethical. He believed democracy is not just a political system but a moral order, a mode of living together with dignity and respect.

Inspired by Buddhist ethics, he saw social democracy as a way to realize compassion, human equality, and collective well-being. His call to “Educate, Agitate, Organize” was not just a political slogan—it was a blueprint for moral and social transformation.

1.8 ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar saw economic democracy as the foundation for a just society. He advocated for:

- State ownership of industries and land reforms to prevent the concentration of wealth.
- Protection of workers' rights through fair wages and job security.
- Social security and economic safeguards to uplift marginalized communities.

His economic vision was inspired by both socialism and Buddhist ethics, as reflected in his book *States and Minorities (1947)*, where he proposed nationalizing key industries to ensure equitable distribution of wealth.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a preeminent social reformer, laid the foundation for a democratic India through his emphasis on not only political and social democracy, but also economic democracy. While political democracy ensures representative governance and social democracy promotes the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity in the societal sphere, economic democracy, according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was vital to ensuring material well-being, dignity, and substantive freedom for all citizens.

In Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's worldview, democracy could not be sustained unless the economic structure of society was reoriented to achieve social justice. He rejected the idea that political freedom alone could bring true emancipation for the oppressed, especially Dalits, women, landless peasants, and industrial laborers. Thus, economic democracy forms a critical pillar in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's broader vision of a just and egalitarian society.

This chapter examines Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of economic democracy, the rationale behind its necessity, his policy suggestions, and the constitutional mechanisms he proposed to realize it.

Understanding Economic Democracy

In simple terms, economic democracy refers to a socio-economic system in which the means of production and wealth are equitably distributed, ensuring that no group monopolizes economic resources to the exclusion of others. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, it involved:

- Access to basic resources (land, capital, education)
- Equal opportunity for employment and livelihood
- Fair distribution of national wealth
- State responsibility for the economic welfare of citizens

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned economic democracy as a condition where all individuals are guaranteed the means to live a life of dignity and freedom, transcending the limitations imposed by class, caste, and inherited poverty.

Economic Roots of Social Inequality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar identified that economic structures reinforce and perpetuate social hierarchies, particularly in the Indian context where the caste system acts as an economic apparatus of exploitation. The caste system, he argued, is not only a social hierarchy but also an economic stratification, determining access to labor, land, capital, and markets.

- Dalits were historically denied the right to property and education.
- The caste-based division of labor fixed economic roles and curtailed mobility.
- The Hindu social order ensured economic servitude for marginalized communities.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar declared that without economic independence, neither political rights nor social status could be sustained. His critique of capitalism, feudalism, and casteism was centred around this fundamental understanding of how economic deprivation maintains social domination.

Economic Democracy and the Indian Constitution

Although the Indian Constitution does not explicitly use the term "economic democracy", Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ensured that its principles were embedded within the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV), which reflect a commitment to a welfare state.

Key provisions aligned with economic democracy:

- **Article 39:** The State shall strive to ensure that the ownership and control of material resources are distributed to subserve the common good and that there is no concentration of wealth.
- **Article 41:** The State shall make effective provision for right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement.
- **Article 43:** The State shall endeavour to secure a living wage, decent standard of life, and conditions of work ensuring dignity.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned these principles as guidelines for future governance, arguing that economic justice was essential for making democracy real and sustainable.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Views on Land Reforms and Agriculture

Land ownership was, in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's view, a critical axis of economic power and social status. He believed that agrarian reforms were

necessary for achieving economic democracy, especially because a large percentage of India's population depended on agriculture.

In his "States and Minorities" (1947) memorandum, Dr. Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed:

- Nationalization of land with the State as the ultimate landlord.
- Redistribution of land to eliminate landlordism and tenancy exploitation.
- Encouragement of cooperative farming to increase productivity and equity.

These radical proposals were driven by his belief that private ownership of land, especially in a caste-ridden society, would perpetuate inequality and inhibit mobility.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Economic Philosophy and Labour Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to labor rights was unique, combining Marxian economic concerns with a liberal democratic framework. As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942–46) and later as Law Minister, Dr. Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar introduced a number of progressive labor reforms:

- Reduction in working hours (from 12 to 8 hours).
- Right to maternity benefits.
- Establishment of employment exchanges.
- Promotion of fair wages and labor welfare.

He advocated for state regulation of labor markets, arguing that unregulated capitalism would only deepen exploitation. His commitment to labor rights stemmed from his broader vision of creating equity in economic participation.

“State Socialism” in States and Minorities (1947)

In *States and Minorities*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed a unique model of State Socialism, which included:

1. State ownership of key industries (such as insurance, utilities, railways, and manufacturing).
2. Agricultural collectivization and nationalization of land.
3. Protection of fundamental rights and civil liberties within a socialist economy.

He emphasized that socialism must be implemented through constitutional means, making it non-violent, democratic, and rights-based. Unlike Marxist revolutionaries, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed in democratic

socialism rooted in law and institutions. His socialism was also distinct from Gandhian trusteeship, which he viewed as vague and incapable of confronting entrenched caste and class power.

Economic Democracy and the Dalit Struggle

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the struggle for economic democracy was inseparable from the Dalit struggle for dignity and emancipation. He argued that without access to land, capital, education, and jobs, Dalits could not exercise their citizenship meaningfully.

He consistently demanded:

- Reservation in government employment and educational institutions.
- State-supported economic upliftment programs for Scheduled Castes.
- Protection against economic discrimination.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was clear that political democracy would remain hollow unless the economic basis of caste oppression was eradicated.

Critique of Capitalism and Economic Inequality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized the exploitative tendencies of unregulated capitalism, especially in a society lacking social safeguards. He believed that the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few would undermine democracy, reduce citizens to economic slavery, and create conditions of perpetual poverty and dependency.

He warned: “Economic reform without social and political reform is of no avail. In fact, it is bound to prove to be a grand failure.”

Thus, his economic philosophy was not purely anti-capitalist, but anti-monopoly, pro-regulation, and welfare-oriented, seeking balance between individual initiative and collective good.

Relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Vision Today

In an era of rising inequality, jobless growth, and privatization of public services, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s vision of economic democracy remains profoundly relevant:

- It urges a redefinition of development from mere GDP growth to inclusive growth.
- It demands the democratization of the economy through policies ensuring equal opportunity, minimum income, and labor protections.
- It inspires movements for social justice, land reforms, and economic inclusion of historically marginalized communities.

1.9 CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the importance of constitutional morality—a commitment to uphold democratic values, legal integrity, and ethical governance. He borrowed the term from British constitutional scholar George Grote and stressed that without constitutional morality, democracy could become a mere facade.

He warned against the dangers of a 'grammar of anarchy', where people might resort to unconstitutional methods to achieve political or social ends. His speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 4, 1948, highlighted that adherence to constitutional principles is crucial for sustaining democracy.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Idea of Constitutional Morality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was not only a jurist and social reformer but also a visionary political thinker. One of the most profound and enduring contributions he made to Indian political thought was his elaboration of the principle of constitutional morality. Introduced in the Indian political discourse during the Constituent Assembly Debates, the concept of constitutional morality for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not a mere legal doctrine—it was the ethical foundation of democratic governance and the moral compass of a constitutional society.

In a diverse and hierarchical society like India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that constitutional morality was essential to safeguard the Constitution from being subverted by extra-constitutional loyalties, particularly those rooted in caste, religion, and social prejudices. This chapter explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's notion of constitutional morality in its historical, philosophical, legal, and ethical dimensions, analyzing how he adapted and expanded this concept to suit the challenges of Indian democracy.

Understanding the Origin of Constitutional Morality

The term "constitutional morality" was originally coined by the 19th-century British historian George Grote, who used it to describe the values and principles that sustained Athenian democracy. According to Grote, constitutional morality implied a willingness to subordinate personal and sectional interests to constitutional processes and principles.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar borrowed and expanded upon this concept, giving it a deeper socio-political resonance within the Indian context. In his speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 4, 1948, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar defined constitutional morality as:

“...a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority and acting under and within these forms.”

However, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, constitutional morality was not mere formalism or obedience to constitutional procedures. It was an active ethical commitment to democratic values such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice, even when such values conflicted with social customs or majoritarian will.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision: Constitutional Morality vs. Social Morality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was acutely aware that Indian society lacked a tradition of constitutional morality, as the social fabric had long been governed by caste-based social morality. He argued that caste hierarchy, patriarchy, and communalism constituted the dominant social morality of India, which often contradicted constitutional values.

He observed: "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it."

This observation is critical. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, constitutional morality was not innate in Indian society, and hence, deliberate state action and civic education were required to inculcate it. He emphasized that social democracy must precede or accompany political democracy, for without social transformation, constitutional institutions would be hollow.

Constitutional Morality as a Restraint on Majority Rule

One of the most critical contributions of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's theory of constitutional morality is his insistence that constitutional governance must be bound by principles and not by numbers. He warned against the tyranny of the majority, which could destroy democracy even while operating within constitutional limits.

In this sense, constitutional morality served as a check on majoritarianism, emphasizing rights-based governance, the independence of institutions, and the protection of minorities and dissenters. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar insisted that respect for constitutional principles must guide the actions of both the government and the governed.

"Democracy is not merely a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience."

This means that constitutional morality requires ethical conduct, public reason, and mutual respect, not just rule-following behaviour.

Constitutional Morality and the Role of Institutions

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar placed significant emphasis on institutional integrity and the role of constitutional offices such as the Judiciary, Parliament, Executive, and Civil Services. He believed that the success of a Constitution depends not just on its textual provisions but on the character and integrity of those who implement it.

In his famous speech during the Constituent Assembly debates, he remarked:

“However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot.”

Thus, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, constitutional morality was not merely a public virtue but also an institutional requirement. It was essential that individuals holding constitutional power operate with restraint, responsibility, and a deep respect for the ethical foundations of governance.

Constitutional Morality and Social Justice

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s vision of constitutional morality was inseparable from his commitment to social justice. He regarded caste as an anti-democratic institution and held that constitutional morality must enable the annihilation of caste.

He wrote in *Annihilation of Caste* (1936):

“The real remedy for breaking Caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar saw social reform, particularly the dismantling of the caste system, as the moral obligation of a constitutional state. Therefore, constitutional morality demanded policies like reservations, abolition of untouchability, and legal safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, not as acts of charity but as acts of constitutional necessity.

Cultivating Constitutional Morality: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Suggestions

To cultivate constitutional morality in Indian society, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed several measures:

1. **Civic Education:** Teaching citizens about their constitutional rights and duties to promote a sense of democratic responsibility.
2. **Legal Reforms:** Enacting progressive laws that reinforce liberty, equality, and justice while curbing discriminatory social practices.
3. **Independent Institutions:** Safeguarding the autonomy of the judiciary, election commission, and other bodies to ensure rule of law.
4. **Leadership Ethics:** Emphasizing the moral responsibility of political and administrative leaders to uphold the Constitution.
5. **Public Discourse:** Encouraging rational, ethical, and informed public dialogue to sustain constitutional values in political culture.

In contemporary India, the relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality cannot be overstated. With the rise of majoritarian politics, institutional erosion, and growing social polarization, there is an urgent need to revisit and revive the spirit of constitutional morality.

- Judicial interpretations, especially by the Supreme Court in landmark cases like *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)* and *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala (2018)*, have invoked Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of constitutional morality to uphold individual rights over social orthodoxy.
- Civil society, too, draws on this principle to critique state actions and demand greater accountability, transparency, and justice.

1.10 DEMOCRACY AND CASTE SYSTEM

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a fierce critic of the caste system, arguing that it was fundamentally undemocratic. He stated: "The caste system is a denial of democracy, for it denies equality and fraternity." (*The Annihilation of Caste*, 1936)

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, democracy in India could not succeed without abolishing caste-based discrimination. He advocated for:

- Reservation policies for Dalits and backward classes in education and government jobs.
- Social reform movements to change societal attitudes.
- Legal protections through constitutional provisions such as Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability).
- Democracy as a Continuous Process

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that democracy was not static but required constant effort and vigilance. He cautioned against three major threats to democracy:

1. Hero-worship or Personality Cults – Excessive reverence for leaders could undermine democratic institutions.
2. Social and Economic Inequality – If democracy remains only political and not social or economic, it will lead to conflict.
3. Neglect of Public Conscience – The masses must be educated and aware to participate actively in governance.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on Democracy and the Caste System: A Critical Analysis

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and one of the foremost intellectuals and reformers of modern India, developed a unique and radical vision of democracy that critically engaged with the deep-rooted inequalities of Indian society, particularly the caste system. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, democracy was not just a system of governance, but a way of life founded on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. However, he firmly believed that these democratic ideals were fundamentally incompatible with the social hierarchy and exclusion entrenched in the caste system.

This chapter explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of democracy in the context of caste-based social structures. It aims to provide a critical analysis of how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar theorized the contradiction between democratic political institutions and undemocratic social institutions, and why the annihilation of caste was central to his vision of a just and inclusive democracy.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Definition of Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of democracy was normative, ethical, and social, rather than merely political or procedural. In his seminal writings and speeches, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar consistently defined democracy as:

“A form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed.”

In another notable formulation, he stated:

“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 fellow beings.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of democracy involved more than electoral representation and formal institutions; it required substantive social transformation. It entailed a commitment to equal dignity, human rights, and the recognition of individual worth, without which the practice of democracy would remain hollow.

The Caste System: A Challenge to Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed the caste system as the antithesis of democracy. In his revolutionary undelivered speech *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), he argued that caste, by its very nature, denies equality, destroys fraternity, and prevents social mobility, all of which are the pillars of democratic society.

Key features of the caste system, as identified by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, include:

- Hereditary occupation and status
- Social segregation and endogamy
- Denial of education, rights, and access to resources for the lower castes
- Religious sanction of inequality

He wrote: “Caste is not a division of labour. It is a division of labourers. Civilized society is marked by the existence of conscience, of sympathy, of fellow-feeling, which the Caste system does not recognize.”

Thus, the caste system was not only socially discriminatory, but it was also morally corrupt, because it normalized inequality and turned it into a divine order. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar regarded this system as fundamentally anti-humanistic and anti-democratic.

Democracy and Social Reform: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Strategy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that political democracy could not survive without social democracy. He argued that constitutional rights alone would not liberate the oppressed unless accompanied by social reform.

“In politics we will have equality, and in social and economic life we will have inequality... We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy.”

To bridge this gap, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed a dual strategy:

He advocated for reservations, legal safeguards, and affirmative action to ensure the representation of the marginalized in democratic institutions. He emphasized rationalism, secularism, inter-caste marriage, and education as tools to eradicate the caste consciousness embedded in Indian society.

The Incompatibility of Caste and Fraternity

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar placed great emphasis on the idea of fraternity, which he saw as the spiritual foundation of democracy. He believed that without fraternity—a sense of brotherhood and mutual respect—democracy would degenerate into mere rule by majority or procedural legality.

“Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians—of Indians being one people. It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life.”

He argued that caste prevents the development of fraternity because it divides society into exclusive groups that treat each other with suspicion, hostility, or disdain. As long as caste survives, national unity and democratic citizenship remain impossible goals.

Caste and Democracy in the Indian Constitution

As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar incorporated numerous provisions to undermine caste and promote equality:

- Article 15: Prohibits discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, race, sex, or place of birth.
- Article 17: Abolishes untouchability and makes its practice a punishable offence.
- Articles 330–342: Provide for reservations and special representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

These constitutional measures were not acts of benevolence, but mechanisms to correct historical injustices and enable a level playing field in democratic participation.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also emphasized constitutional morality as a guiding principle to ensure that the legal framework would be used to promote democratic values, not to perpetuate social hierarchies.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's critique of the caste system and his radical democratic vision remain profoundly relevant in contemporary India. Despite legal abolishment, caste-based discrimination and violence persist in various forms—social exclusion, honour killings, manual scavenging, and economic marginalization.

- Dalit movements, student activism, and civil rights campaigns in India frequently invoke Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thought to demand justice and democratic rights.
- His vision continues to inspire debates on social equity, constitutional morality, and the democratization of public institutions.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's warning remains prophetic:

“The caste system is not merely a division of labour—it is a division of labourers which is graded one above the other. It is a system of social stagnation.”

Until caste is dismantled both socially and psychologically, India's democratic project remains incomplete. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's analysis of democracy and the caste system challenges us to reconsider what democracy truly means in a hierarchical society. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, democracy is not achieved through constitutional forms alone, but through a deep transformation of social relationships, cultural values, and moral attitudes.

The caste system, rooted in graded inequality and sanctioned by religion, stands as the greatest obstacle to realizing a just and inclusive democracy

in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work compels us to envision a democracy that is not only political in form but social in substance—a democracy that affirms the dignity of every human being.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of democracy was holistic, encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions. His advocacy for constitutional morality, social justice, and inclusive governance laid the foundation for modern Indian democracy. His teachings remain relevant today as societies strive to balance political rights with social and economic justice.

1.11 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of democracy is a comprehensive and transformative vision that goes beyond electoral procedures and formal governance structures. He envisioned democracy as a way of life grounded in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. His understanding of democracy included not only political rights but also social and economic justice, making it a tool for the empowerment of marginalized communities and the restructuring of a deeply hierarchical society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that political democracy must be supplemented by social democracy, which demands the eradication of caste-based discrimination and the establishment of equal human dignity. He also argued that economic democracy is essential for genuine freedom, advocating for land reforms, labor rights, and state intervention to prevent the concentration of wealth.

Constitutional morality, as defined by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, plays a crucial role in sustaining democracy by promoting ethical governance and curbing authoritarian tendencies. He insisted that citizens and institutions alike must respect the values enshrined in the Constitution. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's critique of the caste system highlighted its incompatibility with democratic principles and inspired both constitutional safeguards and grassroots social reform.

His ideas remain profoundly relevant today as democratic societies face challenges related to inequality, social exclusion, and institutional decay. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision serves as a guiding framework for building a just, inclusive, and ethically grounded democratic order.

1.12 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's definition of democracy. How does it differ from Western liberal democratic theories?
2. Discuss the significance of the triad—liberty, equality, and fraternity—in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic vision. How did he relate these principles to Indian society?

3. Analyze the role of constitutional morality in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's democratic philosophy. Why did he consider it essential for sustaining democracy in India?
4. Evaluate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of social democracy. How does it address the challenges posed by the caste system in India?
5. What is economic democracy according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar? Discuss the measures he proposed to realize it in the Indian context.
6. How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's exposure to John Dewey's ideas influence his views on democracy?
7. Why did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argue that political democracy is unsustainable without social and economic democracy?

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

b) Broken Men Theory, Reservation Policy and Labour Policy

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Problem of Untouchability: A Historical Puzzle
- 2.3 Key Aspects of The Broken Men Theory
- 2.4 The Role of Buddhism and Religious Conflict
- 2.5 Implications of The Broken Men Theory
- 2.6 Reservation Policy and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
- 2.7 Labour Policy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Questions
- 2.10 References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To comprehend Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's *Broken Men Theory* and critically assess its explanation of the historical origins of untouchability in India.
2. To analyze the socio-political and religious dynamics that contributed to the marginalization of Dalits, especially through Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's reinterpretation of caste as a social construct.
3. To examine the philosophical, legal, and constitutional rationale behind the reservation policy as envisioned by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for ensuring social justice and representation.
4. To understand Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to India's labour policy and the intersection of caste, class, and economic democracy.

5. To evaluate the contemporary relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas in the context of social justice, labour welfare, and caste-based inequality.
6. To explore how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's theories laid the groundwork for Dalit consciousness, identity politics, and policy reforms in modern India.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, one of the foremost scholars of caste and social structures in India, introduced the Broken Men Theory to explain the historical origins of untouchability in Indian society. This chapter explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 'Broken Men' theory as developed primarily in his essay *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?* (1948). It situates this theory within Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's broader sociological critique of caste and his historical methodology, analyzing how the concept of 'Broken Men' challenged traditional Brahmanical and colonial narratives about the origin of Dalits and contributed to a radical reinterpretation of Indian history.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that untouchables were originally Broken Men—tribal groups who had been defeated in conflicts and left without land or protection. Over time, these displaced people were marginalized and forced into low-status roles, leading to their social ostracization.

2.2 THE PROBLEM OF UNTOUCHABILITY: A HISTORICAL PUZZLE

In pre-modern and colonial historiography, the origins of untouchability were often shrouded in myth or religious justification. Traditional Hindu texts and Brahmanical narratives attributed untouchability to karma, ritual impurity, or transgressions of dharma, often painting it as a divine punishment for past deeds. Colonial administrators, on the other hand, offered ethnographic but often racialized or civilizational explanations. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was dissatisfied with both. He sought a materialist, historical, and rational account of untouchability rooted in social conflict, political exclusion, and economic marginalization. He asked two fundamental questions:

1. Who were the Untouchables?
2. Why and how did they become Untouchables?

His answers to these questions are encapsulated in what he called the theory of the 'Broken Men'.

Definition of Broken Men

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Broken Men were groups of warriors or nomadic tribes who lost their territories due to wars with

dominant ruling classes, particularly the Indo-Aryans. Since they had no land or stable livelihood, they sought refuge outside the villages dominated by settled agrarian communities. They were economically weak and socially vulnerable, which made them susceptible to discrimination.

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2.3 KEY ASPECTS OF THE BROKEN MEN THEORY

a. Defeated Tribes and Their Social Status

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that these Broken Men originally belonged to various indigenous tribal groups but were dispossessed by the advancing Indo-Aryan settlers. Unlike the dominant caste groups, these people were outsiders who had no place in the varna system, making them distinct from the traditional caste hierarchy. However, due to their weak social position, they were forced into menial labor and segregated settlements.

b. Settlement Outside Villages

The Broken Men settled on the outskirts of villages, leading to their physical and social separation from mainstream society. This geographical distance played a crucial role in their eventual untouchability, as they were not integrated into the caste-based economy.

c. Role as Village Watchmen

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar noted that these marginalized groups often took up the role of village watchmen and guardians to defend settlements from external threats. However, despite providing security, they were not accepted as equal members of society and continued to be treated as outsiders.

d. Association with Non-Vegetarian Diet

One of the key reasons for their untouchability, according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was their practice of eating cattle meat. Unlike the dominant caste groups, especially Brahmins, who revered the cow, the Broken Men relied on cattle for sustenance. This dietary difference was used as a justification to brand them as impure and untouchable.

e. Connection to Buddhism and Persecution

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar linked the Broken Men to early Buddhist followers, suggesting that many of them converted to Buddhism in opposition to Brahmanical dominance. After Buddhism declined in India, these groups were further marginalized, reinforcing their untouchable status.

2.4 THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar links the rise of Untouchability to Brahmanical hostility towards Buddhism, particularly after the decline of the Mauryan Empire and the reassertion of Vedic Hinduism. According to him, many of the so-called Untouchables were Buddhists or non-Vedic communities who refused to conform to Brahmanical rituals.

“The Untouchables were originally Buddhists. They became Untouchables when the Brahmins won the battle and established Hinduism as the religion of India.”

Their refusal to perform sacrifices and adhere to Brahmanical norms marked them as impure. In retaliation, the Brahmin priesthood ostracized these populations and assigned them the lowest status in the new social order.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE BROKEN MEN THEORY

a. Challenge to Traditional Caste Histories

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Broken Men Theory challenges the conventional Brahmanical explanations of untouchability, which claim that untouchables were degraded due to their karma or birth. Instead, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar provides a historical-materialist explanation, attributing untouchability to political and social factors.

b. Caste as a Social Construct

By emphasizing the displacement and forced marginalization of the Broken Men, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar presents caste as a socially constructed institution, rather than a divine order. He argues that caste and untouchability were imposed upon people due to socio-political circumstances, not inherent inferiority.

c. Basis for Dalit Identity and Social Movements

The Broken Men Theory has had a significant impact on Dalit historiography and political movements. It reinforces the idea that Dalits were not always at the lowest rung of society but were forced into that position due to historical events. This understanding has strengthened Dalit consciousness and demands for justice.

Criticism and Debates

The ‘Broken Men’ Theory: Core Arguments

1. In *The Untouchables*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar presents the theory that the origin of the Untouchables lies in the conquest of the original Buddhist communities by Brahmanical forces, and more broadly in the

collapse and fragmentation of tribal and peasant communities following military defeats or social disintegration.

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2. Broken Tribes and Excluded Populations

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar posits that many groups who became Untouchables were once part of organized tribal or village communities. These groups broke away—or were expelled—due to wars, internal conflicts, or social upheavals. The "Broken Men" were thus fragments of once-cohesive societies, rendered landless and vulnerable.

“The Broken Men were originally part of the village community but came to be segregated from it. They lost the protection of the tribe or community and were forced to live on the fringes of society.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Broken Men Theory, while widely respected, has faced criticism from some historians and scholars:

- Some argue that untouchability is not solely linked to war and displacement, but is a more complex phenomenon involving economic, religious, and ideological factors.
- Others suggest that untouchability predates the Indo-Aryan period and was present in various indigenous communities.
- A few scholars believe that untouchability was not uniformly imposed across India but evolved differently in different regions.

Despite these debates, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s theory remains one of the most influential explanations of untouchability and continues to shape discussions on caste and Dalit history.

The ‘Broken Men’ as Political Subject

What makes the ‘Broken Men’ theory revolutionary is not merely its historical explanation, but its political implications. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar reclaimed Dalit history, and by doing so, reclaimed Dalit agency. The Untouchables were no longer degraded remnants of sinful souls, but victims of social violence, carriers of an alternative tradition, and potential agents of change.

This theory also resonated with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s lifelong mission to construct a collective Dalit consciousness, rooted in historical awareness and moral dignity. His reinterpretation allowed Dalits to see themselves not as outcasts, but as people with a proud heritage, marginalized by historical processes of domination.

Contemporary Relevance

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s theory of ‘Broken Men’ continues to shape:

- Dalit historiography and subaltern studies: It has encouraged a counter-history that challenges dominant Hindu and colonial narratives.

- Identity politics and cultural movements: Dalit activists and writers invoke the image of ‘Broken Men’ to assert dignity, demand reparative justice, and reconnect with the egalitarian past of Buddhism.
- Academic debates on caste: The theory is a foundational text in critical caste studies, offering a lens to examine social exclusion, collective memory, and historical trauma.

2.6 RESERVATION POLICY AND DR. B.R. DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and a lifelong advocate for the rights of the oppressed, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed reservations as a remedy for structural injustice rooted in the caste system. Drawing from primary sources, speeches, and academic literature, this chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s philosophy on affirmative action, the role of the state in ensuring substantive equality, and the significance of reservations in securing social democracy in India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), a jurist, economist, and social reformer, remains a towering figure in Indian political and constitutional thought. His contributions to social justice, particularly through the design and implementation of reservation policy, were rooted in his experience of caste-based exclusion and his deep understanding of law and governance. He believed that democracy without social justice is hollow and that the Indian state must actively intervene to uplift historically marginalized communities, especially the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s approach to reservation was not a form of charity, but a right rooted in justice, equality, and dignity. He introduced reservations as a temporary yet essential measure to undo the damage of centuries-long caste discrimination.

Historical Background: Caste and Social Stratification in India

The Indian caste system, governed by the varna hierarchy, institutionalized social inequality by assigning status and occupation by birth. Dalits, formerly known as “untouchables,” were relegated outside the varna system and subjected to systemic discrimination. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar described this as a graded inequality where the social order denied liberty, equality, and fraternity to the majority.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s early writings, especially *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), and his participation in various political forums—including the Round Table Conferences—exposed the deep-seated social barriers that hindered the integration of Dalits into mainstream public life.

Dr. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Justification for Reservations

Political and economic
perspective of
Dr. Babasaheb
Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's argument for reservations was based on three interrelated principles:

1. Representation of the Marginalized

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar advocated for adequate and proportionate representation of the Scheduled Castes in politics, education, and government employment. He emphasized that real democracy requires the participation of all social groups in decision-making structures:

“We must be in a position to influence the making of laws and the administration of the country... We must have our proper share in the governance of the country.”—*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Round Table Conference, 1931*

2. Corrective and Compensatory Justice

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the reservation policy was a tool for corrective justice—not merely to provide equality of opportunity but to correct historical wrongs:

“What is the point of equality when the starting point is unequal?”
—*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Constituent Assembly Debates, 1949*

3. Social Integration and Dignity

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also saw reservations as a way to ensure the dignity and social acceptance of Dalits. He was aware that economic upliftment alone would not erase the stigma of caste. Therefore, reservations were also meant to achieve symbolic equality and recognition.

Constitutional Provisions and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Role

As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar incorporated several constitutional provisions for reservations:

Article	Provision
Article 15(4)	Enables the state to make special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes.
Article 16(4)	Allows reservation in public employment for backward classes underrepresented in services.
Article 330 & 332	Provides for reservation of seats for SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
Article 335	Balances reservation with administrative efficiency.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the temporary nature of these provisions, expecting them to be reviewed after 10 years, though they have been extended repeatedly through constitutional amendments.

The Poona Pact and Its Implications

The Poona Pact of 1932 was a turning point in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's struggle for Dalit rights. The Communal Award of British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald had granted separate electorates to the Depressed Classes, which Gandhi opposed. Under immense pressure and Gandhi's fast unto death, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar agreed to a compromise, leading to:

- Reserved seats for SCs within joint electorates.
- Increased number of seats than originally proposed.

While Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar later expressed regret over being forced into this compromise, it laid the foundation for reserved representation within the democratic system, not outside of it.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Warning on the Misuse and Dilution of Reservations

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar anticipated criticism and misuse of reservations. He stated:

- Reservations should be limited to those truly disadvantaged.
- They should not be made permanent without review.
- They must be accompanied by education, economic reforms, and anti-discrimination laws.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also warned against upper caste backlash, stating that dominant castes would attempt to delegitimize reservations by labelling them as "anti-merit." He emphasized that merit is not neutral—it is shaped by social privilege and access.

Post-Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Developments and Relevance Today

After Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's death in 1956, the reservation policy evolved to include Other Backward Classes (OBCs) following the Mandal Commission Report (1980) and its implementation in 1990. More recently, the 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act (2019) introduced 10% reservations for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the general category.

While the expansion of affirmative action reflects changing socio-economic dynamics, many scholars argue that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's original vision was rooted in caste-based social oppression, and class-based reservations dilute the focus on historical injustice.

2.7 LABOUR POLICY OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Political and economic
perspective of
Dr. Babasaheb
Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to the development of India's labour policy remain one of the most underappreciated aspects of his legacy. As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and later as the first Law Minister of independent India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar played a foundational role in shaping India's labour laws, trade union framework, social security measures, and working-class rights. This chapter examines Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's labour policy as a crucial element of his broader vision of social democracy, exploring the intersection of caste, class, and industrial capitalism. Drawing from his speeches, legislative contributions, and scholarly works, the chapter situates Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as a pioneer of labour welfare in modern India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956), best known for his role in drafting the Indian Constitution and championing the cause of Dalits, was also a prolific policymaker in the domain of labour and industrial relations. Between 1942 and 1946, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar served as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, a position akin to the Minister of Labour under the British colonial government. During this period, he introduced more than two dozen labour reforms, many of which laid the foundation for India's post-independence labour policies.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed labour rights as an essential component of economic democracy, a concept he believed was necessary to complement political and social democracy. For him, empowering the working class—particularly those at the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy—was fundamental to achieving justice, liberty, and equality in Indian society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Labour Philosophy: Economic Democracy as a Pillar of Justice

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to labour was not limited to wages and working conditions; it encompassed a broader philosophy of economic justice, rooted in the following **key principles**:

- **Dignity of Labour:** Labour, according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, must be respected as a form of social contribution rather than exploitation.
- **State Responsibility:** The state must actively legislate and intervene in industrial relations to protect workers.
- **Economic Redistribution:** Wealth and production must be distributed fairly, and workers must receive their due share.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Workers:** Marginalized castes often formed the most exploited labour force; therefore, labour reform must also be caste-conscious.

Key Legislative and Administrative Reforms Introduced by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

During his tenure as Labour Member (1942–1946), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar brought transformative reforms that included legislation on wages, working hours, maternity benefits, and employee insurance. Major contributions include:

The Minimum Wages Act

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a strong proponent of a legally mandated minimum wage, ensuring that workers earned enough for basic living. Although the Act was passed after independence in 1948, its philosophical and policy foundations were laid by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's earlier work.

Reduction of Working Hours

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in reducing the daily working hours from 12 to 8 for industrial labourers in 1946. This reform brought Indian labour policy in line with the global standard advocated by the International Labour Organization (ILO). "The working day should be such as to leave the workman some leisure, some breathing space for self-development."

—*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Labour Conference, 1943*

Maternity Benefits Act

Recognizing the importance of gender equality in the workforce, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar framed and pushed for laws that guaranteed maternity benefits to women workers. This was among the earliest such initiatives in Asia.

Employee State Insurance (ESI)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar conceptualized and implemented the Employee State Insurance Scheme, which provided medical and insurance coverage to industrial workers—one of the earliest social security mechanisms in colonial India.

Coal Mines Safety and Welfare

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar introduced regulations to ensure the safety, working conditions, and housing facilities for workers in hazardous sectors like coal mines and railways.

Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill, 1943

He promoted legislation to protect the rights of workers to form unions and participate in collective bargaining. This reflected his commitment to empowering the organized working class.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Role in International Labour Forums

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also represented India at global platforms, including the International Labour Organization (ILO). He sent representatives and contributed significantly to India's international labour diplomacy, advocating global standards in Indian labour law.

His reports to the ILO emphasized:

- The importance of linking economic growth with labour welfare.
- The need to integrate caste and class-based analysis in understanding global labour issues.
- India's responsibility to emerge as a moral leader in labour rights.

Labour and Caste: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Unique Perspective

Unlike most labour leaders of his time, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar foregrounded the interconnectedness of caste and class. He argued that:

- The Dalit working class faced double exploitation—first as labourers and second as untouchables.
- The Indian labour movement needed to acknowledge and address caste hierarchies within its own ranks.
- True labour reform must start with eradication of caste-based occupational segregation.

“The caste system is not merely a division of labour; it is also a division of labourers.”

—Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste*, 1936

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's labour reforms were thus intersectional in nature, addressing both economic and social barriers.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Labour Law Drafting Post-Independence

As India's first Law Minister (1947–1951), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar laid the groundwork for codified labour laws in the Constitution and the Industrial Disputes Act (1947), although he resigned before completing all labour reforms.

He incorporated labour rights in the Directive Principles of State Policy, including:

- Article 39: Equal pay for equal work.
- Article 41: Right to work and public assistance in case of unemployment.
- Article 43: Living wage and decent conditions of work.

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Ambedkar

Though non-justiciable, these principles became normative guidelines for future labour laws.

Criticism and Legacy

Some critics argue that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's reforms were limited to the organized sector, leaving out agricultural and informal workers. However, the institutional groundwork he laid continues to inform debates on:

- Universal social security
- Labour code reforms
- Dalit participation in trade unions

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar remains a beacon for labour justice, influencing modern labour movements and policymaking.

2.8 SUMMARY

Unit II explores the multidimensional contributions of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the areas of caste theory, reservation policy, and labour rights. It begins with his *Broken Men Theory*, which posits that untouchables were originally displaced and defeated tribal communities forced to live on the peripheries of society, later labelled as 'impure' due to cultural and religious divergence from Brahmanical norms. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ties their marginalization to their non-Vedic identity and historical ties to Buddhism, framing untouchability as a socio-political outcome rather than divine destiny.

The second section analyzes Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's justification for the reservation policy as a mechanism of affirmative action and social justice. He viewed reservations as a moral and constitutional necessity to ensure representation and dignity for the oppressed. He embedded this vision within the Indian Constitution and argued that democracy without social justice is hollow.

The final section focuses on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's pivotal role in shaping India's labour policy. As Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942–46), he introduced major reforms including minimum wages, maternity benefits, and the 8-hour workday. He emphasized the dignity of labour, protection of marginalized workers, and state responsibility in economic justice. His labour philosophy interconnected caste and class, advocating for democratic socialism and the integration of social justice into labour law.

Together, these three pillars reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's holistic vision of democracy rooted in liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice.

2.9 QUESTIONS

Political and economic
perspective of
Dr. Babasaheb
Ambedkar

1. Critically examine Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 'Broken Men Theory'. How does it challenge traditional Brahmanical and colonial narratives on the origins of untouchability?
2. Discuss the philosophical and constitutional basis of the reservation policy as developed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. How does it align with his vision of social democracy?
3. How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's interpretation of caste as a socio-political construct influence the emergence of modern Dalit identity and movements?
4. Evaluate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to labour policy during British rule. In what ways did he link economic justice with caste emancipation?
5. In what ways do Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas on caste, reservation, and labour continue to influence contemporary debates on social justice and inclusion in India?
6. What are the political implications of reimagining Dalits not as victims of karma but as historically displaced 'Broken Men'?
7. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar warned against the misuse and dilution of reservations. Do current developments in India reflect his concerns? Discuss.

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE OF AMBEDKARISM

c) Aims, Objectives and Achievements: Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Concept of Republican Party of India

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Independent Labour Party (ILP)
- 3.3 All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF)
- 3.4 Concept of The Republican Party of India (RPI)
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.7 Questions
- 3.8 References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the formation, ideology, and political strategies of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party (ILP), All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF), and Republican Party of India (RPI).
2. Analyze the evolution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political thought, especially how it transitioned from class-based to caste-based mobilization strategies.
3. Evaluate the aims and achievements of ILP, AISCF, and RPI in advancing social, economic, and political justice for Dalits and other marginalized communities.
4. Explore the role of Ambedkarite parties in Indian constitutional development, reservation policy, and Dalit empowerment.
5. Examine the relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision in contemporary India, including issues of caste discrimination, labour rights, secularism, and democratic participation.
6. Critically reflect on the challenges faced by the RPI, including internal factionalism, ideological dilution, and marginalization in modern Indian politics.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started his career with academics and achieved highest of the academic degrees of the world repute from the world-renowned universities. Then his first social organisation established in 1924 was Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha. He further started his activities as the Member of Bombay Legislative Council and later on Bombay Legislative Assembly. He also presented the Memoranda to the British government like Starte Committee and Simon Commission. He also very studiously and actively participated the Round Table Conferences in London. After the Indian Independence Act, 1935 was introduced, he then thought about the Political organisations like Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation and conceptualised Republican Party of India. though these political parties he achieved the goals that he proposed to some extent. Let's discuss these political parties in detail.

3.2 INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY (ILP)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party (ILP) on 15 August 1936 in Bombay (now Mumbai) as a response to the socio-economic and political injustices faced by the Depressed Classes (Dalits) and laborers in colonial India. The ILP was not just a party for Dalits but aimed to represent the interests of all marginalized and working-class people, including peasants and industrial laborers.

This chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the ILP's aims, objectives, and achievements, situating the party within the broader trajectory of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's radical democratic vision. The ILP sought to merge the struggles of the working class and Depressed Classes to construct a society based on justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The party's achievements in legislative advocacy, electoral success, and political consciousness-building made it a pioneering force in anti-caste and anti-capitalist politics in pre-independence India.

The formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) on 15 August 1936 marked a turning point in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political strategy. Until then, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had primarily focused on constitutional reform, representation, and social rights for the Depressed Classes. However, the passage of the Government of India Act, 1935, with its promise of limited provincial autonomy, provided a new opening to enter electoral politics. Realizing the inadequacy of relying solely on social reform and external lobbying, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar formed the ILP to articulate the political voice of the marginalized through democratic means.

Ideological and Political Context

India in the 1930s was witnessing intensified anti-colonial mobilization, but caste and class issues remained unaddressed by dominant political forces like the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed both parties with skepticism—

Congress for its upper-caste Hindu domination and Communists for their neglect of caste as a social category. The ILP emerged as a third front that aimed to integrate economic and social justice into a coherent political agenda.

Aims and Objectives of the ILP

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar formulated the ILP's aims with a clear emphasis on structural transformation through constitutional and democratic means. The following were the party's primary objectives:

Annihilation of Caste and Social Inequality

The ILP aimed to dismantle the Brahmanical social order that had institutionalized caste hierarchy for centuries. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that caste was not merely a division of labour but a division of labourers, enforced through religious dogma. It sought to create a society where every individual had equal opportunities, regardless of caste or class. One of the key objectives was to end the caste-based hierarchy, which led to untouchability and social exclusion of Dalits.

Economic Justice and Labour Rights

The ILP focused on workers' rights, including minimum wages, limited working hours, the right to unionize, and protection against exploitation. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to nationalize basic industries and advocated for state-led economic planning. ILP aimed to abolish caste-based discrimination and economic exploitation of laborers and peasants.

Agrarian Reform

The party proposed the abolition of landlordism and redistribution of land to tillers and landless peasants. It demanded state ownership of agricultural land and fair prices for agricultural produce. ILP advocated for the rights of peasants and landless laborers. It sought to end the zamindari system and introduce land reforms to provide land to the tillers.

Political Democracy

The ILP supported the establishment of parliamentary democracy with universal adult franchise, civil liberties, and freedom of speech and assembly. It aimed to bring marginalized voices into legislative spaces. ILP wanted to ensure that Dalits and laborers had a voice in legislative bodies. It pushed for policies that would empower marginalized communities politically.

Gender Equality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the inclusion of women in the democratic process and their access to education and employment.

Secularism and National Unity

The ILP was committed to a secular state where religion would not dictate social and political policies. It upheld equality of all citizens regardless of caste, creed, or religion. The party promoted secular values and aimed for a government that functioned on democratic and constitutional principles rather than religious or caste-based privileges.

Achievements of the ILP

Electoral Success in 1937 Bombay Presidency Elections

ILP contested the 1937 Bombay Provincial Elections and won 15 out of 17 seats in which it participated. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. The party's strong performance showed its appeal among Dalits, workers, and progressive sections of society. This performance demonstrated the political awakening of the oppressed and the viability of independent Dalit political mobilization.

Opposition to the Khoti System (Landlordism)

ILP played a crucial role in the fight against the Khoti system, which was a feudal land tenure system in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The party worked for the rights of farmers and tenants who suffered exploitation under this system.

Opposition to the Industrial Disputes Bill (1938)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar led the ILP in opposing the Congress-led Kher government's bill, which aimed to suppress workers' right to strike. The ILP mobilized workers and organized protests and mass meetings, leading to a significant reformulation of the bill. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar used ILP's platform to advocate for labor laws and social security measures. His efforts led to the establishment of working hours limits (8-hour workday) and improvements in worker conditions.

Legislative Advocacy

ILP members in the Bombay Legislative Assembly raised critical issues:

Tenant rights

Municipal reforms

Fair wages for mill workers

Abolition of untouchability in public institutions

Political Education and Mass Mobilization

The ILP played a vital role in spreading Ambedkarite political thought among the masses. It organized worker meetings, rallies, and educational conferences, especially in urban industrial centres like Bombay and Nagpur.

Linking Class and Caste

One of ILP's pioneering contributions was its intersectional analysis of caste and class. It highlighted how capitalism in India was embedded within caste structures, leading to dual exploitation of Dalits and workers.

Leadership in Trade Unions

ILP actively supported trade unions and workers' movements. It fought for better wages, working conditions, and employment security for industrial workers.

Advocacy for the Dalit Cause

ILP provided a strong political platform for Dalits, advocating their rights in legislative bodies. It pushed for anti-untouchability measures and better access to education and employment for Scheduled Castes.

The Foundation for Future Dalit Politics

Though ILP was later dissolved in 1942, it laid the groundwork for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's future political movements, including the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) and later the Republican Party of India (RPI).

Transition and Dissolution

By the early 1940s, due to World War II, shifting political alignments, and the need for focused Dalit representation, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar dissolved the ILP and founded the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) in 1942. While the SCF concentrated more on Dalit electoral rights, the ILP's broader social-democratic ideals continued to influence future political efforts.

Historical Significance and Legacy

This part critically examines the formation, political activities, ideological framework, and long-term legacy of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) founded by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1936. Emerging at a time of intense nationalistic and class-based politics, the ILP played a pioneering role in integrating the demands of the working class with the struggles of the socially marginalized, particularly the Dalits. The chapter argues that the ILP was not only a political party but also a revolutionary intervention in Indian political history—representing the convergence of labour, caste, and democratic movements.

The 1930s were a crucial period in Indian politics. While British colonialism was being challenged by nationalists, the working class was beginning to organize, and the Depressed Classes (now Scheduled Castes) were asserting their rights under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Recognizing the absence of a political platform that combined the concerns of both labour and caste, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar launched the ILP.

“We must have a party that will fight not only against economic tyranny but also against social tyranny.” — Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

This vision set the ILP apart. It was neither caste-exclusive nor class-blind. The ILP's goal was to fight for:

Workers' rights and better conditions in industrial and agrarian sectors. Upliftment of the socially ostracized castes. Establishment of social and economic democracy through constitutional means.

Ideological Framework

The ILP was based on democratic socialism, anti-casteism, secularism, and constitutionalism.

Social Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's model of social democracy required both liberty and equality to be realized not only in the political but also in the economic and social realm.

Class-Caste Synthesis

Unlike Marxists, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar maintained that caste was a more rigid and deeply entrenched form of hierarchy than class. Thus, any labour movement ignoring caste was incomplete.

Constitutional Method

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed in gradual, legal, and parliamentary reforms over violent revolution. The ILP advocated for using legislative councils, trade unions, and public discourse to create change.

Historical Significance

Pioneer of Intersectional Politics

The ILP was India's first major political party to combine the question of caste and class. It anticipated what modern scholars now call intersectionality.

Empowerment through Representation

The ILP gave political agency to Dalits and labourers, empowering them to contest elections, demand rights, and become citizens rather than subjects.

Model for Post-Independence Parties

The ideology and organization of the ILP influenced:

Republican Party of India (RPI)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

Dalit Panthers

Numerous **labour unions** and **civil society organizations**

Political and Economic
Perspective of
Ambedkarism

Contribution to Constitutional Thought

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work in ILP foreshadowed his later contributions to:

Fundamental Rights

Directive Principles of State Policy

Reservation Policies

Labour laws and welfare legislation

Legacy in Contemporary India

Even after its dissolution, the ILP's legacy continues through:

Welfare laws protecting workers and Dalits

Social justice discourse in Indian politics

Constitutionalism and parliamentary democracy

Grassroots activism against caste-based and labour exploitation

Relevance in Labour Reforms Debate

In recent times, when new **labour codes** and **corporate reforms** are being critiqued, the ILP's model of **pro-labour, pro-Dalit politics** regains urgency.

3.3 ALL INDIA SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION (AISCF)

Aims of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar founded the All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF) on August 18, 1942, in Nagpur. The AISCF was a political party created to safeguard the political, social, and economic rights of the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar established this organization as a response to the Congress Party's failure to address Dalit concerns and the growing need for a strong independent political voice for the Scheduled Castes.

The need for a distinct political federation exclusively representing the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) became paramount for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the wake of Congress's upper-caste dominance and the failure of other parties to integrate caste-based social justice in their political agenda.

Historical Background: From ILP to AISC

After the relative success of the Independent Labour Party (1936–1942), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar felt the necessity for a more exclusive organization to deal with the particular social and political problems of Dalits. The ILP's broad class-based agenda had begun to clash with the specific demands of the Scheduled Castes, especially when labour unions and communists overlooked caste-based discrimination. This realization led Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to dissolve the ILP and form the AISC to consolidate the political identity of Dalits at the national level.

Foundational Aims of AISC

The All India Scheduled Castes Federation was founded with a clear and revolutionary political vision. Its aims and objectives were articulated through Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's speeches, party manifestos, and writings. These aims can be classified under the following broad themes.

Securing Political Representation for Scheduled Castes

The primary aim of AISC was to ensure adequate and autonomous political representation for Scheduled Castes in all levels of governance—central, provincial, and local.

“Our fight is not for a few jobs here and there. Our fight is for our existence, for our rights as full citizens.” – Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that mere inclusion in mainstream parties like the Congress would never lead to real empowerment, because Dalit voices would always be subsumed under upper-caste leadership. Hence, AISC aimed to:

1. Contest elections under its own banner.
2. Create separate platforms for Dalit leaders.
3. Negotiate directly with British and Indian leaders on constitutional safeguards.

Abolition of Untouchability and Caste-based Discrimination

AISC was a political body with a social mission. It aimed to abolish untouchability, which was not just a religious stigma but a political disability. The AISC advocated for:

1. **Legal penalties** against caste-based discrimination.
2. **Access to public spaces**, including temples, wells, schools, and roads.
3. **Equal opportunities** in employment, education, and administration.

This mission was based on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's consistent argument that social democracy must precede or accompany political democracy.

Establishment of Social and Economic Justice

AISCF believed that social democracy must be achieved through state-led interventions, and not just through social reforms or religious conversions. Hence, it aimed to:

1. Press for land reforms and redistribution of land to Dalits.
2. Demand affirmative action policies (reservations) in education and employment.
3. Encourage economic self-reliance through cooperative ventures and state support.

The AISCF was among the first political parties in India to link social identity with economic justice, prefiguring later developments in affirmative action policy.

Protection of Legal and Constitutional Rights

AISCF aimed to ensure that Dalits were not at the mercy of executive discretion or social goodwill, but were protected by law and the Constitution. This included:

1. Demanding statutory safeguards for representation and employment.
2. Seeking independent commissions to oversee Scheduled Caste welfare.
3. Advocating for special courts to deal with caste atrocities.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legal training and deep belief in constitutional morality were evident in AISCF's emphasis on rule of law and constitutional rights.

Education and Awareness among Scheduled Castes

Another central aim of the AISCF was to promote political awareness and education among Scheduled Castes. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized:

1. The creation of a politically conscious Dalit electorate.
2. Mobilizing Scheduled Caste youth through study circles, newspapers, and local branches.
3. Disseminating information about constitutional rights, electoral processes, and political ideologies.

The AISCF became a mass political education movement, much like what Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had earlier envisioned during the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha days.

National Unity through Social Inclusion

Contrary to the allegations of separatism, the AISCF aimed at true national integration based on equality and fraternity, not on Hindu caste hegemony.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that Scheduled Castes could be full participants in nation-building only if they were treated as equals. Therefore, the AISCF:

Opposed both Hindu orthodoxy and Islamic communalism.

Advocated for a secular democratic state with no religious favouritism.

Stood for a unified Indian nationalism based on dignity and justice, not merely geography.

Activities and Political Engagements

The AISCF:

Participated in the 1946 elections, winning 4 out of 17 reserved seats.

Criticized the Congress's Poona Pact politics, which weakened Dalit autonomy.

Opposed the Hindu Code Bill's delay, advocating for gender and caste equality.

Actively supported Dalit entry in education, employment, and political offices.

Though it never achieved the mass popularity of Congress, AISCF institutionalized Dalit political assertion and influenced policy discourse at the national level

Achievements of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF)

Constitutional and Legal Contributions

The **most enduring achievement** of AISCF was its **indirect but powerful role** in shaping the **Constitution of India**.

Role in the Constituent Assembly

Though elected under the AISCF banner, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's participation in the **Constituent Assembly (1946–1950)** was central to embedding **constitutional safeguards** for Scheduled Castes. These included:

Article 17: Abolition of untouchability.

Article 15(4): Enabling affirmative action in education and employment.

Article 16(4): Reservation in public employment.

Article 46: Directive to promote Scheduled Castes' educational and economic interests.

Without the AISCF, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar might not have had the **organizational backing** to represent Scheduled Castes at this crucial moment.

Advocacy for Separate Settlements and Representation

The AISCF also revived Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's long-standing demand for **separate settlements** for Scheduled Castes to ensure their **physical security and social dignity**, especially in rural India. While this was not accepted by the Constituent Assembly, it set a tone for the **spatial dimensions of social justice** that continue in modern policy discourse.

Social and Ideological Achievements

Consolidation of the Ambedkarite Ideology

The AISCF was instrumental in promoting **Ambedkarite ideology**—a vision that combined:

Social democracy and constitutionalism,

Economic justice and state-led reform, and

Caste annihilation through political assertion.

The AISCF became a vehicle for this message across India. Through its manifestos, public meetings, and training programs, it spread ideas that would **outlive the party itself**.

Promoting Dalit Political Education

The AISCF focused on **raising political consciousness** among Dalits, particularly those who had been historically excluded from political institutions. This was done through:

Public campaigns against caste discrimination.

Distribution of literature on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thought.

Formation of **study circles** and **local federations**.

This laid the foundation for **grassroots activism** and empowered future generations of Dalit leaders.

Legacy and Institutional Impact

Birth of the Republican Party of India (RPI)

After Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's death in 1956, the AISCF was restructured and renamed as the **Republican Party of India (RPI)** in 1957. While the RPI faced organizational setbacks, it carried forward the AISCF's objectives, particularly in **Maharashtra** and parts of **South and North India**.

The RPI's existence reaffirmed that **Dalit politics had become a permanent fixture** in the Indian political system.

Influence on Later Dalit Movements

The ideological clarity and organizational structure of the AISCF inspired:

Dalit Panthers (1972) in Maharashtra, which reimagined Ambedkarism through radical cultural politics.

The **Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)** in the 1980s, which emerged as a major national party and even ruled **India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh**.

These later movements acknowledged their **intellectual debt to AISCF**, positioning Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision at the heart of their political strategies.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite its achievements, the AISCF had limitations:

- It failed to **expand significantly beyond Maharashtra** and parts of Central India.
- It suffered from **limited financial resources** and **organizational depth**.
- It faced **hostility from the Congress**, which co-opted many Dalit leaders and undermined AISCF's electoral base.

However, these limitations were symptomatic of the **systemic barriers** faced by any Dalit-led political movement in a deeply hierarchical society.

3.4 CONCEPT OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF INDIA (RPI)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of social justice, envisioned the Republican Party of India (RPI) as a political alternative for the oppressed classes. Although he passed away before its official formation, his ideology and vision laid the foundation for the party. The RPI was established on 3 October 1957 as a successor to his earlier political initiatives, particularly the All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's idea of the RPI was deeply rooted in the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice, aiming to create a truly democratic and just society beyond caste and class barriers.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision for the Republican Party of India

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of the downtrodden, envisaged a political party that would function as a vehicle for the social and economic emancipation of India's most oppressed communities. His deep disillusionment with the Indian National Congress, his strategic political engagements including the formation of the Independent Labour Party (1936) and the Scheduled Castes Federation (1942), and his final political thoughts culminated in the conceptualization of the Republican Party of India (RPI).

The RPI was to embody Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity in practice—not only as constitutional values but

as actionable goals in the everyday lives of millions of Dalits and backward classes.

Ideological Foundations of the RPI

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political philosophy was grounded in a combination of:

Social Democracy: Based on the annihilation of caste and the establishment of human dignity.

Economic Justice: Through state control of key industries and protection of labor rights.

Political Representation: Ensuring marginalized groups had a meaningful voice in governance.

Secularism and Rationalism: Rejection of religious orthodoxy and promotion of scientific temper.

In his speeches and writings, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the need for a political party that would not be bound by the interests of the upper castes or capitalist elites but would act as a **“party of the people”**, particularly those excluded from the mainstream of Indian politics.

Historical Context of the RPI's Formation

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, after the partial failure of the Scheduled Castes Federation in the 1946 elections, recognized the need for a broader platform that could unite not only Dalits but also laborers, minorities, and the economically backward sections of society. The formation of the RPI was thus a strategic evolution from:

Independent Labour Party (1936–1942) → focused on workers and peasants.

Scheduled Castes Federation (1942–1956) → focused on Dalit identity and rights.

Republican Party of India (1957–) → envisioned as an inclusive, pan-Indian movement for justice.

From Concept to Reality: The Road to the Formation of RPI

Final Years of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Buddhist Turn

In his final years, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar devoted significant energy to two major projects: **conversion to Buddhism** and the **formation of a new political party**. In his speech at the historic **Deekshabhoomi event in Nagpur (14 October 1956)**, where he converted to Buddhism along with nearly half a million followers, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar spoke about the need for a political movement that reflected **Buddhist values of compassion and equality**.

The Nagpur Resolution and Party Framework

Before his death, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had communicated with his close associates—such as **N. Sivaraj, Dadasaheb Gaikwad, and B. Shyam Sunder**—regarding the formation of the Republican Party of India. He envisioned it as a party of "**all the oppressed**", including Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities, and economically backward classes. He proposed the dissolution of the Scheduled Castes Federation and the establishment of a more **inclusive political organization**.

Formal Inauguration of the RPI

The RPI was officially inaugurated on **3 October 1957** in Nagpur. **N. Sivaraj** was elected as the first president of the party. **Objectives of the Republican Party of India**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's proposed objectives for the RPI were not merely electoral but deeply transformational:

Annihilation of Caste: Challenging the caste system not only socially but through legal and institutional reforms.

Upliftment of the Depressed Classes: Economic empowerment through land reforms, access to education, and employment.

Democratic Equality: Ensuring true political representation for the Scheduled Castes, Tribes, and minorities.

Protection of Constitutional Rights: Especially with regard to fundamental rights, reservations, and protections under Articles 15, 16, and 17 of the Constitution.

Secularism and Scientific Temper: Promoting rationalism and rejecting religious dogma, aligning with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism.

The RPI as a Continuation of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Political Strategy

Political Representation as a Means of Empowerment

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that political power was essential for the social and economic emancipation of Dalits. As he famously said:

“Political power is the key to all social progress.”

The RPI was thus a vehicle to empower Dalits to not merely participate in politics but to lead political discourse and governance.

Constitutionalism and Parliamentary Democracy

Unlike radical leftist movements, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized constitutional methods—appeal, agitation, and negotiation—rather than

violence. The RPI was envisioned as a constitutional party, working within the framework of democracy to achieve revolutionary goals.

RPI's Strategy for Inclusive Coalition Politics

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of the RPI extended beyond Dalits. He sought to bring together:

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Religious minorities

Backward classes

Working-class laborers

Progressive intellectuals

He envisioned a broad coalition of marginalized and progressive forces to challenge Brahmanical and capitalist dominance in Indian politics. This strategy later influenced political formations like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and other social justice movements.

Legacy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision in RPI's Practice

Though the RPI faced organizational disunity and factionalism after its inception, its foundational years were marked by notable achievements:

Winning 13 seats in the 1962 Maharashtra Assembly elections.

Raising critical issues like untouchability, atrocities on Dalits, and land reforms in legislative forums.

Playing a role in preserving Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings and thoughts through public discourse, publications, and events.

The RPI also laid the groundwork for future Dalit movements and was a precursor to modern Ambedkarite political activism.

Limitations and Challenges

Despite Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision, the RPI struggled with:

Factionalism: Multiple splinter groups diluted its effectiveness.

Leadership vacuum: After Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the party lacked a unifying national leader.

Electoral marginalization: Inability to expand its influence beyond regional strongholds like Maharashtra.

Co-optation by mainstream parties: Many leaders allied with dominant parties, compromising on core principles.

These challenges prevented the RPI from becoming a dominant national force but did not diminish the power of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision that inspired its birth.

Contemporary Relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's RPI Vision

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for the RPI remains **profoundly relevant** in modern India:

- Caste-based discrimination persists in various forms, making the RPI's mission of annihilating caste an ongoing struggle.
- The rise of identity politics, Dalit assertion, and Ambedkarite student movements demonstrates the enduring appeal of his political philosophy.
- Constitutional values of social justice and equality continue to inspire progressive parties and civil society.

3.5 SUMMARY

Unit III examines the political legacy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar through three major political platforms: the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF), and the Republican Party of India (RPI). The ILP, founded in 1936, marked Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's first attempt to integrate the issues of caste and class within a formal political framework. Its focus was on annihilating caste, achieving economic justice, and empowering labourers and marginalized communities through democratic means. The party won notable victories in the 1937 Bombay elections and raised issues such as land reforms, labour rights, and anti-untouchability measures.

With the launch of AISCF in 1942, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar shifted toward consolidating Dalit identity and political representation. The AISCF aimed to abolish untouchability, secure constitutional and political rights for Scheduled Castes, and advance social democracy. It played a vital role in the pre-independence and Constituent Assembly period by influencing critical constitutional provisions related to affirmative action and anti-discrimination.

Post-independence, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar conceptualized the Republican Party of India (RPI) to further democratize Indian society. Although he passed away before its formal inauguration in 1957, the RPI carried forward his agenda of caste annihilation, economic justice, political empowerment, and secularism. The party initially succeeded in mobilizing Dalits and contesting elections but gradually lost prominence due to factionalism, leadership crises, and ideological dilution. Despite its decline, the RPI's legacy inspired later movements such as the Dalit Panthers and the Bahujan Samaj Party.

This unit highlights how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political efforts created a foundation for Dalit political assertion, democratic inclusion, and the pursuit of an egalitarian India.

3.6 QUESTIONS

1. Critically evaluate the ideological evolution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's political thought from the ILP to the RPI. How did his priorities shift with changing political contexts?
2. Discuss the significance of the Independent Labour Party in shaping Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to labour rights and caste emancipation. How did it differ from both the Congress and Communist movements of the time?
3. How did the All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF) redefine Dalit political identity and representation in the 1940s? What were its main achievements and limitations?
4. Analyze the objectives of the Republican Party of India as envisioned by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Why did the party fail to sustain its early momentum after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's death?
5. Examine how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's emphasis on constitutionalism and parliamentary democracy shaped the strategies of the ILP, AISCF, and RPI. How did these parties contribute to India's constitutional development?
6. In what ways do the core objectives of the RPI continue to be relevant in addressing contemporary issues of caste-based exclusion and socio-economic inequality in India?
7. Compare and contrast the challenges faced by the Republican Party of India with those encountered by other Dalit political formations like the Bahujan Samaj Party and Dalit Panthers.

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SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF AMBEDKARISM

a) Civil Rights Movement: Mahad Chavdar Tank Satyagraha and Kala Ram Temple Entry Movement

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Early Life of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
- 4.3 Education and Career of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
- 4.4 Background to Civil Rights Movement
- 4.5 Mahad Chawdar Tank Satyagraha
- 4.6 Kala Ram Temple Entry Satyagraha
- 4.7 Satyagraha and Aftermath
- 4.8 Summary
- 4.9 References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To explain early life, education and career of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.
 2. To analyze Background to Civil Rights Movement
 3. To examine the Mahad Chawdar Tank Satyagraha
 4. To critically evaluate the Kala Ram Temple Entry Satyagraha
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a Constitutional luminary, the Doyen of Economics, a Sociologist, an authority on religion, a legal expert, a philosopher. Not only this, but he contributed to field of history too. His knowledge of history and history writing is not less than a first-grade historian. As an M.A. student (1913-15) he wanted to work on the problem of 'Ancient Indian Commerce' and submit the dissertation to Columbia University of U.S.A. Due to some reasons he changed his topic to 'Administration and Finance of the East India Company'. He submitted this dissertation to the Columbia University and obtained his M.A. degree in 1915. Let's discuss about his early life, education and civil rights movement with reference to Mahad Chavadar Tank Satyagraha and Kala Ram Temple Entry Satyagraha

4.2 EARLY LIFE OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar born into a Dalit family on April 14, 1891, in the town of MHOW-Military Headquarter of War in the Central Provinces of British India (now in the state of Madhya Pradesh). His family belonged to the Mahar caste, which was considered one of the lowest in the Hindu social hierarchy at the time. His father, Ramji Maloji Sakpal, served in the British Indian Army as a Subedar. He held a deep interest in education and encouraged his children to pursue learning despite their social and economic circumstances. His mother, Bhimabai Sakpal, passed away when he was just five years old. During childhood Bhimrao was known as 'Bhiva'. He had several siblings, including three brothers and two sisters. They grew up in a household marked by poverty and social discrimination due to their caste identity.

Bhiva's early life was characterized by struggle and hardship. His family faced social ostracization and economic deprivation because of their caste. Despite these challenges, Bhiva displayed exceptional intelligence and a keen interest in learning from a young age. Bhiva married Ramabai in 1906 in the vegetable mandi of Byculla. Ramabai supported Bhiva throughout his life and played a significant role in his personal and professional endeavours. They had several children together, including sons and daughters.

4.3 EDUCATION AND CAREER OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Bhiva completed his elementary education from Satara School (Maharashtra) in 1902. He matriculated in the year 1907 from Elphinstone Highschool, Mumbai with Persian as his principal subject and he was the first one to clear matriculation in the then Mahar community and hence was felicitated in a function. The chief guest of the function was Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar, a Bhandari, presented a book on Buddha to Bhimrao Ambedkar. In 1909, he passed his Intermediate from Elphinstone College with Persian and English as a specialisation. In the year 1913, he was awarded his Degree (B.A.) from Elphinstone College affiliated to University of Mumbai with Economics and Political Science as specialisation. Even today seeking a degree from abroad is dream of many students, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made possible in 1915.

The long for further education took him to Columbia University, New York, for M.A. and Ph.D. respectively in 1915 and 1917. He also did M.Sc. in 1921 from London School of Economics. He presented his research titled 'Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance in British India'. After that he secured degree of Bar at Law (Barrister) from Grey's Inn, London. He also spent some period from 1922-23 for reading economics in the University of Bonn, Germany. He has been the first Indian to achieve the degree of D.Sc. from the London School of Economics in 1923. For this degree his thesis was titled 'The Problem of Rupee-Its Origin and Its Solution'. He was honoured with the degree of

LL.D. (Honoris Causa) on 5th June 1952 by the Columbia University and D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) on 12th January 1953 by the Osmania University, Hyderabad. The Columbia University has honoured Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as a 'Symbol of Knowledge' and one the Best Student of that University in 200 years. The Columbia University has also installed a bust of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in its premises which inspires the students of that American University.

Despite facing discrimination, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar pursued education with determination and became one of the most prominent scholars and leaders of his time. He earned multiple degrees, including a doctorate from the University of London, and dedicated his life to advocating for the rights and dignity of marginalized communities in India.

Throughout his life, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar drew upon his experiences of social discrimination and marginalization to become a leading figure in the struggle for social justice and equality. His legacy continues to inspire millions of people across the world who fight against caste-based discrimination and oppression. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's life was profoundly shaped by his experiences with the caste system, which dominated Indian society during his time. As a member of the Dalit community, historically marginalized and oppressed within the Hindu social hierarchy, Ambedkar faced discrimination, exclusion, and humiliation from a young age.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's resilience, determination, and intellectual prowess enabled him to become one of the most influential figures in India's struggle for social justice and equality. His efforts played a crucial role in shaping modern India's democratic principles and institutions, and his legacy continues to inspire movements for social change around the world.

4.4 BACKGROUND TO CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The Pre- Ambedkarite Dalit Movement also talks of the upliftment of the untouchables. They always criticized the religious scriptures which makes the mentions of the deplorable conditions of the untouchables. Being the part and parcel of Hindu religion, they had been ostracized by the Hindu brethren who have been following the Hindu practices and so are termed as Caste Hindus. Here the principal questions have been raised by the Dalit movement launched by various activists as below:

1. Why not untouchables are treated as human beings?
2. Why the Indian people who are Hindus treat their brethren Hindus lesser than an animal and birds?
3. Why the British Government also did not pay heed to the progress and for removal of the blot of untouchables?
4. Why the Indian nationalist leaders did not take up the issues of the untouchables to the national agenda?

5. How the person who is not treated as human being is supposed to take part in the national movement?
6. When the son of the soil has not been accepted as human being, how can he fight for the soil?
7. How can the community which is looked down upon by the British as well as the caste Hindus will fight against whom?
8. So, due to **Dual Dominance**, the community will try to get rid of either of the two and further, it will try its level best to remove its chains which have tied it since centuries together.
9. Although, the concept of nationalism for the caste Hindus and the outcastes have been different from each other. So, the community should feel that this is their own nation and for which it should dedicate its life.
10. Therefore, even subsequent movement of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also tried to define what the nation is, what the nationalism is and he fought at the two fronts like British rule as well as the caste Hindus. He never supported British against the Indians but whenever the time came to express his feeling towards his nation, he clarified his stand in favour of India only.

4.5 MAHAD CHAWDAR TANK SATYAGRAHA

The Hindu shastras divide Hindu society in four varnas — Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. There was a section of society that was outside this fourfold varna system but was in an exploitative relationship with the caste Hindus and also faced many restrictions. This group has come to be known as untouchables. Caste Hindus considered them 'impure' and this practice of untouchability was not limited only to interpersonal interaction but also extended to public spaces. The untouchables could not enter temples, were forced to have their separate water bodies, their children had to sit separately in schools and so on. Mahad Satyagraha was one of the most important organised efforts under the leadership of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to challenge these regressive customs of the caste Hindus.

The Mahad Satyagraha, which took place in 1927 in the town of Mahad in Maharashtra, India, stands as a seminal moment in the history. Led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, this nonviolent protest marked a significant step towards achieving social justice, equality, and civil rights for the Dalit community in India.

The oppressed castes (called as Depressed Classes in colonial regime or ex- untouchables) have faced severe discrimination, segregation, and social ostracism in Indian society for centuries. Access to public resources such as water bodies, temples, and schools was often denied to them, perpetuating their social, political and economic marginalization.

The Mahad Satyagraha was a response to these injustices and aimed to challenge the deeply ingrained caste-based discrimination. As a leader of

the Depressed Classes, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was at the forefront of opposing the ideology of the caste system. He believed that India not only requires political reform, but also social reform. An effective strategy to fight social inequality while the struggle for freedom was ongoing was important for him. As he summarized in *Annihilation of Caste* (1936): “That political reform cannot with impunity take precedence over social reform in the sense of the reconstruction of society, is a thesis which I am sure cannot be controverted”.

The Bombay Legislative Council had passed a S.K. Bole resolution passed in 1923 which had permitted the untouchables to use the water from the Chawdar Tank at Mahad. But due to the reluctance of Caste Hindus of the Mahad Municipality, it was not implemented. So, there was planned a Conference by Kolaba District Depressed Classes on 19-20 March 1927. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was to preside over the meeting and along with him all the Mahars assembled there were to enjoy the right to use the water of the Chawdar tank.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had gone to Mahad for a two-day conference organised by Kolaba District Depressed Classes on March 19–20, 1927 on the invitation of Ramachandra Babaji More. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar presided over this conference, which was attended by thousands of delegates. The main agenda of the gathering was to raise awareness about the civil rights of untouchables. During the conference it was decided that the attendees would march to Chavdar tank and the “untouchables” will assert their moral and legal right to access a public water body. Talking about the importance of Chavdar tank, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar says:

“The Untouchables, either for purposes of doing their shopping and also for the purpose of their duty as village servants, had to come to Mahad to deliver to the taluka officer either the correspondence sent by village officials or to pay Government revenue collected by village officials. The Chawdar tank was the only public tank from which an outsider could get water. But the Untouchables were not allowed to take water from this tank. The only source of water for the Untouchables was the well in the Untouchables quarters in the town of Mahad. This well was at some distance from the centre of the town. It was quite choked on account of its neglect by the Municipality”

On March 20, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his co-workers led a procession of 2,500 “untouchables” through main streets towards the Chavdar tank. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took water from the tank and drank it. Others followed suit. This was known as the Mahad Satyagraha. Then everybody returned to the pandal. It was a peaceful protest but quite revolutionary in its implications.

Two hours after the event, caste Hindus raised a false rumour that the “untouchables” were also planning to enter the temple of Veereshwar. At this a large crowd of caste Hindus armed with bamboo sticks gathered at street corners. They dashed into the pandal. Many of the delegates were at that time scattered in small groups in the city. Some were busy packing

and a few were taking their meals before dispersing for their villages. The majority of the delegates had by now left the town. The rowdy mob pounced upon the delegates in the pandal, knocked down their food in the dust, pounded their utensils and beat them.

Caste Hindus of Mahad did not like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his companions' revolutionary act. They carried out a purification ritual to undo the "desecration".

They also sent messages to their henchmen to punish the delegates of the conference in their respective villages. In obedience, assaults were committed on a number of people either before or after they had reached their villages ("Mahad Satyagraha not for Water but to Establish Human Rights).

Actually, some of the touchable- upper caste Hindus also supported the cause and campaigned for the conference. To mention, Surendranath Tipnis, Anantrao Chitre, Gangadhar Nilkanth Sahastrabudhe were among them. The first day, the leaders assembled there gave their speeches and inspired the gathering for their right of a human being. At the night the subject committee of the conference decided to physically visit the tank and drink the water from it along with all the untouchables. Accordingly, in pursuance of the resolution of the Mahad Municipality which in 1924 had declared to have thrown open its Tank to the Depressed Classes, it was now decided to take water from the Tank and establish the right of the Untouchables. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who represented the awakened spirit of the Untouchable Hindus, was marching towards the Tank from which the Muslims and Christians took water along with the so-called touchable Hindus, but from which the Untouchable Hindus who worshipped the Hindu Gods, stuck to the same Hindu religion through ages past, were, although their throats parched with thirst, not allowed to take even a drop of water. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took water from the Tank and drank it.

How come the Indian national movement be participated with such kind of treatment meted out to the own religious human beings like Mahars, untouchables and the Depressed Classes. Yes, it is possible whenever these classes are unaware of their exploitation, they can participate. But when they are conscious of their rights and came to know of their exploitation, they will naturally fight for their human rights. This task was done by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and hence the untouchable masses which became conscious, started following him and came at the front to gain their human rights. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that if right from the beginning, the Indian national leaders and the Indian National Congress must have worked for the removal of the social evils, it would have been possible that the organized struggle for freedom would have been successful as early as possible.

The Bombay Chronicle reported the incident of attack on the people gathered for the conference, "The procession was a most peaceful one and everything passed off quietly. But after about two hours some evil-minded

leaders of the town raised a false rumour that the Depressed Classes were planning to enter the temple of Vireshwar, whereupon a large crowd of riff raffs, all armed with bamboo sticks were collected. The crowd soon became aggressive and the whole town at once became a surging mass of rowdies who seemed to be out for the blood of the Depressed Classes.”

The Bombay City Police Special Branch investigated the incident and reported it to the Government. There was one meeting held in Bombay on 3rd July, 1920 to discuss the further course of action on the Mahad Satyagraha. The report said, “Under the auspices of the Bahishkrit Hitakarani Sabha, a public meeting of the Depressed Classes was held at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall on the evening of July 3 to protest against the hardships inflicted on the Untouchables of Mahad in Kolaba district. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Bar-at-Law, presided over an audience of about 1,000 people. Speeches were made by the president, Ragoba Narayan Vanmali, Mahadeo Abaji Kamli, Sitaram Namdeo Shivtarkar, Nirmal Limbaji Gangavane, Gitanand Brahmachari and Samant Nanji Marwari, condemning the treatment meted out to their brethren in Mahad by the Higher Classes. They decided, in order to carry on a peaceful agitation against this treatment, to enlist volunteers and collect funds. They would first have a conference at Mahad after the Diwali holidays and then it would be decided to start Satyagraha in order to enforce their rights as citizens. A resolution to this effect was passed. Another resolution was passed requesting the Government to establish a separate department to deal with the grievances of the Depressed Classes as was done in Madras. An appeal for funds was made by the speakers and about Rs. 350 were collected. A dozen people consented to become volunteers for the Satyagraha movement when it is started.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar then decided to launch another Satyagraha in December 1927 in Mahad to assert the rights of the Depressed Classes. However, the oppressor castes initiated a legal action against Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his colleagues on 12 December 1927 in the Mahad civil court, seeking issuance of a temporary injunction. On 14 December, the court granted a temporary injunction, which prohibited Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, his colleagues, and members of the Depressed Classes or those acting on their behalf, from accessing the Chavdar Tank until further orders were issued. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar however decided to continue his proposed Satyagraha during 25-27 December, even though he decided to not go to the Tank till the pendency of the civil suit. On 25 December 1927, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, while addressing the people of the Depressed Classes, stated”

“It is not as if drinking the water of the Chavdar Lake will make us immortal. We have survived well enough all these days without drinking it. We are not going to the Chavdar Lake merely to drink its water. We are going to the Lake to assert that we too are human beings like others. It must be clear that this meeting has been called to set up the norm of equality.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and his supporters also burnt a copy of 'Manusmriti' to symbolically reject the foundations of the caste system. The gathering also passed certain resolutions towards equality, non-discrimination, and equal access to resources.

Later, on 25th December, 1927 another conference at Mahad was held in which publicly bonfire of the Hindu scripture 'Manusmriti' was conducted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at the hands of upper caste (CKP) fellow brother Gangadhar Nilkanth alias Bapusaheb Sahastrabuddhe.

In the civil suit, the defendants including Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that the tank belonged to the Mahad Municipality and should be open to all. The trial court ruled against the plaintiffs, stating that they failed to prove a longstanding custom excluding untouchables from using the tank, and that this custom did not qualify as a legal right. The case was dismissed in 1937.

An appeal was filed against the decision, but the Assistant Judge, Thana affirmed the lower court's ruling. The judge held that there was no evidence or legal basis to support the exclusion of untouchables from using the tank. Subsequently, the plaintiffs appealed to the Bombay High Court. The High Court also dismissed the appeal in 1937.

Thus, after almost 10 years of struggle, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was able to secure legal victory for his people.

4.6 KALA RAM TEMPLE ENTRY SATYAGRAHA

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's one more fight for the human rights of the untouchables was that his movement for the Temple Entry Satyagraha that is 'Kala Ram Temple Entry Satyagraha' at Nasik dated 2nd March 1930. Before three years he had launched Chawdar Tank Satyagraha at Mahad which was received a success legally (not by the change of mind of the caste Hindus) in 1937 only after ten years. The untouchables also belonged to Hindu religion and they also worship the gods and goddesses like Ram, Krishna and Laxmi as well. But they were not allowed to enter the temples of their deities by the caste Hindus and worship them. Therefore, another movement of Temple Entry Satyagraha was decided to launch by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the temple was selected that was Kala Ram Temple. (The idol of Rama was painted in black colour)

The year 1930 was a year of action and reaction. It brought forth a new line of thinking and a new angle of approach; new measures of repression and new methods of rapprochement. Better still, it was the age of Satyagraha. It was in this year that Mahatma Gandhi as the generalissimo of the Congress inaugurated his great movement for the liberation of the country on March 12, 1930, like Dandi March and Salt Satyagraha.

Ten days before the Dandi March of Gandhi, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the father of Indian social unrest, launched his temple entry movement at Nasik. Preparations for this movement had been going on for over three

months. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was guiding, inspiring and organizing it from Bombay through his letters and lieutenants. The Depressed Classes at Nasik had formed a Satyagraha Committee and through its Secretary, Bhaurao Gaikwad alias Dadasaheb Gaikwad, informed the Trustees of the famous Kala Ram Temple that they would launch Satyagraha, if the Trustees did not throw the temple open to the Untouchable Hindus before a particular date. Simultaneously, a clarion call was issued to the Depressed Classes to come to Nasik to assert their right of worshipping Shree Rama in the said temple. In response to this call of the Satyagraha Committee, about 15,000 volunteers and representatives assembled in a specially erected pandal in the Depressed Classes locality at Nasik. Notable among those presents were Deorao Naik, Rajbhoj, Pradhan, Shivtarkar, Patitpavandas and B.G. Kher. At last, the day of action dawned. It was Sunday, March 2, 1930. In the morning at 10.00 a.m., a Conference was held under the Presidentship of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the pandal to consider the situation and adopt ways and means for launching the Satyagraha.

Rationale Behind the Temple Entry Proposed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar put forward a thought-provoking speech about the entry Kala Ram Temple. He said, “today, we are about to enter the Temple. But the entry in the Temple would not solve the whole problem. Our problem is comprehensive. It is political, social, religious, economic, educational etc. The issue of Kala Ram Temple entry is an appeal to the Hindu mind. The high caste Hindus deprived us from the far ages. Whether the same Hindus are willing to grant our humanitarian rights will be the question raised from this Temple entry Satyagraha. Whether the Hindu mind is willing to accept us as human beings, this is the question to be tested through this Satyagraha. The high caste Hindus looked down upon us and treated us even worse than cats and dogs. We wish to know whether those very Hindus would give us the status of man or not. This Satyagraha will provide answer to this question. This Satyagraha is one of the efforts for bringing about a change of heart among the high Caste Hindus. Hence the success of this effort depends on the Hindu mind-set. Our real problem is not going to be solved by the entry into the Ram Temple. It will not bring about any radical change in our life. But this is a test to judge the high caste Hindu mind. Whether the Hindu mind is willing to accept the elevated aspirations of the new era that “man must be treated as man; he must be given humanitarian rights; human dignity should be established “is going to be tested. In order to achieve this goal, we have launched this Satyagraha. The main question is whether the high caste Hindus are going to consider these aspects and act accordingly. We know that in this temple resides God made of stone. By having a mere glance at him or by worshiping him, our problem will not be solved completely. Millions of people might have visited this temple and have had a glance at the god up till now. But who would say that their basic problem was solved by this act? We know this. But our Satyagraha today is an effort to bring about a change of heart among the Hindus. With this principled position we are launching this Satyagraha.”

Arrangement to Proceed to Temple Entry

At noon the Conference adjourned and again met at half past one. At three in the afternoon, the congregation divided itself into batches of four extending itself over a mile-long procession. It was the biggest procession in the history of Nasik. At the head played a band after the military style redolent of the association of many of the Depressed Class members with military life. Then followed a batch of scouts. Behind them walked about 500 women Satyagrahis showing a revolutionary change in their outlook; and they were followed by a multitude of processionists enthused with an exalted spirit, but walking with a full sense of discipline, order and determination. As soon as the procession came up to the eastern gate of the temple, the District Magistrate, the Police Superintendent and the City Magistrate moved towards the gate of the temple. As all the gates of the temple were closed, the processionists proceeded to the Godawari Ghat. There the procession transformed itself into a meeting. At eleven O'clock that night the leaders again discussed the issue in all its aspects and decided to launch a non-violent struggle before the gates of the temple.

This historic struggle thus commenced on the morning of March 3, 1930. The first batch of 125 men and 25 women was posted at the four gates of the temple, and over 8,000 enlisted Satyagrahis were awaiting their turn. But the gates of the temple were closed and barricaded. While the Satyagrahis squatted at the entrance, chanting hymns and singing bhajans, crowds of Untouchables numbering over 3,000 gathered in their vicinity; but the police were on the alert and kept them on the move. A strong force of armed police was posted at each gate. Two First Class Magistrates were on duty at the place since early morning to meet any emergency. Reynolds, the Police Superintendent, had shifted his office to a tent pitched right in front of the temple. The touchables, too, were precluded from entering the temple as the gates remained closed, and their leaders were deliberating behind closed doors to find a way out of the impasse. A difficult situation would have developed had the gates been opened to the Caste Hindus.

At night, a public meeting of the citizens of Nasik was held under the Presidentship of Dr. Kurtakoti, the Shankaracharya, but it ended in pandemonium due to the predominance of the orthodox people. The Sanatanists by now had got panicky and rowdy. They pelted the meeting with stones and shoes. It was felt that even Rama himself would be thrown aside, if he were to tell the orthodox Hindus to throw open the temple to the Untouchables!

The Riot by the Caste Hindus and Injury to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

The Satyagraha struggle continued for about a month. April 9 dawned. It was the day of the chariot procession of the image of Rama. A compromise was patched up between the Caste Hindus and the Untouchables. It was decided that strong men from both sides should draw the chariot. Thousands of people assembled at noon near the main gate of

the temple to see the sight. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, with his choice gymnasts, stood near the gate. But before they could touch the chariot, they were engaged in broils by the riotous element of the Caste Hindus, and the Caste Hindus ran away with the chariot, as secretly planned, through a street, narrow, thorny and inconvenient on either side, and the mouth of which was guarded by armed police. A daring Bhandari youth by name Kadrekar broke the cordon of the armed police who were awaiting orders to fire, and in a movement crowds of Untouchables pursued the chariot amidst showers of stones and captured it. Dangerously wounded, Kadrekar fell down in a pool of blood. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was protected by his men and as the umbrellas that protected his person were shattered, he too, received minor injuries. There was free fighting between groups of Untouchables and Caste Hindus all over the city.

4.7 SATYAGRAHA AND AFTERMATH

This Satyagraha provoked considerable ill-feeling in the minds of the orthodox Hindus throughout the District. As a result of this tension children of the Untouchables were thrown out of schools, roads were closed to them, and necessities of life were denied to them in the market because they claimed equal rights with all other Hindus. Untouchables in several villages were maltreated. Despite these sufferings, the struggle at Nasik was earned on.

Attempts of Discussion and Compromise

Attempts were being made to persuade both the parties to reach a compromise. Dr. Moonje and Dr. Kurtakoti the Shankaracharya, were trying to reach a settlement. The great multi-millionaire Birla also saw Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in Bombay in the middle of April 1930. But so firm was the resolve of the Depressed Classes that orthodox Hindus had to keep the famous temple closed for a whole year and the agitation continued.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also was a Member of Bombay Legislative Council, had written two letters to His Excellency Governor of Bombay regarding the problems created by the bureaucracy during Kala Ram Temple entry Satyagraha at Nasik. The letters are as follows:

On 24th March 1930 he wrote that the assurance that Government proposed to act impartially in the dispute between the touchables and the Untouchables, which is centered in the Satyagraha at the Kala Ram Temple at Nasik but were partial to the side of the caste Hindus. Further, he brought to the notice of the Governor that the police authorities permitted other touchable Hindus to enter the Temple from the entrance to the house of the Pujari. To prevent this, the District Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate were approached by the Satyagraha Committee to discuss the question and to communicate to them the intention of the Satyagraha Committee to blockade that private entrance to the general public and permit only the members of family of the Pujari. The District Magistrate, however, refused to see the members of

Satyagraha Committee and turned them away with a chit stating that he will remove those who will start Satyagraha at the door of the Pujari.

The stand taken by the District Magistrate was seriously brought to the notice of the Governor. Thus, the struggle showed that the government is also partial to caste Hindus. He also wrote that the police attitude against the untouchables only. They should have prevented the caste Hindus who deceived government as well as to the untouchables of the original agreement.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote second letter to Frederick Sykes, Governor of Bombay dated 11th April, 1930 in which he reported the course of the riots committed by the caste Hindus against the untouchables. Every one of us must know the course of the day of the Temple Entry Satyagraha as reported by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as follows:

Origin of the Riot

According to the practice of the Kala Ram Temple at Nasik, the Rath (carriage of the God Ram) was to be taken out in the procession through the city. I was asked by Inspector Karnik (one of the Police Officers on duty at the Kala Ram Temple) what attitude I proposed to adopt the connection with the Rath procession. I told him that if equal treatment was accorded to Untouchables, I had no objection to the Rath being taken out and I also specified the nature of the equality of treatment. I had stipulated for stating that I would insist upon two things— (1) That the Untouchables will participate in dragging the Rath along with the touchables, and (2) the Untouchables will offer Puja to the Idol in the Rath. Mr. Karnik then left and turned with the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate told me that my conditions were accepted by the touchable Hindus and that the touchables would bring the Rath to the main door of the temple and after they had dragged it for 10 feet from the gate the Untouchables could join, and together with the touchables join carrying by holding the rope fastened to the Rath, and questioned me whether I had any objection to the Rath procession, to which I replied 'I had none' and in order to help the cause of peace I went out of my way to sort out about 50 out of a 5,000 Untouchables and told them that they alone want to take part in the dragging of the Rath. Accordingly, the Rath was brought out to the temple gate by the touchables. But the touchables who wanted to deceive both the Untouchables and the Police Officers did two things— (1) the touchables held the rope so close to one another that no room was left for the Untouchables to join in, and (2) the touchables instead of stopping the Rath at the temple gate, as previously agreed to, began to run away with it so as to give no chance to Untouchables to catch the rope and participate in carrying the Rath. This manicure to violate the most important condition in the agreement naturally enraged the feelings of the Untouchables. But the immediate cause of the fight was the action of the Police Sepoys a great majority of whom were Caste Hindus, they at once started to assault those Untouchables who were struggling to hold a bit of the rope. The fight was started by the **Caste Hindu Police** who openly

took the side of the touchable Hindus. The batch of 50 Untouchables was thus subjected to an assault from two-sides. The touchable Hindus who had held the rope were brushing them away and preventing them from taking a position near the rope and when the Untouchables were struggling to take a position the caste Hindu Police were charging with their batons and butt-ends of their rifles. Seeing their men assaulted in this way the rest of the Untouchables followed the Rath with which the touchables were running away at a terrific speed. Seeing that the crowd of the Untouchables pursuing the Rath had come very near it, the touchables abandoned Rath on the road and went to adjoining field and began to throw a volley of stones on the crowd of Untouchables who were standing on the road. The road was lined on one side by barbed wire and on the other side by cactus, and consequently the Untouchables could not escape from the volley of stones as a result of which many of them were injured. The peaceful conduct of the Untouchables is evidenced from the fact that there is not a single casualty reported from among the touchable Hindus.

Extent of the Mischief Done

The crowd of the touchable Hindus when they were dispersed from the Field wherefrom, they were throwing stones went to the camp of the Satyagraha Committee, pulled down the tent, smashed bicycles of volunteers, stoned the motor belonging to one of the members of the Committee and stoned the women who were in the charge of the kitchen and caused injuries to small children straying about. From there it went to the bank of the river where they found some Untouchable men, women and children who could not leave the bank of the river and join the main body of the Untouchables at the temple gate on account of the fact there was no one to take charge of their bullocks and carts, they were brutally assaulted, their belongings were burnt and some were thrown into water. According to the information given to me this attack resulted in the death of one man. Very little help was given to these unfortunate Untouchables on the bank of the river. The main body of the Untouchables could not go to their rescue because they were stopped from moving from their place and the police cordon was placed around them and as most of the Police force was engaged in keeping custody of the main body of the Untouchables at the gate, very few were left to give aid to those Untouchables who became victims to the attack on the bank.

Attitude of the Police

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote, "I must, however, guard myself against creating the impression that I have any complaint to make against the Police Officers. On the contrary, I have not the slightest hesitation to say that they have done their duty. I wish particularly to mention the names of Inspectors-Shelke, Nagarkar and Karaka for their splendid work in the most trying circumstances arising out of the Satyagraha. My complaint is against the Sepoys who took sides and who exhibited their caste prejudice by assaulting respectable Untouchables in a most wanton fashion. Their names and numbers will be submitted to their superiors and I trust Your Excellency will direct disciplinary action against them".

Policy of District Magistrate

While reporting the policy of the District Magistrate, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "I regret to say that I was not satisfied with the policy of the District Magistrate in connection with the Satyagraha of the Untouchables. In my last letter I had informed Your Excellency how a private door of the house of the Pujari was being used by the public as an entrance to the temple and how our Satyagraha was being frustrated thereby. The District Magistrate did not pay any regard to our contention and on the Ramnavami Day not only allowed the public to use the private entrance of the Pujari in complete disregard of our contention but prohibited our Satyagrahis to sit as usual at the adjacent public way the barricade from which was removed to provide exit to the touchable Hindus entering by the private door. As a result, 18 Untouchables out of 300 who offered Satyagraha were arrested on the Ramnavami Day. After the riot of the 9th, the District Magistrate proposed to me that I must stop the Satyagraha or else he will withdraw the Police. His proposal was considered by the Satyagraha Committee and was rejected and I think rightly. Nothing could be a greater disaster to movement of the Untouchables than the stopping of the Satyagraha at this juncture. The touchable Hindus would gain the impression that any slight use of the force is sufficient to crush the movement of the Untouchables. Under the circumstances I or Satyagraha Committee can allow such an impression to go round. Only on this, if on no other account, we must continue our Satyagraha. Regarding the withdrawal of the Police, I wish the Government of Bombay to realize fully the implications thereof. To my mind it means that the Government is not willing to use the power it has under its command to help people who are struggling for their rights to win them. Such a power is good for nobody and the Depressed Classes may then be justified in joining hands with those who are speaking for a change. I hope that the Government of Bombay will give proper directions to the District Magistrate on this point. I learn from the 'Times of India' of today's date that the District Magistrate has promulgated an order under Section 144 Cr. P. Code and prohibited people coming from near the Kala Ram Temple. I do not know if this order contemplates the prevention of our Satyagrahis from sitting at the temple doors as they have been doing heretofore. I most respectfully submit to Your Excellency that there is a chance (I use this word advisedly as I do not know the opinion of the Satyagraha Committee) of this order being respected only if the District Magistrate gives an assurance that the temple doors will remain closed during the period stated in his order and that the private door of the Priest will not remain open to the public".

The Satyagraha was not yet over and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had gone to London to participate the RoundTable Conference. But still, he wrote a letter to the Satyagrahis with his blessings dated 2nd November, 1931. The letter stated,

"I regret very much not to have been able to write to you in reply to the letter you sent me some time ago containing the interview you had with the Commissioner. As anticipated by you I did get a letter from the

Commissioner C. D. asking me to advise you people to stop the Nasik Satyagraha. I have not replied to him but I am going to do so by this mail. I am going to tell him that we cannot stop. So you may tell our people to go on. I see that you are starting Satyagraha on the 5th November. I hope you have made the best preparation. I am sorry. I am not there to help you. But I know that our people are now alive to their problem and that they do not need me every time”.

Later on, the Satyagraha was decided to be given up and in one of the letters to Bhaurao Gaikwad alias Dadasaheb Gaikwad, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote as below:

202 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR : WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

Regarding the above mentioned *Satyagraha* Dr. Ambedkar explained his stand in the following letter addressed to Bhaurao Gaikwad.

BHIMRAO R. AMBEDKAR,	Rajgriha Colony.
M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc.,	Dadar, Bombay 14.
Barrister-at-law., J. P., M. L. C.	3-3-34

My dear Bhaurao,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 23rd Feb. It is very kind of you to have asked me for my views on the propriety of the Depressed Classes launching upon a *Satyagraha* at the Kala Ram Temple in Nasik on the coming Ram Navami Day. I have no position in saying that such a move would be quite uncalled for and should not merely be suspended but should be stopped altogether. This may appear strange and surprising coming as it does from one who was the author of the *Satyagraha*. But I am afraid to declare this change of front. I did not launch the temple entry movement because I wanted the Depressed Classes to become worshippers of idols which they were prevented from worshipping or because I believed that temple entry would make them equal members in and an integral part of the Hindu Society. So far as this aspect of the case is concerned I would advise the Depressed Classes to insist upon a complete overhauling of Hindu Society and Hindu theology before they consent to become an integral part of Hindu Society. I started temple entry *Satyagraha* only because I felt that was the best way of energising the Depressed Classes and making them conscious of their position. As I believe I have achieved that purpose I have no more use for temple entry. I want the Depressed Classes to concentrate their energy and resources on politics and education and I hope that they will realise the importance of both.

Your sincerely,
Sd/-B. R. Ambedkar.”¹

Accordingly the *Satyagraha* was stopped immediately.
—Editors

¹: Khairmode, Vol. 3; Pp. 357-358.

This Satyagraha movement went on for full six years when it was brought to a close in 1935 at a Conference held in Yeola in Nasik District in which the Untouchables as a result of the adamant attitude of the Hindus in refusing to give them equal social rights resolved to go out of the Hindu fold. This Satyagraha movement was no doubt independent of the Congress. It was organized by the Untouchables, led by the Untouchables and financed by the Untouchables.

4.8 SUMMARY

The Chawdar Tank Satyagraha was launched by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for the human rights of the untouchables. The caste Hindus were reluctant to throw open the tank for the untouchables even if they were having their own water resources other than the Chawdar Tank. But they continued to fight the legal battle for almost ten years and finally, failed to get success from the court of law. Thus, this kind of discrimination had not been seen in the world for the members of own religious fold.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar started a temple entry movement with the intention to exercise the right to worship the gods and goddesses of the Hindus to which the Depressed Classes belong and worship at their homes. They were not allowed to enter the temple which was regarded by the caste Hindus that it will be polluted. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as an experiment, launched the temple entry Satyagraha at Kala Ram Mandir at Nashik in 1930. The people from the Mahar caste that is Depressed Classes had gathered at the temple but were beaten with sticks and were pelted with stones. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was also received injuries and was saved by his activists with human shields. The movement continued for six years but the caste Hindus did not allow the untouchables to enter the temple. Later, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave up that movement.

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SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF AMBEDKARISM

b) Perspective on Conversion to Buddhism

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Ideas of Religion
- 5.3 Religious Background
- 5.4 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Religious Leanings
- 5.5 Yeola Conference and Aftermath
- 5.6 Dr. Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on Why Buddhism Alone?
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5.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1.To explain Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas of religion.
- 2.To analyze Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Religious Leanings.
- 3.To examine Yeola Conference and Aftermath.
- 4.To discuss Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Ideas of Buddhism.
- 5.To evaluate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Twenty-Two Vows.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a gentleman of distinction, a great scholar, a brilliant author, an able statesman, an outstanding social reformer, a remarkable law-giver, a patriot in the true sense, a lovable friend, and a Dhammaduta par excellence. Multitalented, this devoted son of mother India, laboured hard to remove the blot of 'Untouchability' from her face. A man of practical sense, this intellectual luminary was, above all, a far-sighted religious leader. He was certainly the hero of the contemporary Buddhist renaissance in India. Moreover, in the annals world-wide revival

of Buddhism in the mid-twentieth century, he stands out as a beacon-light for all times and climes. Besides, his wisdom and vision have made a lasting contribution the social consciousness of humanity.

5.2 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S IDEAS OF RELIGION

He was essentially a religious man. The religion had influenced his life in many ways. He once said about religion, "what good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but not want hypocrisy."

His ideas about religion can be reduced to following:

1. The function of a true religion is to uplift the individual. For that purpose, it should teach the virtues of fellow-feeling, equality and liberty.
2. Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules. The moment it degenerates into rules, it ceases to be the religion as it kills responsibility which is the essence of a truly religious act.
3. Religion is an influence of force suffused through the life of each individual moulding his character, determining his actions and reactions, his likes and dislikes.
4. Man cannot live by bread alone. He has a mind which needs food for thought. Religion instils hope in Man and drives him to activity.
5. Religion in the sense of morality must remain the governing principle in every society.
6. Religion, if it is to function, must be in accord with reason which is merely another name for science.
7. It is not enough for religion to consist of moral code, but its code must recognize the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity.
8. Religion must not sanctify or ennoble property.
9. Religion must be judged by social standards based on social ethics. No other standard would have any meaning if religion is held to be a necessary good for the well-being of the people.
10. The religion that compels the ignorant to be ignorant and the poor to be poor is not religion but a vitiation.
11. Religion and slavery are incompatible.
12. Religion is for man and not man for religion.

5.3 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

During the sixth century B.C.E., we had religious revolution in India started by the Vardhaman Mahavira and the Gautam Buddha. Both these preceptors challenged the complexities, dominance of priestly class in the Vedic religion and its philosophy of existence of God, belief in Atma or universal soul and especially the principles of violence and sacrifice. The concept of Non-Violence of Mahavira was filled with extremities beyond the purview of a laity where Buddha's concept was of Middle Path worthy of common person. As they challenged the traditional religion of the Vedas, colonial historian Dr. Vincent Smith called them as 'Protestant Religions of ancient India'.

Revival of Buddhism held by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on 14th October, 1956, said to be the second revival because Buddha's challenge to Vedic religion was the revolution and murder of Brihadrath Maurya, a Buddhist king, treacherously by his Brahman commander in chief, Pushyamitra Shunga was the counter-revolution. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar challenged again the Vedic religion (Hinduism) and converted to Buddhism along with his five lakhs followers. This is one of the first kinds of mass conversion in the world and hence it is the second revolution of Buddhism and its revival. Buddha's revolution was based on the principle of non-violence, compassion, brotherhood, human kindness and reason. As other religions have been extended on the threat of the sword and violence.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar belonged to Hinduism but long back when he was tenth passed, was better familiarized with Buddhism as Shri. Krishnaji Arjun Keluskar had gifted him a biography of Lord Buddha on his felicitation function for matric passed in 1913. On Sunday, 13th October 1935 he resolved that though he born as a Hindu, will not die as a Hindu at Yeola Conference in the district of Nasik. He was waiting to get the Hindu society changed to give equal treatment to the untouchables. Nonetheless, they should at least must receive the human rights for themselves as more the rights were enjoyed by animals and vice versa. Finally, on Sunday, 14th October, 1956 he converted to Buddhism. He also administered the oaths of Buddhism to about five lakh followers at Nagpur, which is known as 'Diksha Bhoomi'. He administered twenty-two vows to the converts of Buddhism.

5.4 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S RELIGIOUS LEANINGS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in the year 1956, but if we go to trace his whole life sketch, we find that there have been many occasions where he is more attracted towards Buddhism. How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's turn towards Buddhism or what were his leanings towards Buddhism? On 25th December 1927, he put on bonfire, the Vaidik religious text 'Manusmriti'. Further, Sunday, 2nd March, 1930, he launched Temple entry Satyagraha at Kala Ram Mandir, Nasik but caste Hindus did not move to allow the untouchables to enter into the temple. In

his paper 'Mooknayak' (the leader of the Dumb), he discouraged the people who wanted to build a Saint Chokha Mela temple at Tryambak, Nasik, and advised them to apply their energy towards removal of Untouchability.

During the visit of the Simon Commission, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stressed the separateness of Untouchables from caste Hindus. At the Round Table Conference in London, he suggested that untouchables be called "Protestant Hindus" or "Non-conformist Hindus".

In 1929 at Jalgaon, Maharashtra, at least about five thousand Mahars had published a notice stating if caste Hindus did not budge of following untouchability within a given time, they would embrace Islam or Christianity. However, the caste Hindus replied them that the untouchable castes should first remove their sub caste discriminations then will they think of their own. The untouchables like Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Bhangi etc. organized co-dinners on many occasions to show that they have no sub caste discriminations that the caste Hindus thought was impossible. When Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar addressed their issue, he advised them that they should embrace other religion. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote in the editorial of Bahishkrit Bharat, "No particular effect will be felt on the bullying of the so-called upper castes by becoming Buddhist or Arya Samajist, so we see no meaning in following this path. To successfully confront the domination of Hindus, we should become Christians or Muslims and win the support of a powerful community and with this erase the mark of Untouchability." Within a month, twelve Mahars in the area had embraced Islam. Perhaps if Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had advised them towards Buddhism, they would have immediately done so.

The first mention of embracing Buddhism came in the meeting held at Bhima-Koregaon in 1930, wherein, Dharmaji Patil of Nagpur thought that it would be advisable that the Depressed Classes should embrace Buddhism. Again, it was not the suggestion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He was fighting to get separate electorates for the Depressed Classes in India from the British at the third Round Table Conference held in England. To support his demand, the Depressed Classes Congress was held at Kampti near Nagpur, in May 1932. The General Secretary of the Buddha Mahasabha who asked the Depressed Classes to embrace Buddhism. In 1933, there were rumours that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself would become a Muslim, which he denied vehemently, adding that perhaps he might become Buddhist.

On Sunday, 13th October 1935, ten thousand people including some from Hyderabad and the Central Provinces, gathered at Yeola to attend the Bombay Presidency Depressed Classes Conference. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made an historical announcement there that though he born in Hinduism was not in his hands, but to resolve not to die as Hindu is in his own hands.

5.5 YEOLA CONFERENCE AND AFTERMATH

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar appealed the people there that the Kala Ram Temple Entry Satyagraha to be ceased and asked to win for a respectable another society within Hindustan. Mahatma Gandhi reacted this and said that religion is not a house or a cloak that can be changed at will. He in a talk with John R. Mott, described the untouchables as ‘cows’ unable to understand the distinctions between Christianity and the Hinduism. Hence, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar replied that it is not necessary to have ancestral religion, which does not allow its followers of right to equality.

To quote Fredrick Bailey, “the village untouchables in Orissa cannot rise within the existing ritual and political structure of the village.... they are showing the first signs of becoming a separate village community.”

In Maharashtra, the second time the Manusmriti was burnt ceremoniously by eight hundred youth at Nasik and resolved not to participate in any jatras, visit holy places, and give money to priests or to observe Hindu festivals. Further the Kala Ram Temple Entry Agitation Committee was also dissolved. The Hindu Dharma Tyag Committee at Nagpur on same day 9th November, 1935 started to prepare the list of the people willing for conversion. In January 1936, a Poona Depressed Classes Youth Conference was held, where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made another strong speech and repeated the resolve to leave Hinduism. Kisan Faguji Bandsode, a pre- Ambedkarite reformer wanted to get the reforms remaining within Hinduism, but Nagpur people now were very active to get the conversion.

After the Yeola announcement, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at many occasions, held discussions with various religious leaders like Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism etc. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar signalized the Buddhist leanings by many activities, for instance, A Pamphlet “Mukti Kon Pathe? (What path to freedom?), was issued by Bharat Bhushan Printing Press, Bombay, 1936 at the front page in a poetical format in which all the appeal was made to the Depressed Classes without mention of Buddhism that:

“If you want your dignity, humanity, equality, brotherhood..... self-respect, change the religion”.

An Italian Buddhist monk, Loknatha had issued a booklet, published in Ceylon, dedicated to the Depressed Classes of India entitled ‘Buddhism will make you free’ reminded them that “you were once Buddhists and were depressed by the Hindus for refusing to come under the Hindu fold.” After twelve years, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote his book The Untouchables, in which he propounded the ‘Broken Men’ theory. He had named his house at Dadar, Mumbai as “Rajgriha”, colleges at Mumbai as ‘Siddharth’ and the premises as ‘Anand Bhavan’ and ‘Buddha Bhavan’; the college at Aurangabad as ‘Milind’ and the premises as ‘Nagsen Van’. All these names adopted by him were the Buddhist one. According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Buddhism could be a universal religion.

In May 1950, he wrote an article in the Journal of the Mahabodhi Society entitled 'The Buddha and the Future of His Religion', debated if a religion is to perpetuate as world religion, then it should have following requisites.

1. The society with religion of morality as a governing principle to social unity.
2. The religion must be based on science or principle of reason so not to be ridiculed in future.
3. The religion must recognize three fundamental principles of social life that is liberty, equality and fraternity.
4. The religion must not sanctify or ennoble poverty. Further he claims that all the above four requirements can be fulfilled only by Buddhism and not any other religion in the world.
5. So far as the future of religion of Buddhism is concerned, he proposed the task of its spread over the Sangha order.

When Sanghrakshita of England who founded the Buddhist order of Triratna Baudha Mahasangha met Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar first time and asked him whether the Buddhism had really future in India? Dr. Babasaheb bitterly exclaimed that it has no future in India. However, later he prepared for the conversion.

He spoke, at the Buddha Jayanti function at New Delhi in 1950, noting that the Indian state flag bearing Ashoka Chakra and Seal (Emblem) had found their symbolism in Buddhist culture. So far, universality, rationality and scientific approach of Buddhism is concerned, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has denied the traditional cause of Buddha's 'Great Renunciation' and adopted logical reason for it and same has been incorporated in his book 'Buddha and his Dhamma.' He states that Buddha renounced home because to stop war between Shakyas and Koliyas which were the neighbours of each other. In addition, it was the punishment that he accepted to renounce home by taking the permission in a day light from his parents and wife. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was very eager to find the copy written by Tamil Buddhist scholar P. Lakshmi Narsu, 'The Essence of Buddhism'. According to Narsu, "The dictum accepted in all schools of Buddhism is that nothing can be accepted as the teachings of the master, which is not in strict accord with reason." On 4th May 1955 Dr. Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar registered 'The Buddhist Society of India' for the propagation of Buddhism.

5.6 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR ON 'WHY BUDDHISM ALONE'?

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had choice between Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism. Initially he favoured Sikhism, but later decided against it. Referring to his declaration in 1935, which culminated in conversion to Buddhism on 14th October, 1956, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said "This conversion has given me enormous satisfaction and pleasure

unimaginable. I feel as if I have been liberated from hell." While explaining the foundation of Buddha's religion, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said: "Buddhism denies the existence of God and soul. The real basis of Buddhism is rational way to eradicate suffering. The Buddha said, "There is suffering in the world, suffering wide spread". Ninety percent people were afflicted with suffering or misery of some kind or the other. The main object of Buddhism is to emancipate the suffering humanity".

Discussions with Islam, Sikhism and Christianity

At one time Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had almost settled for Sikhism and in fact his decision to embrace Sikhism was final. Concluding his statement, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said with a certain emotion: "The move for conversion to Sikhism has been approved by a number of Hindus including Shankaracharya, Dr. Kurtakoti. In fact, it is they who took the initiative and pressed it on me. If I have gone to the length of considering it an alternative, it is because I felt a certain amount of responsibility for the fate of Hindus". Dhananjay Keer says, he took this quotation from the Times of India of 8-8-1936.

What made Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar prefer Sikhism to Islam or Christianity? Dhananjay Keer suspects a "Brahmin conspiracy" in influencing Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to prefer Sikhism to any other more radical religion that might have destroyed Brahmanism. "Dr. Moonje and Dr. Kurtakoti obviously chose the least evil in supporting Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the proposed conversion of the Depressed Classes to Sikhism, because they believed, as did all great Hindu leaders of the past and present, the Sikhism was a branch of Hinduism owing the same culture and principles."

Dhananjay Keer says, at least Sikhism would have been much better than Buddhism. The ubiquitous turban and the beard of the Sikh not only give him a separate, distinct identity and a fierce, tough look, but also the right to carry the 'kirpan' would have brought him a weapon also for self-protection. Besides, the powerful Sikhs who have made the biggest socio-economic strides in the country would have been a tower of strength to the converted Untouchables. Such Untouchable converts to Sikhism sporting the Sikh turban, beard and armed with the Kirpan would have been a terror in the countryside. Apart from this, when the Punjabi Suba was carved out, those converted to Sikhism could have got a homeland of their own if they wanted to go there. Khalistan would have helped to pave the way for a Dalitastan.

Discussion on Islam

May be he was not allowed to develop contacts with them. He rejected the offer of funds from the Nizam of Hyderabad. All this he did knowing fully well that embracing Islam would definitely help the Untouchables socially, economically and politically too. The Untouchables wanted exactly these three things and yet he did not want it if the price was to embrace Islam. To that extent Moonje, Savarkar and Shankaracharya and other Brahmin leaders succeeded in weaning him away from Islam.

"Ambedkar's statement, which Dr. Moonje had enclosed with his letter to Rajab, said that although Islam seemed to give the Depressed Classes what they need politically, socially and economically, although Christianity had boundless resources available to it from America and England and a Christian Government behind it, and although Sikhism had a few attractions and was not so helpful to the Depressed Classes socially, financially and politically compared with Islam and Christianity, yet he favoured Sikhism in the interests of the Hindus and added that it was the duty of the Hindus to help the Sikhs in removing the economic and political difficulties that would lie in the way of the neo-Sikhs."

From this it is clear that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at some stage did categorically admit that conversion to Islam would have helped the Untouchables, and brought them greater benefits and solved their social, economic and political problems more than any other religion. We get a clear picture of Ambedkar's views on Islam in his fantastic treatise, 'Thoughts on Pakistan', in 1940. But Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took the opposite view and called the Muslims a separate nation and called for the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan.

5.7 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S IDEAS OF BUDDHISM

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a great admirer of Buddhism. He himself stated that from his study of comparative religions, two great personalities have influenced or captivated him immensely. They were Buddha and the Christ. He embraced Buddhism because Buddhism instructed people how they should behave with one another and prescribed for man his duty, to another and relation with God in the light of equality, fraternity and liberty. For him, Buddhism was based on morality. It was based on ethics and the Buddha acted as a guide and not as God whereas Krishna said that he was the god of gods, Christ said he was God's son and Mohammad Paigamber said that he was the last messenger of God. Except the Buddha all founders' religions claimed for themselves the role of Mokshadata (Saviour) and claimed infallibility for themselves, while the Buddha was satisfied with the role Margadata (guide). The religion Buddha was morality.

In place of God in Buddhism, there was morality. The Buddha propounded a most revolutionary meaning of the word 'Dharma'. Dharma to Brahmins was Yadnyas and sacrifices to God. In place of Karma, the Buddha substituted morality as the essence of Dharma. The social gospel the Hinduism was inequality whereas Buddhism was for equality. He added that the Gita upholds Chaturvarna. In his article entitled 'Buddha and the Future of His Religion' Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar summarized his thoughts on Buddhism as follows:

1. The society must have either the sanction of law or sanction of morality to hold it together without either the society is sure to go to pieces.

2. Religion, if it is to function must be in accordance with reason, which is another name for science.
3. It is not enough for religion to consist of a moral code, but its moral code must recognise the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity.

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Buddhism fulfilled these requirements and so among the existing religions, Buddhism was the only religion which the world could have, repudiating all suggestions that Buddhism had disappeared, he said: "Buddhism in its material form disappeared, I agree. But as a spiritual force it still exists." As regards Hinduism, he said, that it went through three stages - The Vedic religion, Brahminism, and Hinduism. It was during the period of Brahmanism that Buddhism was born. Brahmanism preached inequality. Buddhism preached equality. To him Buddhism differed from Hinduism. He further observed: Hinduism believes in God. Buddhism has no God. Hinduism believes in soul. According to Buddhism there is no soul, Hinduism believes in Chaturvarna and Caste System. Buddhism has no place for the Caste System and Chaturvarna.

While delivering his talk on B.B.C. London in May, 1956 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said: "I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches prajna (Understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism), Karuna (Love), and Samata (Equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life. Neither God nor soul can save him from the hell of his own doing. Moreover, Babasaheb Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar liked Buddhism for its following merits also.

1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar observed that the Buddhist order of nuns marked a great advance on the ancient Hindu attitude to women.
2. That while being Buddhist one need not copy the merits of Christianity both in substance and in form since "90 per cent of Christianity is copied from Buddhism".
3. That for a good and happy life man wants prajna, karuna and samata and Buddhism gives them all.
4. Buddhism is continuous with the ancient Indian Recluse Naga culture as distinct from the Vedic, Brahminic, Epic, Vedantic Hindu culture.
5. That the untouchables of Hindu society originated from their Buddhist predecessors.
6. Lord Buddha was opposed to social discrimination of men and upheld equality. On that basis he founded the Sangha consisted of 75 percent of Brahmin monks and 25 per cent of Shudra monks treated on par with each other.
7. The name of the Buddha is well known outside India and its dignity and fame excels that of Rama and Krishna.

8. Buddhism is based on reason. Its main principles form no part of theistic religions.
9. Buddhism is the rational way of eradicating suffering.
10. Buddhism can save the world.

5.8 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S TWENTY-TWO VOWS

Finally, on the Dassera Day, Sunday, 14th October, 1956, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar converted to Buddhism at Nagpur Deeksha Bhoomi, and on 15th October he administered the Precepts and Vows or Oaths to nearly five Lakhs followers from untouchable castes and even some caste Hindus. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar knew that his Depressed Classes have been ridden with all mythological, imaginary gods and goddesses from which they must be relieved. He was most worried if they do not follow these vows then they will again lose their freedom and equality and become victim of Hinduism.

Twenty-Two Vows categorized into three sections are as follows:

Section I: Denunciation of Hindu Mythology and Dharma Shastras

1. I shall not believe as Gods in the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, and shall not worship them.
2. I shall not believe as Gods in Rama and Krishna and shall not worship them.
3. I shall not believe in 'Gauri', Ganapati and other gods and goddesses of Hindus, and shall not worship them.
4. I do not believe that God has taken incarnations.
5. I believe that Lord Buddha was the incarnation of Vishnu is a sheer madness and false propaganda.
6. I shall not perform rituals of 'Shraddha' and shall not offer 'pind-daan'.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar chose Buddhism being the scientific and rational, which welcomes each human being irrespective of any discrimination. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar studied the sacred Sanskrit texts of Hinduism and revealed the false beliefs of the 'Trinity' of Hinduism that is Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. Hence, he administered his followers not to believe and worship these deities anymore. A Handwritten notes of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar are available in which he mentioned about the fallacy of Brahma and Shiva. Therefore, he administered this vow to his followers. Similarly, the Hindus believed in Rama and Krishna, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote a critique entitled "Riddles in Hinduism" and one of it was titled as "Riddle of Rama and Krishna." The questions here are raised that Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the epic literature composed by Valmiki and Vyas respectively and even not the historical

literary sources. At present in Indian politics, the question of Ram Janma Bhoomi and Ram Temple has been a burning issue of winning over Hindus and the subsequent elections. How the technology used by Rama and Krishna has been suddenly disappeared from India? Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted his followers to realize the mythology of Rama and Krishna. In addition, there has not been any reference in the Ceylonese literature about Rama and Ravana. The story of Ganesha is very popular that Ganesha's head was re-fixed with elephant head. This is all imagination and mythical creations of the Brahmanical literature. The concept of incarnation of God has been very illogical. This vow was administered, because this kind of concepts encourages blind beliefs among the masses. If Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had to take his fellow beings towards rationalism, modernism and scientific temperament, they must be indoctrinated about such blind beliefs.

In the Hindu philosophy, it is prevalent that there have been ten incarnations taken by Vishnu and one of the ninth incarnations was that of the Buddha. The question then comes to mind why not all the Hindus in India display image of Buddha in their houses and inside temples. Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar propounded that Buddha was the son of human being and a great personality who reached the status of enlightenment and transcendence.

Dr. Ambedkar, being the rationalist advised his followers not to perform Shraddha of the deceased and offer Pind-dan, which are the integral parts of the Hindu rituals after death of the person. In the year 1920, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar observed the death anniversary of his father and shockingly asked his wife, Ramabai, to serve meat and fish to the forty students what they missed the most in the hostel. He accordingly asked his followers to avoid such rites and rituals. He knew that if he had to emancipate his community from the dogmatic practices of Hinduism, they have to denounce and give up the practices of Hindu mythology and Dharma Shastras.

Section II: Adoption of Teachings of the Buddha

1. 7. I shall not follow anything against the principles and teachings of the Buddhism.
2. 8. I shall not get any ceremonies performed by Brahmins.
3. 9. I shall believe that all human beings are equal.
4. 10. I shall try my level best to establish equality.
5. I shall adopt the 'noble eightfold path' preached by the Buddha.
6. I shall adopt the ten 'paramitas' prescribed by the Buddha.
7. I shall have compassion for all living beings and try to protect them.
8. I shall not steal.

9. I shall not tell lies.
10. I shall not commit adultery.
11. I shall not consume intoxicants like liquor and drugs.
12. I shall lead a life with pradnya, moral character and compassion.

In this section of the vows, we find that the Buddhist teachings are incorporated. The convert should never consult a Brahman in any case as well. According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, “Buddha clearly had the laity in mind when he preached five precepts (Panchsheel) and Eight-fold Path or Middle Path” shown by Buddha by which ‘Dukkha can be eliminated. Even if these Panchsheel is followed, the life of the common person can be happy forever and remain aloof from any sins of violence and will have compassion towards all creatures. Apart from this, the person must follow ‘paramita’ such as Dana, Sila, Nekhamma, Metta, Upekkha etc. to make his life peaceful and relieved. These vows are in the true context of 1956 as well as on today and will remain relevant in future generations.

Section III: Belief and Resolution towards Buddhism

1. I renounce Hinduism as to detrimental to all human kind and treat it with inequality and looks down upon as mean. I do accept the Buddhism instead.
2. Buddhism is true religion that I am absolutely assured of.
3. I believe that I am being reborn by accepting Buddhism.
4. I solemnly affirm to behave as per the principles and teachings of the Buddha.

This section encourages the converts to renounce Hinduism and adopt the path of humanity and advancement. He wanted to make them realize that it is total transformation in the life that they will feel like they have reborn.

5.9 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had personal sufferings, ostracism, discriminations due to caste system since his childhood till he becomes the highly qualified as Barrister. Therefore, he resolved to abolish this discrimination by constitutional means with the British government as well as with Independent Indian government. He tried his level best to expose the wrong doings and methods of untouchability followed by caste Hindus and their foundations in the scriptures who compels the caste Hindus to follow them due to religious fear. But to no avail. Therefore, his mind and efforts were led to change the religion that doesn't give equality to its own followers. Therefore, he after thorough deliberation for almost 25-30 years converted to Indian religion i.e. Buddhism.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made revival of Buddhism in Modern India in general and the world in particular along with five lakhs followers. He had leanings towards Buddhism the most than any other religion. The occasions are many and the Buddhist symbols adopted by him show his leanings. The Yeola Conference that accelerated the leanings into reality in the year 1956. He administered twenty-two vows to the newly converts to have their New Birth. The twenty-two vows administered by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar have been relevant in the social context of the period in 1956, today and will remain relevant in future. The Buddhists must follow vows to make their life free. They must believe that thousands of years, their ancestors and even they continued worshipping the Hindu deities but not a single of them came to wipe their tears or prevent the perpetrators of caste Hindus. The Buddhists must study the mythology of Hinduism, give up ritualism, verify with their conscience, and adopt science with morality.

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SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF AMBEDKARISM-III

c) Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha the People's Education Society

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Overview of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha
- 6.3 Foundation of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha
- 6.4 The Constitution of the Sabha
- 6.5 The People's Education Society & Its Institutions
- 6.6 Application to Dept of Education, Health and Lands, New Delhi
- 6.7 The People's Education Society & Its Constitution
- 6.8 Summary
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6.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study overview of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha.
2. To explain the Constitution of the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha.
3. To analyze Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Application for PES.
4. To critically evaluate the People's Education Society & Its Constitution

6.1 INTRODUCTION

During the start of his political and social work Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar established Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha in 1924. Later on in 1945, he founded an Educational Organization namely People's Education Society. While starting these organizations, he had no funds but he did. At the same time the members he admitted on the boards of these organizations did not restrict to Depressed Classes alone but they belonged to all the castes and communities as well. Even the members had been experts from the field of education and law and also clean by their social and political approach. The President of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha was Sir Chimanlal Setalvad (1864–1947). He was a prominent Indian barrister and jurist who practiced in the Bombay High Court during the early 20th century. He

held the unique distinction of serving as the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University for 12 consecutive years (1917–1929), the longest tenure in the university's history. He was also involved in public service, including a role as a Minister under the reforms scheme in the Bombay Presidency.

The People's Education Society registered in 1945 of which the members having highly qualified and the Doctorate, Barrister, Masters like degrees in their possession. Here also we find that the society had nominated membership open to all the castes and communities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar first had his proposal and selected the land of 6 acres in Fort area of Mumbai and applied for the approval as well as the loan of Rs. 600000/- without interest from the Government of India. He assured the Government that he will not use that amount at very beginning but only after the approval for the college is received. One thing to be noted here that those days Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself was the Minister i.e. Labour Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council but he strictly followed the procedure to apply for the Approval for the People's Education Society.

In this chapter, we will see the aims and objectives, constitution of these two organisations and we will not discuss about the present administration and politics attached to People's Education society.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF BAHISHKRIT HITKARINI SABHA

The Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha was a pivotal social reform organization established by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on 20th July 1924 in Bombay (now Mumbai). Its primary aim was to uplift the Depressed Classes (presently known as Dalits) by promoting education, social awareness, and economic empowerment.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar convened a meeting at Damodar Hall in Bombay, where the Sabha was formally founded. He served as the Chairman of the Managing Committee.

Before moving to detailed Constitution of the Sabha, we just have a overlook on the following.

The Sabha's guiding motto was **“Educate, Agitate, Organize”**, reflecting its commitment to: last so many years it has become a Slogan and everyone who speaks on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, pronounce this ‘motto’ and it has become the reality that everyone is going to take education to the as high as possible.

The Sabha aimed at :

A Multifaceted Approach to Upliftment:

The Sabha's constitution, as outlined in the sources, explicitly states its commitment to a multifaceted approach toward achieving its goals. Recognizing that true empowerment requires addressing multiple dimensions of social exclusion, the Sabha prioritized the following:

Education: The Sabha aimed to “promote the spread of education among the Depressed Classes by opening Hostels or by employing such other means as may seem necessary or desirable.”

Cultural Advancement: Recognizing the importance of fostering a sense of community and shared identity, the Sabha sought to “promote the spread of culture among the Depressed Classes by opening Libraries, Social Centers and Classes or Study Circles.”

Economic Progress: To enable the Depressed Classes to become self-reliant and break free from the cycle of poverty, the Sabha planned to “advance and improve the economic condition of the Depressed Classes by starting Industrial and Agricultural Schools.”

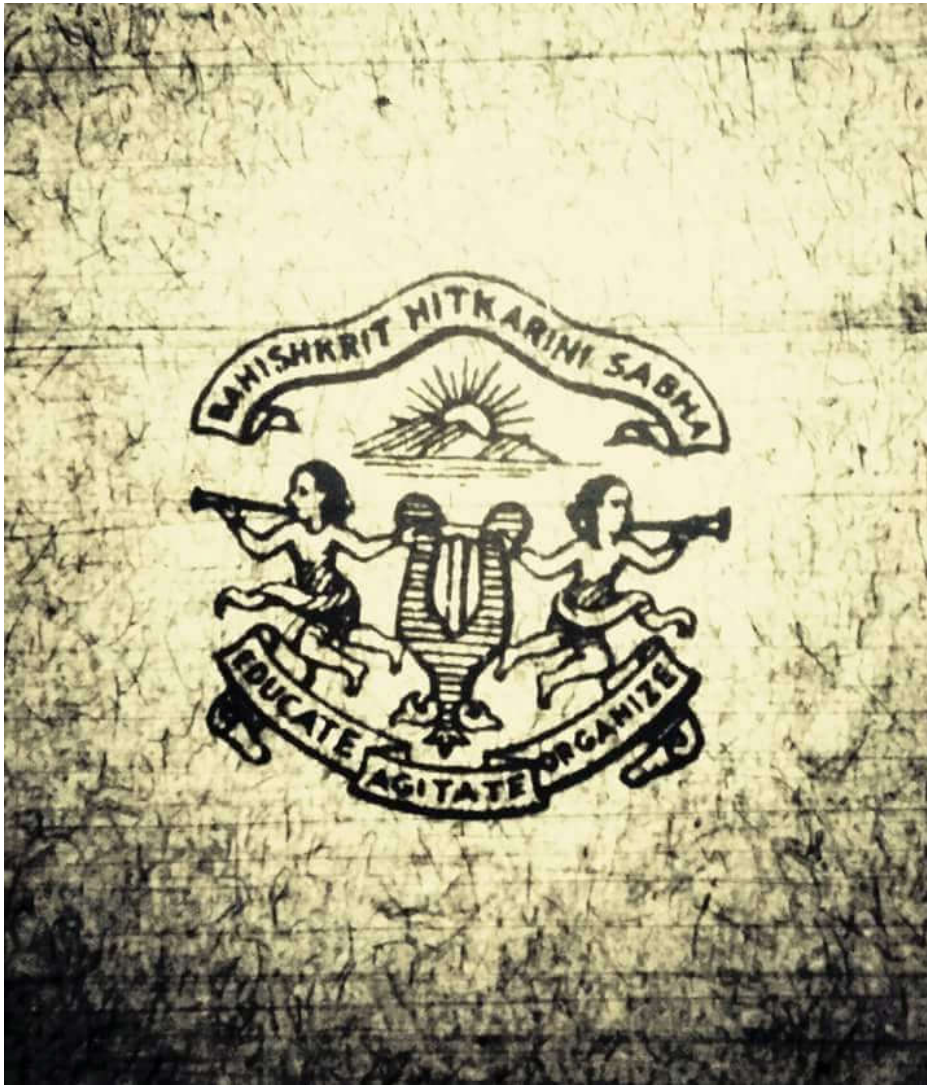
Early Activism: The Mahad Satyagraha:

The Sabha’s commitment to action was evident from its early years. The sources highlight the Mahad Satyagraha of 1927 as a pivotal event in the organization’s history and in the broader struggle for Dalit rights in India. The Satyagraha was a direct response to the denial of access to the Chawdar Tank, a public water source in Mahad, to the Depressed Classes based solely on their caste. This act of discrimination sparked outrage and galvanized the Dalit community to assert their fundamental rights. Under Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s leadership, the Sabha organized a march and conference at Mahad, mobilizing thousands of people to challenge this injustice. The sources describe how around 15,000 volunteers and representatives of the Depressed Classes gathered in Mahad, signifying the growing awareness and mobilization within the community. The Mahad Satyagraha forced Indian society to confront the harsh realities of untouchability. The sources document how even newspapers that typically opposed Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Sabha were compelled to engage with the issue.

By challenging the entrenched caste system and advocating for the fundamental rights of the Depressed Classes, the Sabha paved the way for future social reform movements and legal changes. The Sabha’s actions, particularly the Mahad Satyagraha, sparked public debate and forced a reassessment of deeply ingrained prejudices. This shift in public discourse, though often met with resistance, was a crucial step towards dismantling caste-based discrimination. The Sabha’s legacy extends beyond its immediate actions. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s leadership within the organization, his advocacy for social justice, and his later conversion to Buddhism continue to inspire individuals and movements striving for a more equitable society.

The Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha’s centenary serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice in India. The organization’s commitment to education, cultural advancement, and economic progress, combined with its unwavering stand against untouchability, helped lay the groundwork for a more inclusive and just society.

The Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha laid the foundation for subsequent movements and organizations led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, focusing on the rights and empowerment of the Depressed Classes. Although the Sabha was dissolved on 14th June 1928, its principles and objectives continued to influence social reform movements in India. The Sabha played a crucial role in challenging the deeply entrenched social hierarchies of Indian society. The Sabha's legacy continues to resonate with contemporary struggles for equality and justice, particularly among those historically marginalized within the caste system.



Motto of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha: **'EDUCATE, AGITATE,
ORGANISE'**

(Source: Courtesy from Google Images)



Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with his Activists of Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha
(Source: Courtesy from Google Images)



Dr. Ambedkar with Social Workers

(Source: Courtesy from Google Images)

6.3 FOUNDATION OF BAHISHKRIT HITKARINI SABHA

In March 1924 to launch social movement for the uplift of the Untouchables Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar convened a meeting on 9 March 1924, at the Damodar Hall, Bombay, to consider the desirability of establishing a central institution for removing difficulties of the untouchables and placing their grievances before government. After

much discussion and debate, it was resolved that an institution be established and according it was founded on 20 July 1924, under the title 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha' and was registered under Act XXI of 1860.

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The Aims and Objects of the Sabha

- a) To promote the spread of education among the Depressed Class by opening Hostels or by employing such other means as may seem necessary or desirable.
- (b) To promote the spread of culture among the Depressed study circles.
- (c) To advance and improve the economic condition of the Depressed Classes by starting Industrial and Agricultural schools.
- (d) To represent the grievances of the Depressed Classes.

Members

- 1. Sri Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad – The President of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha
- 2. Meyer Nissim – Vice-President
- 3. J.P. – Vice-President
- 4. Rustomji Jinwala – Vice-President
- 5. G.K. Nariman – Solicitor
- 6. Dr. R.P. Paranjpye – Solicitor
- 7. Dr. V.P. Chavan – Solicitor
- 8. B. G. Kher – Solicitor
- 9. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The Chairman of the managing committee
- 10. S.N. Shivtarkar – Secretary
- 11. N.T.Jadhav – Treasure

6.4 THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SABHA

The Constitution of the Sabha must have been followed as per the provisions already existed. It must have been applied in the Format available with the Charity Commissioner those days which even today has been prescribed by the office of the Charity Commissioner. Normally, it called as the Memorandum of Association and we find here the original documents from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches as below:

- I. The name of the Society will be: — “Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha”
- II. Its activities will be confined to the Presidency of Bombay.
- III. The Head Office of the Sabha will be situated in Bombay.

IV. The aims and objects of the Sabha will be—

- (a) To promote the spread of education among the Depresses Classes by opening Hostels or by employing such other means as may seem necessary or desirable.
- (b) To promote the spread of culture among the Depressed Classes by opening Libraries, Social Centres and Classes or Study Circles.

- (c) To advance and improve the economic condition of the Depressed Classes by starting Industrial and Agricultural Schools.
- (d) To represent the grievances of the Depressed Classes.
- (e) To organize or help any club, association or any movement calculated to bring about the general enlightenment, social rise or economic betterment of the Depressed Classes.

V. Activities Proposed: —

- (1) To purchase, hire, lease or otherwise acquire any rights and privileges necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Sabha.
- (2) To erect, construct, alter and maintain any building or buildings necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Sabha.
- (3) To sell, improve, develop, exchange, lease, mortgage, dispose of, turn to account, manage or otherwise deal with all or any part of the property or rights and privileges of the Sabha.
- (4) To accept donations or property for general or specific purposes of the Sabha on condition or conditions not inconsistent with the aims and objects of the Sabha.
- (5) To amalgamate with or incorporate within itself any Society or Association with aims and objects similar to the aims and objects of the Sabha.

VI. The Administration and Governing Body:

- (i) Board of Trustees (ii) Council of Management (iii) Board of Control appointed in accordance with the rules of the Sabha.

VII. Quorum at any meeting of the Board of Trustees, Council or Management and Board of Control,

The quorum will consist of 10, 7 and 15 members of those bodies respectively. No quorum will be necessary for any adjourned meeting.

VIII. Remuneration or Pecuniary Benefits to Members:

No member of the Board of Trustees, Council of Management and Board of Control will be entitled to any pecuniary benefit from the properties and funds of the Sabha by reason of its being such member of the Board of Trustees, Council of Management or Board of Control.

RULES OF THE SABHA

- 1. Any person either male or female who is above the age of 18 years will be eligible for membership of the Sabha.

2. Any person desirous of becoming a member of the Sabha may apply on the form of application provided for that purpose.
3. The Council of Management will have power to admit or refuse any application for membership.

4. Powers of General Body:

The General Body of the Sabha will have power of dismissing any member of the Sabha for gross misconduct endangering the interest of the Sabha by a vote of 3/4 of the members present at the meeting.

5. Classification of the Members and Criteria:

- (i) Patrons: Those who pay Rs. 3,000 or more in one sum or in such suitable instalments as the Council of Management may approve of.
- (ii) Supporters: Those who pay Rs. 2,000 or more in one sum or in such suitable instalments as the Council of Management may approve of.
- (iii) Sympathisers: Those who pay Rs. 1000 or more in one sum or in such suitable instalments as the Council of Management may approve of.
- (iv) Life Members: Those who pay Rs. 500 or more in one sum or in such suitable instalments as the Council of Management may approve of.
- (v) Associate Members: Those who pay Rs. 200 or more in one sum or in such suitable instalments as the Council of Management may approve of.

(vi) Ordinary Members:

These will be of the following classes:

A : Those who pay Rs. 25 per Year

B : " " " Rs. 10 " "

C : " " " Rs. 5 " "

D : " " " Rs. 3 " "

E : " " " Re. 1 " "

6. Board of Trustees:

There will be 16 Trustees of the Sabha for life in whom will be vested all the immoveable and moveable property of the Sabha as well as all the funds of the Sabha in whatsoever form. Of these 16 at least 4 shall be residents of Bombay.

7. Election to the Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees will be elected in the first instance by the General Body of the members of the Sabha. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Trustees by death, resignation, incapacity or residence abroad will be filled up by a vote 3/4 of the General Body of the members of the Sabha assembled for that purpose within 6 months from the occurrence thereof.

8. The Board of Trustees will at all times contain a member or members of the Mahar, Chambhar, Mang and Dhed communities and shall be so constituted that it would have 4 Trustees from Konkan, 2 from Gujarat, 2 from Kanerese and 8 from other districts of the Bombay Presidency.

9. All property moveable and immovable and all funds will be held in the name of the Trustees.

10. The Council of Management will submit an annual Budget of Expenditure appropriated under convenient major and minor Heads with the Expenditure to be incurred thereon in the coming year and the same shall come into operation as passed by the Trustees. Provided that the Council of Management may submit supplementary budget at any time during the course of the year.

11. The Trustees will meet at least once a year within three months from the close of the previous official year of the Sabha for the purpose of passing the Annual Budget and will meet as often as may be necessary for passing supplementary budget on the requisition of the Council of Management. At all meeting of the Board of Trustees the majority vote will prevail.

12. At all Budget meeting of the Board of Trustees the Chairman of the Council, the General Secretary and the Treasurer will sit as additional members. Provided that none of them will have the right to vote unless they are themselves Trustees.

13. There will be previous notice of one month for every meeting of the Board of Trustees and for every meeting of the General Body of the members of the Sabha for the purpose of electing a Trustee.

14. The Trustees will have the right by a resolution du authorise that certain properties and funds will be vested in or dealt with in the name of one or more of their members.

15. The Trustees will have the right of voting on any proposition or question by circular issued in that behalf by the General Secretary. All Resolutions so voted on by circular will be embodied in the minute book of the Board of Trustees.

16. The Trustees may choose from among themselves a chairman for their meeting from time to time who will sign the minutes of the meeting before the meeting is dissolved.

17. The Secretary of the Sabha will be ex-officio Secretary of the Board of Trustees and shall prepare the minutes of every meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Council of Management

18. The Council of Management will be the executive of the Sabha for the official year and will consist of 20 members of the Sabha constituted as follows:

- (i) Four elected every year by the Board of Trustees from such among themselves as are residents at Bombay.
- (ii) Twelve elected every year by the General Body of the Sabha.
- (iii) Four co-opted every year by the 16 composed of (i) and (ii) from among the Depressed Classes members of the Sabha.

19. Any vacancy occurring in the Council of Management by death, resignation, incapacity or residence abroad of any member thereof will be filled up by the remaining members of the Council by a resolution duly passed at a meeting to be called for the purpose.

20. The Council will have the power:

- (a) To hold and manage the funds and pro
- (b) To hire, purchase or otherwise, acquire and dispose of properties and materials for the benefit of the institutions and activities of the Sabha in the name of the Trustees of the Sabha.
- (c) To organize any activity or open any institution falling within the aims and objects of the Sabha.
- (d) To abolish any institution or activity permanently or temporarily: provided that no Hostel will be abolished permanently or temporarily except by the vote of the 4/5th of the Trustees of the Sabha.
- (e) To open or close Branches of the Sabha wherever and whenever it appears advisable to do so.
- (f) To appoint the staff or other workers from time to time and fix their salary and terms of employment and to suspend and dismiss them when necessary.
- (g) To frame, alter and amend bye-laws regulating the various activities of the Sabha and the conduct and management thereof and the bye-laws to frame will have the force of rules until the same are amended or abrogated by the Board of Control.
- (h) To declare a vacancy if a Member of the Council fails to attend four meetings of the Council in succession.
- (i) To maintain a regular list of all contributors.

- (j) To arrange for the convening of the meeting of the General Body of the members of the Sabha and the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Control.

21. The Council will at its first meeting elect from its own members one Chairman, one General Secretary and one Treasurer. Besides these the Council may elect one or more of its members to act as Assistant Secretaries or Organizing Secretaries to be in charge of specific functions or activities. Any vacancies in the post of these office bearers occurring during the course of the year may be filled at the next ordinary monthly meeting by the remaining members of the Council by a resolution duly passed at a meeting to be called for.

22. The Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurers will be jointly responsible for the proper deposit and withdrawal of moneys belonging to the Sabha. They will deposit the moneys in the name of the Trustees of Sabha in the Bank or Banks appointed by the Council.

23. All withdrawals of money will be in strict conformity with the Budget and will be operated upon under the joint signatures of the Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer.

24. The meetings of the Council will be ordinary or special.

25. All receipts and withdrawals of moneys of the Sabha shall be placed before the next ordinary monthly meeting of the Council.

26. Ordinary meeting of the Council will be held on or about the 15th of every month.

27. Any ordinary meeting adjourned for want of quorum will again meet on five days' clear notice on such day as the Chairman or in his absence, the General Secretary may fix.

28. Seven days' clear notice is necessary for the ordinary meeting of the Council and the agenda must be circulated with it.

29. The ordinary meeting of the Council will transact business as under:

- (a) Reading of Minutes of the last meeting.
- (b) Passing of monthly statements of accounts and reports from the institutions, branches of the Sabha and of activities.
- (c) Disposing of letters, proposals and other communications submitted by the Secretaries.
- (d) Deciding upon questions relating to the general administration of the affairs and estate of the Sabha.
- (e) Passing of bills and expenditure incurred.
- (f) Any other business with the permission of the Chairman.

Special Meeting of the Council

30. The Chairman or Secretary may convene a special meeting of the Council at 3 days' notice.

31. Any four members of the Council may, by a written requisition to the General Secretary call for a special Meeting of the Council which will be Summoned by him within 10 days from the receipt of the requisition.

32. The requisition will specify its purpose and the same will be circulated along with the notice of meeting.

33. The rules as to quorum at an ordinary meeting will also apply to the special meetings of the Council.

Chairman: Powers and Functions

34. The Chairman will:

- (a) Preside at all meetings of the Council and in case of equality of votes he shall have a casting vote in addition to his own as a member: Provided that in the absence of the Chairman such member of the Council as may be voted to the chair will preside and will exercise such of the powers of the Chairman as pertain to the conduct of the meeting of the Council.
- (b) decide all questions of order and procedure at the meeting of the Council and his decision will be final
- (c) sign all vouchers
- (d) carry on all foreign correspondence of the Sabha
- (e) communicate to the President and Vice-Presidents the minutes of the business transacted at the ordinary and special meetings of the Council.

General Secretary: Powers and Functions

35. The General Secretary will:

- (a) be responsible for and be in charge of all the records of the Sabha
- b) convene all meetings of the Council, Board of Trustees and the Board of Control whenever necessary, according to Rules of the Sabha and will record minutes of proceedings of their meetings
- (c) call for the monthly statements of accounts and other reports from the heads of institutions and branches of the Sabha and will record minutes of proceedings of their meetings
- (d) carry on the home correspondence of the Sabha

- (e) keep a proper register of the members of the Sabha with their proper addresses
- (f) submit an annual report to the General Meeting of the Sabha.

Treasurer: Powers and Functions

36. The Treasurer will:

- (a) receive all subscriptions and donations collected on behalf of the Sabha and pass receipts for the same
- (b) keep regular books of accounts
- (c) make all disbursements
- (d) prepare and submit to the Council every year a statement of income and expenditure of the Sabha including statements of separate accounts of the various institutions properly audited by the Auditor appointed by the Sabha at the previous Annual General Meeting and forward the same to the Secretary for being annexed to the Annual Report of the Sabha.

Board of Control

37. The Board of Control will be the collective body of the Sabha and will consist of:

- (a) The Trustees of the Sabha
- (b) The workers of the Sabha
- (c) Patrons
- (d) Life members
- (e) Sympathisers
- (f) Associate members
- (g) One representative of every Branch of the Sabha.
- (h) The President, Vice-Presidents, the Chairman, General Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, Organizing Secretaries and the Treasurer.

38. The Board of Control will supervise the management of the affairs of the Sabha by the Council of Management whether or not it is in accordance with the rules and in case of any serious breach the President or any of the Vice- Presidents may call upon the Chairman of the Council to give proper explanation.

39. The President of the Sabha, of his own motion or at the written requisition of 10 members of the Sabha may call upon the Secretary to convene a meeting of the Board of Control which will be summoned within a month and a half from the receipt of the communication of the

President in that behalf. The Council of Management will be bound by the resolution of the Board of Control on the matter in question, if passed by 2/3rd majority of the members present at the meeting.

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40. There shall be previous notice of one month for every meeting of the Board of Control.

41. The President of the Sabha will preside at every meeting of the Board of Control. In his absence, any of the Vice-President present at the meeting may be voted to the Chair.

42. At all meetings of the Board of Control majority vote will prevail except when it is otherwise provided for by these Rules.

43. The General Secretary will be the ex-officio Secretary of the Board of Control and shall be responsible for recording the minutes of the proceedings of the Board which will be prepared and signed by the President before the meeting is dissolved.

General Body of the Sabha

44. There will be held every year in the month of February, a Meeting of the General Body of members of the Sabha.

45. The official year of the Sabha will close on the 31st December and the Annual General Meeting will be held every within two months after the close of the previous official year.

46. Only those members who have paid their subscription will be entitled to vote.

47. There will be a month's previous notice for the meeting of the General Body of the members of the Sabha.

48. The President of the Sabha will preside at the Annual General Meeting of the Sabha. In his absence any of the Vice- President who is voted to the chair may preside.

49. The following business shall be transacted at the Annual General Meeting: —

- (a) To hear and adopt the Annual Report for the past year.
- (b) To elect 12 members for the Council of Management for the coming year.
- (c) To appoint an auditor for the coming year.
- (d) To elect one President and Vice-Presidents, not more than six for the coming year.

50. These articles of association and Rules of Constitution may be altered, amended, repealed or added to at any time by a vote of the 4/5th of the members of the Sabha present at a meeting specially convened for that purpose, provided that the same alteration, amendment, repeal or addition shall not have any force unless it is approved of by 3/4th of the Trustees of the Sabha.

6.5 SUMMARY

The Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha was a Social Organization and the People's Education Society was an educational organization. If we delve into the constitution or Memorandum of Association, we find what kinds of activities had been proposed by the Sabha. The Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha started hostels for the untouchables and Depressed Classes students so that these students will take education as they will have no problem of bread and butter. The Sabha had many members from upper castes as well as from lower caste and some belonged to highly qualified personalities with clean character. Mahad Chawdar Tank Satyagraha, Manusmriti Dahan, representation to Simon Commission had been some of the few activities undertaken by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar under the Sabha.

The People's Education Society was established by him in 1945 and being the labour minister, he did not abuse his position and applied to Department of Education, Government of India for the approval as well as for the funds to grant. He cited the objective reasons to them why such colleges of higher education are the need of the time to educate the Scheduled caste students which were discriminated by the private colleges in Bombay. But in the Constitution of the Society, he did not just propose the admission for the Scheduled caste students alone but to all irrespective of their castes or religion.

Thus, we find the foundation of the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha and the People's Education Society.

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EDUCATIONAL PRESPECTIVES OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Unit Structure

- 6A.0 Objectives
- 6A.1 Introduction
- 6A.2 Establishment of Educational Institutions
- 6A.3 The People's Education Society & Its Institutions
- 6A.4 Application to Dept of Education, Health and Lands, New Delhi
- 6A.5 The People's Education Society & Its Constitution
- 6A.6 Summery
- 6A.7 References

6A.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the philosophy of Dr Ambedkar behind to establish educational institutions.
2. To review the educational contribution of Dr. Ambedkar
3. To know the constitution of people's education society.
4. To analyse the impact of educational Institutions established by Dr Ambedkar

6A.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's educational perspectives are a beacon of hope for the downtrodden and oppressed people in Indian society. He believed that education is the most powerful tool for social and economic change, enabling individuals to challenge inequality and fight against injustice. As Dr. Ambedkar aptly said, "Education is the milk of the tigress. Whoever drinks it will roar," highlighting the transformative potential of education.

Having experienced immense suffering in his early life, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was determined to change the psyche of Indian society. He firmly believed that this transformation could only be achieved through education.

6A.2 Establishment of Educational Institutions by Dr. Ambedkar:

Dr. Ambedkar advocated for accessible education to all, especially Dalits, women, and other oppressed groups, criticizing the brahminical system that historically denied them access to knowledge. He believed in

inculcating values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and moral character among students.

Dr. Ambedkar advocated for quotas for SC/ST students, ensuring access to schools and colleges. But the brahminical system will not allowd such quotas to SC/STs therefore, ee established the People's Education Society, in Mumbai for promoting colleges for Dalits and minorities, such as Siddharth College in Mumbai and Milind College at Aurangabad, now Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.

Dr. Ambedkar saw education as a tool for social liberation, fostering critical thinking to break caste barriers.

Reasons for Establishing Educational Institutions:

1. **Access to Education:** Ambedkar wanted to provide opportunities for Dalits and other marginalized groups to access quality education, which was historically denied to them.
2. **Empowerment:** Education was seen as a means to empower individuals and communities, enabling them to challenge social and economic inequalities.
3. **Social Mobility:** Ambedkar believed that education could help individuals from marginalized communities to improve their socio-economic status and break the cycle of poverty.

6A.3 THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SOCIETY & ITS INSTITUTIONS



(Logo of PES with Courtsey from Google Images)



Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with his the cooperatives of
education sector and the members of People's
Education Society.

(Courtesy from Google Images)

We have already seen in introduction that one of the important educational institutes founded by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on 8th July, 1945 that is The People's Education Society (PES). It is a distinguished educational institution in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a visionary social reformer and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, established PES with the mission to provide education that fosters intellectual, moral, and social democracy. He believed that education was the most effective tool for uplifting marginalized communities, particularly the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and Buddhists.

The society has since grown into a network of educational institutions across Maharashtra and other parts of India. Some of the notable institutions under its umbrella include:

1. Siddharth College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai, 1946.
2. Siddharth Night High School, Mumbai, 1946.
3. Siddharth College of Commerce & Economics, Mumbai, 1953.
4. Siddharth College of Law, Mumbai, 1956.
5. Dr. Ambedkar College of Commerce & Economics, Wadala, Mumbai, 1956.
6. Dr. Ambedkar College of Law, Wadala, Mumbai, 1971.
7. Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Institute of Management & Legal, 1978.
8. Research Centre, Wadala, Mumbai, 1990.
9. Dr. Ambedkar College of Arts & Commerce, Yerwada, Pune, 1985.
10. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Mahad, Dist. – Raigad, 1963.

11. Milind College of Arts, Aurangabad, 1950.
12. Milind College of Science, Aurangabad, 1950.
13. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts & Commerce, Aurangabad, 1963.
14. Dr Ambedkar College of Law, Aurangabad, 1968.
15. PES's College of Physical Education, Aurangabad, 1984.
16. PES's College of Engineering, Aurangabad, 1995.
17. PES's Polytechnic, Aurangabad, 2010.
18. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar College of Education, Bodh Gaya, Bihar, 2008.

Apart from the above higher educational institutes, the society also operates several schools, night schools, junior colleges in Navi Mumbai, Nanded, Pandharpur, Kolhapur Bangalore and Bodh Gaya (Bihar). It also operates Buddhist Seminary as well and school in Bangalore.

The society's headquarters is located at Anand Bhavan, 348, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Mumbai - 400001.

6A.4 APPLICATION TO DEPT OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND LANDS, NEW DELHI

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar submitted an application to the Government of India for a loan for setting up a college in Bombay. The days when he applied, he was the Labour Member i.e. Labour Minister in the Viceroy's Executive Council. The application was as below:

To,

The Hon'ble Sardar Sir Jogendra Singh,
Member-in-Charge of the Department of Education,
Health and Lands, New Delhi.

Sir,

I beg to submit this application to the Government of India for a loan without interest Rs. 6,00,000 (Rupees Six Lakhs) for setting up College in Bombay for the promotion of Education among the Scheduled Castes and pray that it may be favourably considered.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar cited the report of The Hartog Committee, 1930 which examined the condition of education in India and its spread among the various communities and summarized the position regarding the spread of education among the Scheduled Castes which were then called the Depressed Classes. He brought the fact to the notice of the Education Dept that the Departments in the Government of India have not been able to fill the quota of the 8 1/2 p.c. of the vacancies reserved for the Scheduled Castes by the Government of India by its Resolution of 1943

due to insufficiency of qualified candidates is an indication that the condition of education among the Scheduled Castes reported to be existing in 1929 has not materially altered during the interval.

He wrote that from the point of view of raising the status of the Scheduled Castes and from the point of view of giving them social security from those elements in Indian Society which are hostile to them higher education particularly College education is more important to them than primary education. The welfare of the Scheduled Castes depends entirely upon a sympathetic public service and that the public service if it is to be sympathetic must be representative of the different element in the national life of the country, and particularly of the Scheduled Castes. While pointing out the need of the executive posts to the Scheduled Castes, he wrote that the attainment of Executive post, it is obvious, requires a high degree of education. He also brought Dropout rate of the Scheduled Castes reaching to college education.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar listed out the reasons of drop out in the application namely i) poverty, ii) difficulty in getting admission in a college, iii) is absence of freeships and iv) want of hostel accommodation. He wrote the College education is in the private hands and most of them were communal in their organization and in the matter of their staff. So, they refuse admissions to the Scheduled Caste students.

Further he mentions,

“I propose to make a beginning by starting a College in Bombay which will have such an aim and will endeavour to carry it through. According to my calculations it will require a sum of about Rupees Six Lakhs to set up such a college. In pre- war time it could have been done with a lesser amount. But having regard to the rise in the cost of material I do not think that the College could be stalled on anything less than this amount. As to the raising of this amount it is impossible to expect the Scheduled Castes who are the poorest community in India to be able to raise this amount. I am therefore obliged to request the Government of India for a loan of the amount without interest to be repaid by suitable instalments. The properties of the proposed College will be mortgaged to Government as a security for the loan.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar mentioned some of the particulars as below:

“I mention below some important particulars about the proposed College in order to indicate how it will function: —

I. It will be managed by a duly constituted body registered under the Charitable Societies Act,

II. It will have two sides Arts and Science.

III. It will be non-Communal in as much as :

- (i) It will be open to students of all Castes and creeds, only it will pay special regard to the educational interests of the Scheduled Castes students.
- (ii) The teaching staff will be mixed staff. There will be no bar on the ground of race, religion or community.
- (iii) Subject to the Regulations of the Universities in India it will be open to Scheduled Castes students of all Provinces without any kind of discrimination.

He further wrote about the selection of the place for the college at Bombay-

“I have chosen Bombay as a place for the College for three reasons. Firstly, I propose to take upon myself the duties of the Manager of the College and also take part in teaching as soon as I am free from the responsibilities of my present office. In the initial stage I feel I must take these responsibilities on my own shoulders. This I can do better if the College is located in Bombay. Secondly, there is an acute need for more Colleges to provide College Education to the enormous number of students who have now congregated in Bombay and who cannot find admission in any of the existing Colleges. According to press reports applications for opening ten new Colleges are pending before the Senate of the University of Bombay which shows how vast in the number of students in want of admission. With the prospect of drawing a large number of these into the College I feel confident that the College will pave its way and there is every chance of the College showing profit. Thirdly, having been a professor of Economics in the Sydenham College of Commerce, Bombay, Principal of the Government Law College, Bombay, a Member of the Senate and Syndicate of the Bombay University I feel that I can get recognition for the proposed College more readily from the Bombay University than from a university outside that province.”

He also, writes about the location he chose from Bombay- “I have selected a site for the College with an approximate area of six acres. It belongs to the Bombay Municipality. It is the only site left in Bombay which can be regarded as suitable for a college. If I lose the site, I shall have to abandon my project which will be a great calamity. I can proceed with the negotiations only on the assurance that I can raise funds which is I have said I can do only by way of loan from the Government of India. I do not propose to draw the amount of loan immediately. It will remain with the Government of India. It will be drawn as and when need to draw arises. As I am anxious to secure the site, I shall be grateful if my application is granted without delay.”

1st February 1945,
22, Prithviraj Road,
New Delhi.

I remain,
Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) B. R. Ambedkar.

6A.5 THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SOCIETY & ITS CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the Society namely the Memorandum of Association as per the then format of Charity Commissioner was followed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and accordingly applied for the registration of the society.

Memorandum of Association of
THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SOCIETY MUMBAI
(Estd. 8th July, 1945)

Founder: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar M.A. Ph.D., D. Sc, LL.D., (Columbia). D. Litt., (Osmania) Barrister-at-Law.

Head Office: Anand Bhavan, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Fort, Mumbai-400 023.

Registered under the Society's Registration Act XXI of 1860. Registration No. 1375 of 1945-46 Date 9th July, 1945 and the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 (Bombay XXIX of 1950) Registration No. F 303 (Bom.) Dated: 2nd June 1953.

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SOCIETY

Board of Trustees

1. Shri K. B. Talwatkar (Trustee)
2. Hon'ble Shri K. H. Ranganath (Trustee)
3. Shri S. S. Rege (Trustee)

Members of the Governing Body

1. Dr. S. P. Gaikwad, G.C.A.M. (Chairman)
2. Shri S. S. Rege, B. A., Dip. LIB. Sc. (Dy. Chairman)
3. Shri K. B. Talwatkar, M. A., LL.M., S.E.M.
4. Dr. P. T. Borale, B. A., LL.B., Ph. D. (Law)
5. Shri M. S. Moray, B. A., LL.M.
6. Prof. S. K. Mohagaonkar, M.Com.
7. Hon'ble Shri K. H. Ranganath, B.Sc., B.L.
8. Padmashri Dr. M. L. Shahare, M.Sc., Ph.D.
9. Prof. S. L. Khot, M. A., LL.M.,
10. Prof. Arun M. Donde, M.A., LL.B., Ex. MLC

Secretariate

Prin. D. J. Gangurde, M.Com., LL.M., Secretary

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF THE PEOPLE'S EDUCATION SOCIETY, MUMBAI

Name and objects of the society

1. The society shall be called the 'People's Education Society' and shall be managed and administered by the Buddhists.

2. The office of the Society shall be at Bombay or at such other place as may be decided from time to time.

3. The aims and objects of the society shall be :-

- (a) To provide facilities for education, secondary, collegiate, technical, physical and the like;
- (b) To start, establish, conduct and/or aid educational and Buddhist religious associations such as schools, colleges, vihars, hostels, libraries, playgrounds, Buddhist Institutes etc. at suitable places in the State of Maharashtra as well as any other parts of India;
- (c) To provide facilities for education of the poor and the Buddhists;
- (d) To create and foster general interest in education among the Scheduled Castes and Buddhists who are converted from amongst the Scheduled Castes and in particular to give them special facilities, scholarships and freeships for higher education;
- (e) To promote science, Buddhist and other literature and fine arts and to impart useful knowledge in comparative studies of religion;
- (f) To purchase, take on lease or otherwise acquire property for the Society and to invest and deal with the moneys of the Society in such manner as may from time to time be determined;
- (g) To construct, maintain, rebuild, repair, alter, replace or reinstate houses, vihars, buildings or works for the purpose of the society;
- (h) To sell, dispose of, improve, develop, exchange, lease, mortgage or otherwise alienate or deal with all or any property of the Society;
- (i) To co-operate, or affiliate the Society or any Institution or Institutions run by or belonging to the Society with a view to securing further advancement of the aims and objects of the Society especially of Buddhists;
- (j) To raise money with or without security for carrying out any of the propose, aims and objects of the Society;
- (k) To procure the Society to be registered or recognized in any state in India;
- (l) To do all other lawful things and acts as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of any of the aforesaid aims and objects.

II - Subscribers and patrons

4. Any person paying Rupees ten per year as subscription to the Society shall be eligible to be enrolled as a subscriber of the Society and shall be entitled to the privileges of the subscriber.

5. Any person paying a lump sum donation of Rs. 500 or more to the Society shall be eligible as a patron of the Society and shall be entitled to the privileges of a patron.

III - Control and management

6. The Society shall have: -

- (i) A Governing Body;
- (ii) A Board of Trustees;
- (iii) A General (originally managing) Council; And
- (iv) An Executive Committee for every College, Vihar, School or other institution or a group thereof as the Governing Body may decide for the Management of its affairs.

7. The Governing Body shall consist of eleven

(a) The Governing Body shall have power to invite any person or persons to be ex-officio members of the Governing Body for per poses specified in a special resolution making such appointments. Such a person shall have no right to vote on any question which falls outside the scope or purpose for which he has been appointed. Where any dispute arises as to whether the question falls within the scope or the purpose, the decision of the Chairman shall be final.

8. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three persons appointed by the Governing Body from among its own members. Of these, at least two shall belong to Buddhists converted amongst the Scheduled Castes.

9. All the properties and funds of the Society shall vest in the Board of Trustees, save as herein otherwise provided.

9. (a) The Board of Trustees shall have the rights to sue and be sued on behalf of the Society in respect of the properties and funds of the Society.

10. (1) There shall be a General Council to supervise and co-ordinate the work of all institutions of the Society. The General Council shall consist of not less than fifteen members nominated by the Governing Body. Out of these 15 members 11 shall be from the Governing Body of whom 8 shall be from the Buddhists who are converted from amongst the Scheduled Caste members of the Governing Body. The rest shall be from the subscribers and patrons.

(2) Unless otherwise provided by the Governing Body the head of every institution will be an Ex-officio member of the General Council.

(3) The Resolutions of the General Council shall be recommendatory only.

11. For every College, Vihar, School

appointed by the Governing Body, one of whom shall be the Dean or Principal of the College or School or Institution, the Registrar of the institution, not less than two from the Buddhists who are converted from the Scheduled Castes and one who in the opinion of the Governing Body is an Educationist.

12. The Chairman of the Governing body, who shall be Buddhist, shall be an Ex-officio member and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, General (Originally Managing) Council and all Executive Committees. He will be a member of these Bodies in addition to the number of members specified in the above clauses.

12. (a) (1) The Executive authority of the Society shall vest in Chairman.
(2) All deeds, documents and assurances requiring to be executed by or on behalf of the Society may be executed by the Chairman alone and shall be binding on the Society.

13. The supreme control and Governance of the Society, its institutions, its property and its funds shall be vested in the Governing Body.

14. The first members of the Governing Body shall be: -

1. The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc, Barrister-at-Law, New Delhi.
2. Rao Bahadur, N. Shivraj, B.A., B.L., M.L.A., Madras.
3. Daulatrao Gulaji Jadhav, B.A., LL.B., Bombay.
4. Raja Ram Bhole, B.Sc, LL.B., Poona.
5. J. H. Subbiah, B.A., Secunderabad.
6. Hirjibhai Khushalbai Patel, B.A., LL.B., Bombay.
7. G. T. Meshram, New Delhi.
8. Rao Bahadur S, K. Bole, Bombay.
9. M. V. Donde, B.A., Principal, Gokhale Education Society's High School, Parel, Bombay.
10. S. C. Joshi, M.A., LL.B., New Delhi.
11. M. B. Samarth, Barrister-at-Law, Bombay.

The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar shall be the first Chairman of the Governing Body and after him he shall always be a Buddhist.

15. The membership of the Governing Body and Board of Trustees may terminate either on death, incapacity, resignation or removal.

16. The term of the office of the members of the General (Originally Managing) Council and of the members of the Executive Committee other than the Dean or Principal and Registrar shall be for three years unless terminated by death, incapacity, resignation or removal. A person whose term of office has expired will be eligible for renomination. The Dean or Principal and Registrar shall continue as members of the Executive Committee so long as they hold office as Dean or Principal or Registrar.

17. The Governing Body shall have power to remove any member of the Governing body, of the Board of Trustees, of the General (Originally Managing) Council and of any Executive Committee from the body provided that three- fourth of the members of the Governing Body present at a meeting specially called for the purpose vote in favour of his removal.

18. The present Chairman of the Governing Body shall appoint or nominate his successor.

19. In case there is no valid nomination of the successor to the present Chairman, or the person so nominated refuses or fails to accept or ceases to hold the post of any reason whatsoever the Chairman shall be elected by the remaining members of the Governing Body.

20. Subject to the provision herein contained all vacancies in the Office of the other members of the Governing body, the Board of Trustees, the General (Originally Managing) Council or the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Governing Body provided that a vacancy of Buddhist converted from the Scheduled Castes member shall be filled by a person belonging to Buddhist who is converted from amongst the Scheduled Castes only and no other.

21. The Chairman of the governing Body shall be Executive Officer of the Governing Body and will act in consultation with the members of the Governing Body in matters of General Policy and finances.

22. (i) The Chairman may appoint a member of the Governing Body to act as the Deputy Chairman in his absence and delegate to him such authority as he may choose to do.

(ii) The Chairman may also appoint a person to act as the Secretary of the Society and prescribe in writing the duties of the Secretary, his salary and term of his office.

(iii) The Governing Body may also appoint from among themselves one member of the General Secretary of the Society. His term of office shall be three years.

23. The Governing Body may appoint necessary staff for carrying on its affairs and also for running its institutions, fix their scales or pay and service conditions and frame standing orders or rules for the guidance and directions of the staff, authorities and Bodies of the Society and may frame Regulations defining their functions, powers and duties.

24. For each college, Vihar, School or Institution or a group thereof as the Governing Body may decide, the Governing Body may appoint a Registrar.

25. Subject to the superintendence and control of the Chairman, the Registrar will work under the head of the institution. He will perform all the duties pertaining to the day-to-day administration of the institution in accordance with the standing orders and regulations of the Society.

IV - Funds of the Society

26. The funds of the society shall consist of grants, donations, subscriptions, fees, gifts, etc. received from time to time.

27. Secretary shall maintain proper books of accounts and other documents of the income and expenditure of the Society. The accounts of the Society shall be periodically audited by the auditors recognised under the Indian Companies Act and appointed by the Governing Body.

28. The Governing Body shall appoint from amongst the members of the General Council and Executive Committee, or Committee, a Secretary who shall carry on the general work of the Council and of the Executive Committee or Committee respectively. The tenure of the office of the Secretary shall be three years.

29. An annual statement of receipts and expenditure of the Society shall be drawn up by the Secretary of the Society and a consolidated statement shall be kept at the Office of the Society and shall be opened at all times for inspection of the members of the Governing Body, Board of the Trustee, General (Originally Managing) Council and Executive Committee, Patrons and Subscribers.

V - General

30. The Governing Body and other Bodies shall discharge their duties and exercise their powers, authorities and functions in accordance with the Articles annexed to this Memorandum (Schedule - A).

31. The Governing Body shall have power to alter, amend, add or modify the said Articles as may be required by circumstances, provided always that such alteration, amendments, additions, or modifications shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum.

32. This Governing Body shall have power to alter, amend, add or modify this Memorandum save and except provision regarding the composition of the Governing Body, the Board of Trustees, the General (Original Managing) Council and the proportion of representation on each such body of the members of Buddhists who are converted from amongst the Scheduled Castes, the provision regarding the term of the office the first Chairman, the ex-officio membership of the other bodies of the Chairman, contained in clauses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 20, and 21 thereof provided that three-fourth of the members of the Governing Body present at the meeting specially called for the purpose vote for such alteration, amendment , addition or modification of the Memorandum,

Signed
B. R. Ambedkar.
S. K. Bole.
M.V. Donde.
S.C. Joshi.
M. B. Samarth.
D. G. Jadhav.
H. K. Patel.

9th July, 1945.

SCHEDULE “A”

**ARTICLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION
OF THE PEOPLE’S EDUCATION SOCIETY**

1. These Articles shall be called the People’s Education Society’s Articles.
2. The Governing Body shall meet every six months to receive and consider reports from all institutions and bodies under its control. The other bodies shall hold their meeting once in a quarter and as often as may, from time to time, be necessary for the transaction of the business of the Society, its institutions, etc. as the case may be.
3. The Governing Body shall hold a meeting to be called the Annual General Meeting ordinarily in the month of April each year, at which the General Secretary shall submit his annual Statement of Accounts and a report of the work and activities of the Society.
4. The Chairman of the Governing Body in his discretion or on a requisition of any three members may, at the time, summon a special meeting of the Governing Body, Board of Trustees, General Council or Executive Committee as the case may be for any cause that seems to him or them to be sufficient.
5. Notices, in writing, of every meeting whether general, special or adjourned shall be delivered or sent through post to each member ordinarily seven clear days before the date of the meeting. But in the case of an adjourned meeting the notice may be of such duration as the period between the date of the original and adjourned meeting will permit. A notice of a meeting shall ordinarily state and place, date and hour of the meeting and the work to be transacted and a notice of special meeting shall further state the specific matter to be discussed thereat.
6. The number of members required to constitute a quorum shall be four for each body for the time being. The number of members required to constitute a quorum shall be half of the total number of each body for the time being.

6.(a) Every member of the Governing Body or of a Committee of an institution of the Society shall attend regularly the meeting of the Governing Body or of the Committee as the case may be and in the event of his inability to attend such a meeting, he shall ask in writing for permission to be absent from the meeting.
7. If a quorum shall not have assembled within half an hour after the time appointed for any meeting the members or member present may adjourn. A meeting may be adjourned by the Chairman upon the adoption of a resolution to that effect. If at such adjourned meeting a quorum is not present the members present shall be a quorum.

8. The Chairman of the Governing Body shall preside at the meeting of those bodies. Each Body shall at its First meeting in April elect a Vice-Chairman for the year who shall preside in the absence of the Chairman. When both Chairman and the Vice Chairman are absent the members shall elect a Chairman for the meeting from among themselves.
9. Unless otherwise provided for in the Memorandum, every matter shall be determined by the majority of votes of the members present and voting on the question. The Chairman shall have a casting vote whether or not he shall have previously voted on the same question, but no member shall give more than one vote.
10. Any resolution passed by the Governing Body, General Council or Executive Committee may be rescinded or varied from time to time by the members at any other meeting of the Body concerned.
11. The Governing Body may, at any meeting, appoint a person or a Committee for making an enquiry or for transacting any business; but every act and proceeding of the person or the Committee shall be submitted to a meeting of the Governing Body for approval and, shall not be binding upon the Society until approved of by the Governing Body.
12. Each Body shall maintain a minute-book Record of entry into office of a member and of the proceeding of the meetings of Bodies shall be entered in the minute-book and shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting either at the conclusion thereof or at some future time if they shall have been confirmed.
13. Full account shall be kept in proper books of account, to be provided for the purpose of all moneys received and paid respectively on account of the Society and of its institution such book of accounts shall be made up for each year and shall duly audited by qualified auditors, be examined and passed by the Governing Body at their ordinary meeting in the ensuing year or at some other meeting appointed for the purpose and shall thereupon be signed by the Chairman of the meeting.
14. A list shall be maintained of the subscribers and patrons of the Society.
15. An account for the purpose of the Society shall be open and kept with bankers selected by the Governing Body. Every sum of money received on account of the Society shall, without undue delay, be paid in to the credit of that account unless otherwise expressly ordered by the Chairman.
16. All cheques and orders for the payment of money shall be signed by the Chairman of the Governing Body or by a person or persons appointed in that behalf by the Governing Body.

Certified to be a correct copy of the Articles.

5th July, 1945.

B. R. Ambedkar

D. G. Jadhav

S. C. Joshi

For Branches of the institution at various places, see Appendix—XII

6A.6 SUMMARY

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's educational perspectives continue to inspire and empower marginalized communities. His emphasis on education as a fundamental right, secular education, and critical thinking remains relevant today, offering a vision for a more equitable and just society. By embracing Ambedkar's ideas, we can work towards creating an education system that truly serves the needs of all individuals, regardless of their background or caste.

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar established educational institutions to empower marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, and promote social equality. He believed that education was key to challenging caste-based discrimination and achieving social mobility.

Dr. Ambedkar's educational institutions continue to play a vital role in promoting education and empowerment among marginalized communities. They serve as a testament to his commitment to social equality and his vision for a more just and inclusive society.

6A.7 REFERENCES

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PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

a) Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches on Human Rights Issues

Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objective
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 What are Human Rights?
- 7.3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- 7.4 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision of Human Dignity
- 7.5 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Perception of Human Rights
- 7.6 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Movement for Human Rights
- 7.7 Upholding Human Rights Through the Indian Constitution
- 7.8 Human Rights in the Labor Movement
- 7.9 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Women Empowerment
- 7.10 Summary
- 7.11 Question
- 7.12 References

7.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept and significance of human rights as a universal principle and its historical evolution.
2. To analyze the alignment between the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of human dignity and equality.
3. To explore Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's perception of human rights and his contributions to the empowerment of marginalized communities.

4. To examine how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar upheld human rights through the Indian Constitution and its provisions, including labor and women's rights.
5. To evaluate the role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's movements in promoting human rights, focusing on labor rights, women's empowerment, and social justice.

Perspective on human rights of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Human rights transcend all other rights as inherent and inalienable rights of every individual. The codification of these rights gained momentum after adopting the United Nations Charter in 1945, culminating in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, which stands as the first globally codified document on human rights. However, the significant contribution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to the protection and promotion of human rights has often been overshadowed or inadequately explored in scholarly discourse.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to human rights are narrowly interpreted through the lens of caste emancipation. Yet, his perspective on human rights was far more expansive, advocating for equality, dignity, and justice for all individuals, irrespective of caste, class, or gender. His efforts were not limited to Dalit emancipation but extended to ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms for all citizens, which demanded a thorough and nuanced academic exploration.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's human rights vision is evident in various historical instances, most notably in his role as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. The Constitution, India's first codified document on human rights, safeguards the rights of all individuals, embodying the universal principles of equality, justice, and freedom. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for human rights and his intellectual contributions remains a subject of intense debate and discussion in global academic circles, underscoring the relevance of his ideas in contemporary human rights discourse.

7.2 WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the fundamental rights and freedoms inherently belonging to every individual by being human. These rights exist to protect people from vulnerability, ensure fairness, and promote a just and equitable society. Universal in nature, human rights apply equally to all individuals, regardless of nationality, race, religion, or social status, and are relevant across all times and places. Human rights reflect the need for individuals to live with dignity and thrive, both personally and as part of a community. However, this need is often denied due to factors such as social injustices, exploitation, oppression, discrimination, and natural disasters, leading to suffering and inequality.

The concept of human rights has evolved, stemming from the recognition of these injustices and the need to address them. Today, human rights are upheld as a set of moral and legal principles, enshrined in both national and international laws, to protect individuals and ensure fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all. These rights are not just ethical ideals but are essential for building a society that values human dignity and promotes collective well-being.

7.3 UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, is a landmark document that enshrines the fundamental rights and freedoms inherent to all human beings. Created in the aftermath of the atrocities of World War II, the UDHR sought to prevent such violations of human dignity and justice from recurring and to promote a global standard of equality, freedom, and dignity. The drafting process of the UDHR was led by a diverse committee, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and reflects a collective vision of universal human rights. It transcends distinctions of race, religion, gender, or nationality, affirming the equality and inherent worth of all individuals.

The UDHR comprises a preamble and 30 articles, encompassing a wide range of rights:

Civil and Political Rights: These include the right to life, freedom from torture, slavery, and discrimination, freedom of speech, and the right to a fair trial.

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: These include the right to work, education, healthcare, and an adequate standard of living.

The UDHR has become the foundation for modern human rights laws and has inspired numerous national constitutions, international treaties, and human rights movements worldwide. It remains a guiding principle for ensuring justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

7.4 THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VISION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948, marked a transformative moment in history when nations—ranging from global powers to newly independent states—collectively committed to principles of justice, equality, and human dignity. Yet, the pursuit of human rights did not begin here. The struggle for dignity and equality predates the UDHR and has been championed by visionaries such as Buddha, Thomas Paine, Jyotirao Phule, and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, whose tireless efforts reshaped the understanding of justice and human dignity. For centuries, exploited communities were

often labeled as “less fortunate,” perpetuating inequality under the guise of religion and tradition. Born into an oppressed community, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar overcame such systemic discrimination through perseverance and education. His academic experiences at Columbia University and the London School of Economics shaped his global perspective on freedom, equality, and human rights. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s vision went far beyond the rigid confines of India’s caste system; he emphasized modernity, reason, and scholarship over traditional customs.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar identified the varna system as discriminatory and a deeply entrenched social structure that deprived individuals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. These values, which he regarded as essential for societal reform, brought him into ideological conflict with Mahatma Gandhi, who upheld the caste-based varna system as part of Hindu tradition. Gandhi viewed the Shastras (Hindu scriptures) as immutable and justified caste-based duties, including practices like scavenging, which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar vehemently opposed as dehumanizing. This clash led to Ambedkar’s powerful declaration:

“Though I was born a Hindu, I shall not die a Hindu.”

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, true freedom for Dalits and other oppressed communities was more critical than political independence. He saw political power as a mere transfer of authority from British rulers to upper-caste elites, leaving the systemic inequities of caste untouched. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s vision of human rights transcended religion and politics; it focused on achieving dignity, equality, and justice for all individuals. The UDHR, like Dr. Ambedkar’s philosophy, is rooted in principles of universality, inalienability, and indivisibility. It asserts that human rights belong equally to all people, cannot be taken away, and recognizes the interdependence of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Although not legally binding, the UDHR has had a profound impact on global human rights advocacy. It inspired key international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and influenced the constitutions of many nations. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s life and philosophy resonate with the core principles of the UDHR, reaffirming the shared dignity and worth of every individual. The UDHR stands as a universal guide for justice and equality, serving as a beacon for human rights promotion and protection worldwide, a vision deeply aligned with Ambedkar’s lifelong struggle for dignity and human emancipation.

7.5 DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR’S PERCEPTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s social, economic, and political philosophy was firmly grounded in the principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice. His vision for an inclusive society sought to address deep-

rooted inequalities and systemic discrimination, particularly those entrenched in the Hindu caste system. Though human rights as a discipline did not formally emerge from his works, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideology reflected a clear and evolved understanding of human rights, as seen in his speeches, writings, and reformist movements.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's intellectual and moral framework was shaped by historical figures such as Lord Buddha, Kabir, and Mahatma Jotirao Phule, whom he regarded as his Gurus. These figures inspired his deep commitment to social reform, equality, and justice. His early upbringing in a family that valued respect for others and his exposure to Buddhist teachings further nurtured his ideas of human dignity and universal brotherhood. Significantly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's conception of human rights extended beyond caste-based issues to a broader vision of universal humanity and fraternity. At the First Conference of Depressed Classes in 1927, he emphasized this inclusive perspective, advocating for equality and justice for all sections of society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's historic decision to embrace Buddhism in 1956 was the culmination of years of study and critical analysis of world religions. Buddhism, with its core principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity, resonated with his vision of a just and enlightened society. His embrace of Buddhism underscored his belief in blending scientific reasoning, ethical principles, and legal frameworks to achieve societal transformation. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Contributions to Constitutional Human Rights As the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to human rights remain profound and enduring. He ensured the inclusion of several provisions that aimed to safeguard the dignity and rights of individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities. Key contributions include:

- **Fundamental Rights:** Guaranteeing equality, prohibition of discrimination, and protection of individual freedoms.
- **Minority Rights:** Ensuring cultural, educational, and religious rights for minorities.
- **Socio-economic Justice:** Enshrined in the Directive Principles of State Policy to promote social welfare.

Special Provisions for Marginalized Groups:

Reservation in legislatures: Articles 330 and 332

Employment reservations: Articles 16(1), 16(4), and 335

Reservation in educational institutions: Articles 15(4) and 46

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for a separate electorate for Dalits to ensure their political empowerment faced significant opposition, leading to the Poona Pact of 1932. Additionally, his progressive Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to improve the rights of Hindu women in matters of inheritance and marriage, was rejected in Parliament due to conservative

resistance. In protest, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar resigned as the Minister of Law in 1951, showcasing his steadfast commitment to gender equality and human rights.

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7.6 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

During Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's time, the caste system divided Indian society into hierarchical groups, relegating Shudras and Ati-Shudras (untouchables) to the lowest rungs. These marginalized groups faced exclusion from public spaces, education, and basic rights. The untouchables, in particular, were considered impure and denied access to temples, wells, and other public utilities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar experienced the brutalities of this system firsthand. From his childhood, he endured exclusion and humiliation due to his caste. These experiences deeply influenced his mission to fight for the rights of the oppressed. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strongly opposed the Manusmriti, an ancient Hindu law book that reinforced caste-based hierarchies. He condemned its influence on Indian society, arguing that its laws were inhumane and discriminatory. His public burning of the Manusmriti during the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 was a powerful statement against the caste system and its religious justifications.

Movements Led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

1) Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha (1924)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar founded this organization to promote the welfare of the depressed classes. It aimed to provide education, employment opportunities, and legal support to untouchables and other marginalized groups.

2) Mahad Satyagraha (1927)

One of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's earliest mass movements, the Mahad Satyagraha, was a fight for the untouchables' right to access public water sources. This movement symbolized the demand for equal civil rights and the rejection of caste-based exclusion.

3) Kala Ram Temple Entry Movement (1930)

In Nashik, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar led a movement to allow untouchables to enter the Kalaram Temple, challenging caste restrictions in religious spaces. Though the movement faced resistance, it highlighted the need for religious and social equality.

4) Publications and Advocacy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar used journals like Mook Nayak, Bahishkrit Bharat, and Equality Janta to spread his ideas. These publications called for civil, social, and economic rights for the oppressed and aimed to mobilize public opinion against caste-based discrimination.

5) Political Mobilization

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar established the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1936 to represent the interests of laborers, Dalits, and other

marginalized groups. He later formed the Scheduled Castes Federation, which focused on political empowerment for untouchables.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's activism culminated in his role as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He ensured that the Constitution guaranteed Fundamental Rights, including the right to equality, freedom, and protection against exploitation. His efforts were instrumental in abolishing untouchability (Article 17) and providing legal safeguards for the oppressed. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's movements for human rights remain a cornerstone of India's journey toward social justice. His vision of a society based on liberty, equality, and fraternity continues to inspire efforts to build an inclusive and egalitarian nation.

7.7 UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, widely regarded as the father of the Indian Constitution, was a relentless advocate for human rights and social justice. Throughout his life, he tirelessly fought against caste-based discrimination and gender inequality, striving to create an egalitarian society. His vision of social justice was deeply rooted in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, with a strong emphasis on eradicating systemic injustices and fostering a welfare state where the government actively uplifts all its citizens.

- ***Ambedkar's Philosophy on Human Rights and Social Justice***

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the essence of social justice lay in dismantling the oppressive caste system and gender hierarchies. He believed in building a society where individuals are treated equally and allowed to rise above structural disadvantages. His writings, especially on the caste system, denounce the suffering of marginalized groups, including Dalits and women, and advocate for their empowerment through education, economic opportunities, and legal safeguards. He emphasized fraternity as an essential component of democracy, describing it as a sense of mutual respect and care that binds society. This concept, alongside liberty and equality, shaped the ideals enshrined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar played a key role in drafting. True justice, in his view, required an active effort to address historical and systemic inequalities.

According to scholar Gail Omvedt, "*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision merged nationalism with social reform, where freedom from British rule also meant liberation from caste oppression and cultural divisions. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, nation-building was not only about political unity but also about establishing a society based on dignity, equality, and shared values.*"

- ***Human Rights in the Indian Constitution***

As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in embedding the principles of human rights into the Indian Constitution. His commitment to equality and justice is reflected in

the Fundamental Rights (Part III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) (Part IV), which echo the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

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- ***Fundamental Rights: Protecting Individual Liberties***

The Fundamental Rights ensure essential freedoms for all Indian citizens, irrespective of caste, religion, gender, or race. They include:

Right to Equality (Articles 14–18): Prohibits discrimination and guarantees equal opportunities.

Right to Freedom (Articles 19–22): Protects freedoms such as speech, expression, and movement.

Right Against Exploitation (Articles 23–24): Prohibits forced labor, human trafficking, and child labor.

Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25–28): Allows individuals to freely practice, profess, and propagate their religion.

Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29–30): Preserves the cultural identity and educational rights of minorities.

Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32): Empowers citizens to directly approach the courts for the enforcement of their rights.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar regarded Article 32 as the “heart and soul” of the Constitution, emphasizing its critical role in safeguarding human rights. He remarked:

"If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important—an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity—I could not refer to any other article except this one."

By allowing individuals to directly approach the Supreme Court for the enforcement of their rights, Article 32 ensures that justice is accessible to all citizens.

- ***Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)***

While the Fundamental Rights secure individual freedoms, the DPSP provides guidelines for achieving social and economic equality. Enshrined in Part IV of the Constitution, these principles direct the state to:

- Promote social and economic justice by reducing inequalities.
- Ensure welfare measures such as access to education, health care, and employment.
- Work towards bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.

Together, the Fundamental Rights and DPSP reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s balanced approach to human rights, combining individual freedoms with the collective well-being of society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of justice extended beyond drafting constitutional provisions. His lifelong efforts included the fight for a separate electorate for Dalits, which culminated in the Poona Pact of 1932, and his advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to grant women equal rights in inheritance and marriage. Despite opposition from conservative factions, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's efforts highlighted his unwavering dedication to gender equality and human rights.

7.8 HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to labor movements reflects his deep commitment to economic justice and the welfare of workers. Inspired by earlier pioneers such as Jyotiba Phule and Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar addressed caste-based oppression and advocated for industrial labor reforms and the protection of workers' rights.

1) *Advocacy for Labor Rights and Welfare*

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized the interconnectedness of economic justice and human rights, emphasizing that social and political equality could not be achieved without economic equality. He was particularly concerned with:

2) *Fair Wages and Labor Welfare*

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar championed the cause of fair wages, safe working conditions, and the right to collective bargaining. He argued that eliminating exploitation in workplaces was critical to achieving justice for laborers, especially those from marginalized communities.

3) *Union Representation*

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed a structured approach to labor unions, suggesting two categories:

- 1) Unions with at least 20% membership: Focused on representing specific groups of workers.
- 2) Unions with more than 50% membership: Authorized to represent labor collectively in conciliation or other proceedings.
- 3) This framework was aimed at ensuring effective representation of workers' grievances while maintaining order within industrial relations.

4) *Labor Unions*

According to Ambedkar, labor unions should focus on:

- 1) *Industrial Interests*: Advocating for better wages, working hours, and career progression.
- 2) *Social Welfare*: Providing benefits such as pensions, unemployment benefits, and support for widows.

- 3) Political Advocacy: Promoting policies that protect workers' economic and social positions.

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5) *Three Pillars for Industrial Harmony*

At the Conference of Regional Labour Commissioners in Bombay in December 1945, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar outlined three critical measures to mitigate industrial unrest:

i) Reconciliation Machinery

He stressed the importance of establishing mechanisms for conciliation to resolve disputes between employers and workers. This was intended to prevent strikes and lockouts through dialogue and negotiation.

ii) Amendment to the Trade Disputes Act

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar called for reforms in the existing Trade Disputes Act to better address labor issues, ensuring fair treatment of workers and accountability from employers.

iii) Minimum Wage Legislation

A staunch advocate of minimum wage laws, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that reasonable wages were essential for eliminating exploitation and ensuring dignity in labor.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's labor reforms and ideas were revolutionary for their time. His insistence on reasonable wages and comfortable working conditions emphasized labor welfare as a fundamental right. By combining economic and social objectives with political advocacy, he sought to empower workers in their workplaces and as participants in shaping a just society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to labor rights extended beyond his immediate actions. His influence can be seen in modern labor laws and policies in India, which uphold principles of fairness, equality, and workers' welfare. His approach to labor relations underscores the importance of balancing industrial development with the rights and dignity of the workforce.

7.9 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

At the All India Depressed Classes Women's Conference in Nagpur on July 20, 1940, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that progress could not happen without women's involvement. He strongly believed in the power of women's organizations and said that women could improve society if they were properly educated and motivated. As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar worked hard to ensure that women's rights were included in the Constitution. He made sure that women had special legal protections, while also ensuring that the general laws applied to them equally as to men. Articles like 15(3) and 51(A) were added to guarantee women's rights.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar saw the law as a tool to create a just society where individual growth could go hand-in-hand with the progress of society. In 1948, when the Hindu Code Bill was debated in Parliament, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar defended the bill, arguing that it was essential for women to have legal equality and to end their oppression. Unfortunately, the bill faced strong opposition from conservative groups, and it was not passed. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar resigned from his position as Law Minister, expressing disappointment that women in India were still denied basic rights. He famously said, “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.”

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar worked hard to secure legal rights for women, especially in areas like inheritance and divorce, with a focus on all women, not just the elite. He believed in gender equality, particularly for Dalit women. He also played a key role in creating the Indian Constitution, which included fundamental rights like equality before the law, equal opportunities, and protection against exploitation. These ideas were ahead of their time and were largely adopted by the Constitution Assembly. His ideas on governance, and how power should be shared between the Union Government and State Governments, have helped make India a successful and diverse nation. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s contributions in shaping India’s human rights laws are truly remarkable.

7.10 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a key figure in advocating for human rights in India, particularly for marginalized communities such as Dalits, women, and other oppressed groups. He believed in the principle of equality and worked tirelessly to ensure that the rights of all individuals, regardless of caste, gender, or social status, were protected. His commitment to human rights was most prominently reflected in his role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, where he played a pivotal part in incorporating fundamental rights that guaranteed equality, justice, and liberty for all citizens.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a strong advocate for the rights of women and worked to include provisions in the Constitution that would ensure gender equality. He was particularly concerned with the status of Dalit women, whom he saw as doubly oppressed by both caste and gender. His efforts also extended to the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to provide legal rights for women in areas like marriage, inheritance, and divorce, although the bill faced strong opposition and was eventually defeated.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s vision for human rights went beyond the formal legal framework; he saw the law as an instrument for creating a just and equitable social order. His emphasis on social justice, the abolition of untouchability, and the protection of the rights of marginalized communities laid the foundation for a more inclusive India. He believed that the progress of any society could be measured by the progress made in securing the rights of women and marginalized groups.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to human rights in India were not just confined to legal reforms but were also deeply rooted in his advocacy for social and political change. His work in drafting the Indian Constitution, his struggle for the rights of women, his fight against untouchability, and his commitment to creating a society based on equality and justice have left a lasting legacy in the field of human rights.

7.11 QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- 2) How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in India?
- 3) What role does the Constitution of India play in safeguarding the human rights of its citizens?
- 4) How does the protection of women's rights in India reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for social equality?
- 5) How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work address the rights of Dalits and marginalized communities in India?
- 6) In what ways has Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy influenced the current understanding of human rights in India?

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PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

b) Hindu Code Bill and Women Empowerment

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objective
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- 8.2 What is the Hindu–Code Bill?
- 8.3 Why was the codification of the Hindu Code Bill Necessary?
- 8.4 Objectives of the Hindu Code Bill
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- 8.7 Parliamentary Controversy
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- 8.11 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: The Champion of Women’s Rights
- 8.13 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's view on Women's Education
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- 8.14 Empowering Women Through Social Movements
- 8.15 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Conferences and Speeches for Women’s Empowerment
- 8.16 Relevance of Ambedkar’s Contribution
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8.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To Analyse the Necessity of the Hindu Code Bill
- 2) To Examine Parliamentary Debates and Controversies Surrounding the Hindu Code Bill
- 3) To Evaluate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Role as a Champion of Women's Rights
- 4) To Determine the Contemporary Relevance of Ambedkar's Efforts Toward Women's Empowerment

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a towering figure in Indian history, stands as a symbol of social justice and equality. While his monumental contributions to the upliftment of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, are widely celebrated, his role in championing women's rights remains a cornerstone of his transformative vision for an inclusive society. In an era when women were relegated to the margins of public life, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emerged as an ardent advocate for their education, legal rights, and economic empowerment, laying the foundation for a feminist movement deeply rooted in the principles of social justice and equity.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for women's empowerment was unique compared to other social reformers. He believed in securing women's rights and liberty through a strong legal framework. Recognizing the harsh realities faced by women in the rigid Hindu society, he introduced the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to ensure women's equality as citizens of India. Though initially met with resistance from many Parliament members, the bill was eventually accepted by the Government of India, bringing transformative changes to society.

In contemporary India, where gender-based disparities and challenges persist, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas remain profoundly relevant. His work serves as both a reminder of the unfinished journey toward women's empowerment and an enduring source of inspiration for those advocating for gender justice in the 21st century. By placing women at the heart of his vision for social transformation, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar redefined the feminist narrative in India and established a legacy that continues to shape the discourse on gender and equality.

8.2 WHAT IS THE HINDU-CODE BILL?

The Hindu Code Bill was a significant legislative initiative in post-independence India aimed at reforming Hindu personal laws to ensure gender equality, social justice, and modernization of traditional practices. Championed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the first Law Minister of India, the Bill reflected his vision of an egalitarian society and his deep commitment to the empowerment of women and marginalized

communities. Before the Hindu Code Bill, Hindu personal laws were governed by ancient texts such as the Manusmriti and other Dharmashastras, which institutionalized gender discrimination and caste hierarchies. Women were denied equal rights in marriage, divorce, and property, and their legal autonomy was minimal. The patriarchal nature of these laws reinforced the subordinate status of women in society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a staunch advocate for social justice, believed that true democracy required dismantling such discriminatory practices embedded in the legal framework.

After India gained independence in 1947, the drafting of a unified legal code for Hindus became a priority for the new government. The Hindu Code Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1948 as a revolutionary step towards equality and justice.

8.3 WHY WAS THE CODIFICATION OF THE HINDU CODE BILL NECESSARY?

The codification of Hindu law, culminating in the Hindu Code Bill, emerged as an imperative reform to address entrenched gender inequalities and inconsistencies within traditional Hindu legal frameworks. Historically, Hindu law was an unwritten, fluid system derived from oral traditions and interpretative readings of sacred texts such as the Vedas, Smritis, and Puranas. This lack of standardization left women's rights at the mercy of male religious authorities, whose patriarchal interpretations often perpetuated systemic discrimination and exploitation. The foundations of Hindu law, particularly in matters of inheritance, marriage, and adoption, rested on two principal schools of thought: *Mitakshara* and *Dayabhaga*. The Mitakshara system, dominant across much of India, considered property as the collective asset of a joint family. Under this patriarchal construct, male lineage members—fathers, sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons—were co-owners of the family property by birth, while women's inheritance rights were severely restricted. In contrast, the Dayabhaga system, prevalent in Bengal and parts of Assam, advocated for individual ownership of property, granting an heir absolute rights over inherited assets. Despite its more modern veneer, even Dayabhaga perpetuated gender discrimination, denying women equitable property rights and linking inheritance to marital status, motherhood, and other patriarchal criteria.

It was against this backdrop of systemic inequity that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, one of India's foremost social reformers, envisioned the Hindu Code Bill as a radical step toward gender justice. Drawing on the individualistic principles of Dayabhaga, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to modernize Hindu law by abolishing the entrenched disparities between male and female heirs. The Bill proposed sweeping changes, elevating widows, daughters, and even the widows of deceased sons to equal status in inheritance matters. By ensuring daughters received equal shares in their fathers and husbands' properties, Dr. Babasaheb directly challenged patriarchal notions of property rights that had long subordinated women.

A particularly groundbreaking provision was the Bill's treatment of *Stridhana*—property traditionally gifted to women under Hindu law. Previously regarded as a limited form of wealth, often controlled or appropriated by male relatives, the Hindu Code Bill redefined *Stridhana* as the woman's absolute property. It went further to mandate that sons would inherit their mother's property just as daughters inherited their father's, establishing a precedent for absolute gender equality in property ownership. The Hindu Code Bill thus represented more than a mere legal reform—it was a bold reimagining of Hindu law, rooted in the ideals of equality, modernity, and social justice. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, codification was just about creating a uniform legal system about dismantling centuries of patriarchal privilege. The Bill sought to transform Hindu society at its core, ensuring that women were no longer relegated to the margins of economic and familial power.

8.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE HINDU CODE BILL

The Hindu Code Bill, envisioned by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, sought to reform and codify Hindu personal laws, addressing the entrenched inequalities and inconsistencies within the traditional legal framework. Its objectives were rooted in gender justice, social equality, and modernization, marking a decisive break from centuries of patriarchal interpretations and practices.

1) Uniformity and Codification:

The Bill aimed to establish a uniform legal framework for Hindus by codifying personal laws relating to marriage, inheritance, adoption, and guardianship. This codification sought to replace the arbitrary and divergent interpretations of Hindu law derived from texts like the Vedas, Smritis, and Puranas, creating a cohesive and consistent legal system.

2) Abolition of Gender Discrimination:

A core objective was to eliminate the gendered inequalities embedded in traditional Hindu law. The Bill sought to grant women equal rights in inheritance, property, and marriage, thereby challenging patriarchal norms and recognizing women as independent legal entities.

3) Equality in Inheritance:

The Bill proposed equal inheritance rights for women, including daughters, widows, and the widows of deceased sons. By granting daughters the same rights as sons in their father's property and sons equivalent rights in their mother's property (*Stridhana*), it aimed to restore parity between the sexes in matters of succession.

4) Reform of Marriage Laws:

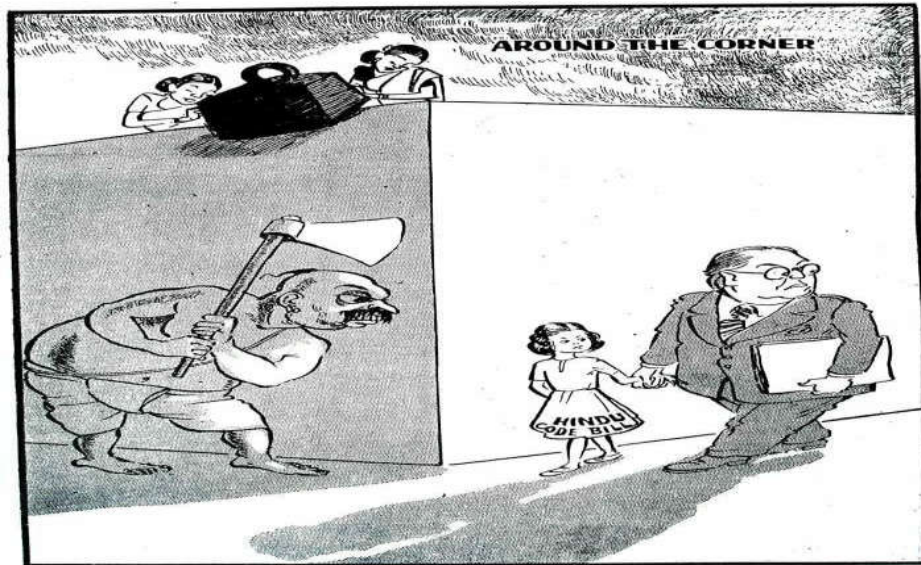
The Hindu Code Bill sought to abolish caste-based restrictions on marriage and endogamy, which were integral to the perpetuation of Brahmanical patriarchy. It introduced provisions for monogamy, divorce, and the legal rights of women within marriage, emphasizing the need for equity and consent in marital relations.

5) Promotion of Individual Rights:

The Bill sought to affirm the individuality of women by ensuring their rights were not contingent on their relationships with male family members. It emphasized personal liberty, equality, and justice, aligning Hindu personal law with the ideals enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

6) Abolition of Untouchability and Caste-Based Oppression:

While primarily addressing gender, the Bill also sought to weaken caste hierarchies by reforming practices like caste-based marriage restrictions and inheritance customs that reinforced social stratification.



(Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar holding the hand of a little girl “Hindu Code Bill” and leading her towards Parliament and a Brahmin holding an axe in hand hiding behind the wall, simultaneously women from the terrace try to save the little girl. Source: K Shankar Pillai, Shankar's Weekly, December 1949 via The Dalit Voice, Twitter)

8.5 REFORMS IN LAW

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized the need to reform Hindu laws to promote gender equality and uplift women’s status in Indian society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed modifications to various existing laws that influenced women's rights, including:

1. ***The Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850*** – Advocating for abolishing caste-based discrimination in property and other civil rights.
2. ***The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856***, Supported the remarriage of widows to counter the oppressive social stigma they faced.
3. ***The Indian Succession Act, 1925*** – Promoting equal inheritance rights for daughters.

4. ***The Native Convert's Marriage Dissolution Act, 1866*** – Allowing for the dissolution of marriages when one spouse converted to another religion.
5. ***The Transfer of Property Act, 1882 (Amended in 1929)***– Addressing inheritance and property transfer laws to include women as rightful beneficiaries.
6. ***The Indian Majority Act, 1875, and The Guardian and Wards Act, 1890***– Ensuring the protection of minors, particularly girls, and their rights.
7. ***The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937*** – Providing inheritance rights to widows.
8. ***The Hindu Gains of Learning Act, 1930*** – Preventing male family members from solely benefiting from the educational gains of other family members, ensuring fair property distribution.

8.6 THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES ON THE HINDU CODE BILL

The parliamentary debates on the Hindu Code Bill introduced between 1948 and 1951, were among the most contentious and significant discussions in modern Indian legislative history. These debates, which took place in the newly independent nation, revealed deep divisions regarding the intersection of law, religion, gender equality, and social reform. Spearheaded by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the bill sought to reform and codify Hindu personal laws, addressing issues of marriage, inheritance, adoption, and succession to align them with constitutional ideals of justice and equality. However, the proposal faced staunch opposition from conservative sections of society and members of Parliament, leading to protracted and heated deliberations.

Background to the Debates

The Hindu Code Bill was an ambitious legal reform effort initiated during British rule under the leadership of Sir B. N. Rau. The drafting committee, which included legal and social reformers, proposed reforms to address the legal inconsistencies in Hindu personal law. After independence, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the then Minister of Law and Justice, was responsible for refining and piloting the Bill. India's Constitution, adopted in 1950, guaranteed equality before the law and prohibited discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. The Hindu Code Bill was seen as a critical step toward realizing these constitutional principles, especially for women, who had long been marginalized under the prevailing patriarchal interpretations of Hindu law.

Key Issues Discussed in Parliament

The debates highlighted a variety of legal, cultural, and ideological concerns:

1. ***Women's Rights and Gender Equality***

The Bill proposed radical changes to uplift the status of women, granting them equal rights in property and inheritance, and legalizing divorce. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that women's rights to equality and individuality were long overdue and that the Bill was a step toward correcting historical injustices. Supporters argued that the Bill upheld the constitutional principle of equality and was necessary for India's modernization.

However, conservative members, such as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, argued that these provisions disrupted traditional Hindu family structures. Critics claimed that the Bill undermined cultural values and would destabilize the institution of marriage. Some opponents feared that granting property rights to women would fragment family wealth and disrupt the joint family system.

2. ***Marriage and Monogamy***

The Bill introduced provisions for monogamy, abolishing polygamy among Hindus. It also allowed inter-caste marriages and simplified divorce procedures, emphasizing equality and mutual consent in marital relationships. These measures faced opposition from traditionalists who viewed monogamy as contrary to Hindu customs and argued that divorce threatened the sanctity of marriage.

Proponents countered by pointing out that such reforms were already in practice among other communities and were essential for social progress. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that without these reforms, Hindu society would remain shackled to regressive practices that were incompatible with the ideals of justice and modernity.

3. ***Property and Inheritance***

One of the most debated aspects of the Bill was the proposal to grant daughters equal inheritance rights on their father's property and sons equal inheritance rights on their mother's property (*Stridhana*). These provisions directly challenged the patriarchal norms embedded in traditional Hindu laws like *Mitakshara* and *Dayabhaga*, which favored male heirs.

Conservatives opposed these changes, arguing that they disrupted the sanctity of family traditions and threatened the economic foundation of joint families. However, reformists pointed out the inherent discrimination in denying women the right to inherit property, emphasizing that equality before the law required equal access to resources.

4. ***Secularism and Religious Autonomy***

The Hindu Code Bill also raised broader questions about the role of the state in reforming religious practices. Critics argued that the Bill interfered with the personal laws of Hindus while leaving the personal laws of other

religious communities untouched. This led to accusations of bias and concerns about the state encroaching on religious autonomy.

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Supporters, however, clarified that the Bill was a necessary reform for Hindu society, which constituted the majority, and that similar reforms for other communities could follow. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar highlighted that the Bill was not an attack on religion but an attempt to align Hindu personal laws with the constitutional principles of equality and justice.

5. Intersectionality of Gender and Caste

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that the Bill was not only a gender reform but also a challenge to Brahmanical patriarchy, which perpetuated caste and gender oppression. By dismantling caste-based restrictions on marriage and inheritance, the Bill struck at the heart of the social hierarchies embedded in Hindu law.

8.7 PARLIAMENTARY CONTROVERSY

The Bill was first introduced in the Constituent Assembly on April 11, 1947, by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the then Law Minister. It was referred to a Select Committee on April 9, 1948, after nearly a year of debate. By the time it returned to Parliament on February 5, 1951, the Bill had become a lightning rod for opposition. Conservative forces, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, vehemently opposed the reforms, branding them an existential threat to Hinduism itself. Critics referred to the Bill as an "*atomic bomb on Hindu society*," and slogans like "*Hinduism in Danger*" underscored the communal and caste-based resistance. The opposition wasn't limited to political factions outside the government. Influential figures within the establishment, such as Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, and Anathasayanam Ayyangar, the Speaker, openly expressed their reservations. Ambedkar, a staunch advocate for social equality, faced resistance not just as a reformer but as an "*untouchable*" leader challenging deeply entrenched orthodoxy.

Despite the mounting challenges, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar passionately defended the Bill, articulating its necessity in bringing Hindu personal laws in alignment with the constitutional values of equality and modernity. The debates, however, became a protracted affair, spanning over four years, marking the longest discussion on a single piece of legislation in independent India. As debates stagnated, only four clauses of the "Marriage and Divorce" section were discussed in Parliament before it adjourned in September 1951. The lack of progress and the Congress Party's evident reluctance to fully back the Bill left Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar disillusioned. On September 27, 1951, he tendered his resignation as Law Minister, citing the Congress's apathy toward social reform as a primary grievance.

In his resignation letter, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wrote:

To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched, and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap.

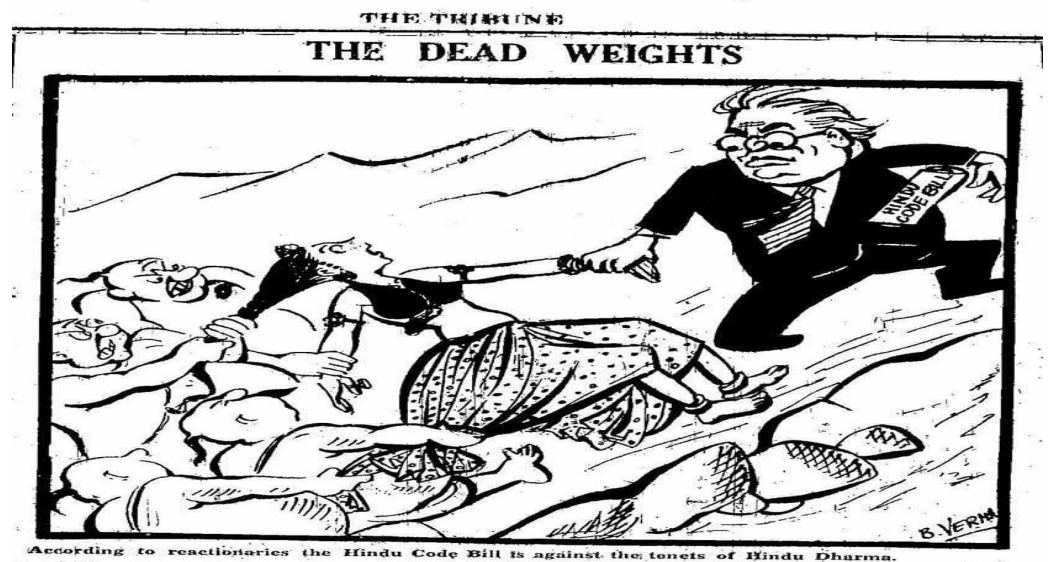
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also criticized Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for failing to honour his promise of full support for the Bill, pointing out the Congress's broader inability to act decisively on issues of social justice.

8.8 THE DILUTION OF THE BILL

After Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's resignation, Nehru, though ideologically aligned with the Bill, faced immense political pressure to compromise. Following the first General Elections of 1952, which gave the Congress a decisive mandate, the legislation was reintroduced in a diluted form. To diffuse opposition, the original Hindu Code Bill was split into four separate laws:

1. The Hindu Marriage Act (1955)
2. The Hindu Succession Act (1956)
3. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (1956)
4. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956)

While these laws collectively codified many principles of the original Bill, they represented a moderated version of Ambedkar's vision.



(A Cartoon of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar pulling a Hindu woman from the grip of Hindu Orthodoxy. It states "According to reactionaries the Hindu Code Bill is against the tenets of Hindu Dharma" | Source: B Verma, The Tribune, March 1949 via The Dalit Voice, Twitter)

8.9 THE HINDU CODE BILL – A LEGISLATIVE MILESTONE IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

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The Hindu Code Bill stands as one of the most significant legislative reforms in independent India, aimed at modernizing and codifying Hindu personal law. Initially introduced in 1951, the Bill sought to address longstanding issues of gender inequality and social justice within Hindu society. However, its journey from conception to enactment in 1956 was fraught with intense opposition, heated debates, and numerous amendments.

1) *The Initial Challenges and Opposition*

The Bill was introduced to the Indian Parliament under the stewardship of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, a staunch advocate of social reform and women's rights. Nehru believed that legal reforms were essential to create a progressive and egalitarian society. Yet, the Bill faced vehement resistance, particularly from orthodox Hindu organizations and conservative sections of society, who viewed it as an assault on Hindu traditions, customs, and rituals. The opposition argued that the Bill threatened the sanctity of Hindu social structures and family systems, with many brandings it as an attack on religion itself. Despite this, Nehru and his administration were resolute in their commitment to passing the Bill, recognizing its transformative potential in promoting social justice and gender equality. The Congress government, led by Nehru, demonstrated remarkable political will and perseverance in pushing the legislation forward. After years of deliberation, the Bill was finally passed in a restructured and segmented form in 1956, marking a watershed moment in India's legal and social history.

2) *Provisions of the Hindu Code Bill*

The Hindu Code Bill was divided into four separate acts, each addressing a specific domain of Hindu personal law. Together, these acts significantly reformed marriage, inheritance, guardianship, adoption, and maintenance laws, particularly for women.

1. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

This Act reformed Hindu marriage laws, establishing several progressive provisions:

Minimum age of marriage: 21 years for men and 18 years for women.

Grounds for divorce: Introduced new grounds, including cruelty, desertion, and adultery, reflecting modern understandings of marital rights and responsibilities.

Marriage registration: Provided for the official registration of Hindu marriages.

By codifying Hindu marriage laws, the Act laid the foundation for greater equality within marital relationships.

2. *The Hindu Succession Act, 1956*

This Act was revolutionary in codifying Hindu inheritance laws:

Equal inheritance rights: Granted women the same inheritance rights as men, ensuring daughters had an equal share in their father's property.

Abolition of coparcenary: Ended the traditional system of joint family property, paving the way for independent ownership rights.

Empowerment of daughters: Allowed daughters to become coparceners in their father's property, ensuring parity with sons in matters of inheritance.

This Act marked a significant step toward dismantling patriarchal structures in Hindu society.

3. *The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956*

This Act reformed the laws governing guardianship and the rights of minors:

Natural guardianship: Recognized the mother as a natural guardian, along with the father, ensuring a balanced approach to child welfare.

Duties of guardians: Clearly defined the rights, duties, and powers of guardians over a minor's person and property.

The Act represented a progressive move toward acknowledging the role of mothers in guardianship and ensuring the welfare of minors.

4. *The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956*

This Act codified adoption and maintenance laws for Hindus:

Legal recognition of adoptions: Formalized adoption procedures and established clear legal frameworks.

Maintenance obligations: Made it legally binding for husbands and sons to provide maintenance to their wives, children, and parents.

Equal rights in adoption: Allowed both men and women to adopt and be adopted, a step forward in ensuring gender equality.

This Act provided legal clarity and strengthened familial support systems within Hindu society.

The Hindu Code Bill marked a turning point in India's legislative history, symbolizing the nation's commitment to social reform and equality. It redefined Hindu personal laws, empowering women by granting them rights in marriage, property, guardianship, and adoption. Although the reforms were met.

8.10 MEANING OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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The concept of "*empowerment*" has been widely used across various fields, though its definition often varies depending on the context. In the case of women, empowerment implies their development as politically active, economically productive, and socially independent individuals capable of making informed decisions about matters that affect them. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a saviour of the depressed classes, a renowned jurist, and the architect of the Indian Constitution worked tirelessly throughout his life to uplift the marginalized sections of society, including women. He believed in transforming the rigid social structures that perpetuated inequality. His vision of empowerment extended beyond mere opportunities, encompassing equal economic, political, social, and religious rights.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a firm believer in the strength and leadership potential of women. He emphasized their role in societal transformation, urging women to demand equality and actively participate in shaping their lives and families. He famously insisted that women must show courage, assert their rights, and demand the respect they deserve. His work on the Hindu Code Bill reflected this philosophy, aiming to ensure gender equality in matters of property rights, marriage, and adoption. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, true empowerment required reconstructing society on the foundation of equality, rejecting superficial social reforms that only benefited the upper castes. His deep study of Hindu scriptures, including the Smritis and Shastras, led him to critique their discriminatory practices and to advocate for systemic change. He viewed women's empowerment as integral to achieving fraternity, liberty, and equality in Indian society.

In essence, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's philosophy of women's empowerment continues to serve as a guiding light for creating a just and equitable society. It challenges us to evaluate whether contemporary initiatives genuinely address the multifaceted dimensions of empowerment or merely scratch the surface.

Empowerment is a transformative process through which individuals assert control over factors that influence their lives. Women empowerment, specifically, refers to redistributing social power and control of resources to favor women. This concept was introduced at the 1985 International Conference in Nairobi, where it was defined as a means to achieve greater equity and control for women in all spheres of life.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) expands on this definition by including critical aspects such as:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and their potential for change.
- Developing self-worth, confidence, and the ability to control one's life and secure desired changes.

The process of empowerment encompasses five key dimensions: cognitive, psychological, economic, political, and physical rights. True empowerment is realized only when women are provided with these rights holistically.

Some key indicators of women's empowerment include:

- Raising self-esteem and confidence.
- Eliminating discrimination and enforcing constitutional and legal rights.
- Promoting critical thinking and fostering decision-making abilities.
- Expanding educational opportunities and enabling informed choices.
- Increasing women's participation in decision-making at all levels.

Women's empowerment is about achieving equality and enabling women to contribute meaningfully to society while having control over their lives and resources. It is both a means and an end to achieving social justice and equitable development.

8.11 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR: THE CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emerged as a stalwart advocate for women's rights and the upliftment of marginalized communities, particularly Scheduled Castes and Tribes, throughout his career. His contributions to the cause of women's emancipation were significant and transformative, reflected in his role as a legislator, social reformer, and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. In 1927, as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar championed progressive legislation such as the Maternity Benefit Bill. He argued that ensuring rest for mothers during pre-natal and post-natal periods was vital for the nation's welfare, emphasizing that the government should bear the responsibility for this support. His speeches highlighted the necessity of state intervention for women's dignity and well-being. Women played an active role in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's movements, notably in the 1927 Mahad Satyagraha, which sought temple entry rights for untouchables. During this historic event, the Manusmriti, a text degrading women and Shudras, was symbolically burned. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar encouraged women to embrace education, adopt healthier lifestyles, and reject oppressive traditions.

At the 1940 All India Depressed Classes Women's Conference in Nagpur, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stressed the crucial role of women in societal progress. He urged women to educate their children and nurture high ambitions. His vision for women's empowerment was evident in his leadership during the Round Table Conferences, where he advocated for political safeguards and adult franchises for all, including women. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, Dr.

Babasaheb Ambedkar ensured women's rights were embedded in the political and social framework of independent India. He included provisions such as Article 15(3), empowering the state to make special laws for women, and Article 51A(e), which called on citizens to renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity. His contributions earned the Constitution recognition as a "New Charter of Human Rights."

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed the law as a tool for creating a just and equitable social order. His work laid the foundation for gender equality, empowering women to participate equally in India's progress. His legacy continues to inspire the fight for justice and dignity for women in modern India.

8.12 DR.BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a visionary reformer, viewed education as a transformative force for achieving social, economic, and political empowerment. He believed education was not limited to literacy but served as a powerful tool for fostering critical thinking, moral character, and values like liberty, equality, and justice. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the lifelong importance of education, stating that primary education should ensure individuals remain literate throughout their lives, highlighting its role in individual and societal progress.

Education as a Tool for Empowerment

Ambedkar's approach to empowerment was comprehensive, focusing on uplifting individuals and communities to integrate them into mainstream society. He believed education had two essential purposes: self-betterment and the welfare of society. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, education was a fundamental right, essential for dismantling social oppression and enabling democratic participation. Criticizing the British education system for being narrowly clerical, he advocated a secular and practical education system designed to liberate marginalized communities. He viewed education as the cornerstone for challenging entrenched caste-based inequalities and uplifting the depressed classes.

Focus on Women's Education

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that the progress of a community was directly linked to the progress of its women. At the Second All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference in Nagpur (1942), he remarked,

"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved. Give education to your children. Instil ambition in them. Remove from them all inferiority complexes."

In an era when education for women, especially those from marginalized communities, was scarce, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar championed equal educational opportunities for them. He advocated for co-education and

believed that women's intellectual development was critical for building an equitable society. He envisioned educated women as self-reliant individuals capable of independent thought and significant contributions to nation-building.

Economic and Social Emancipation

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized education as a vital tool for intellectual growth, economic independence, and social equality. He firmly believed empowering women through education was key to ensuring their economic freedom and societal participation. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar advocated for equal educational opportunities for women, along with property rights and financial independence, recognizing that these were fundamental to breaking the cycle of oppression.

He famously stated, *"Education is as necessary for females as it is for males. If you know how to read and write, there would be much progress. As you are, so your children will be. Mold their lives in a virtuous way, for sons should be such as would make a mark in this world."* This powerful observation underscores his belief in the transformative role of women's education, not just for their personal development but also for the broader progress of society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned educated women as agents of change who would nurture future generations with values of equality, justice, and virtue. By empowering women with knowledge and skills, he believed they could uplift their families, contribute meaningfully to the economy, and play a pivotal role in shaping a just and equitable society.

8.13 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to women's rights was revolutionary and distinct from other social reformers of his time, such as Jyotiba Phule, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Mahatma Gandhi. While these reformers sought to address outdated customs and practices within Hindu society, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar went further by challenging the hierarchical social order itself. His vision was to create a society rooted in social justice, where women were treated as equals to men. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to women's rights is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, which guarantees equality and justice for all citizens, irrespective of gender. He strongly opposed sexual discrimination and worked tirelessly to ensure equal opportunities for women in every sphere of life. The Preamble of the Indian Constitution, shaped by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideals, promises:

- Social, economic, and political justice
- Freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship
- Equality of status and opportunity

- Fraternity, ensuring the dignity of the individual and national unity
- Critique of Social Structures

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar criticized the traditional and conservative values that perpetuated the subjugation of women. He denounced the Hindu religion for depriving women of property rights and other fundamental freedoms. He was deeply concerned with the social and economic upliftment of women and emphasized their right to education and equality. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's commitment to women's empowerment culminated in the introduction of the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament. This progressive legislation aimed to modernize Hindu personal laws and included provisions to:

- Abolish various marriage systems and establish monogamy as the only legal system.
- Grant women the right to property and adoption.
- Allow for restitution of conjugal rights and judicial separation.

Although the Hindu Code Bill faced strong opposition, it laid the foundation for reforms that would later shape India's legal framework regarding women's rights.

Advocacy for Muslim Women

Dr. He observed that Muslim women, too, were denied their rightful freedoms under the influence of socio-cultural practices. He criticized the lack of rights for Muslim women in areas such as divorce, stating that they often faced a rigid marital framework that denied them agency. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also opposed the purdah system, which he believed isolated women, harmed their physical health, and deprived them of a vibrant social life. He argued that such practices were inconsistent with Islamic principles and detrimental to gender equality. Ambedkar's overarching belief was that a just society could not exist without the empowerment of women. He championed women's rights to education, property, and freedom, emphasizing their critical role in building a progressive nation. His philosophy was clear: true social reform required the dismantling of systems that perpetuated inequality, and women's empowerment was central to this transformation.

Constitutional Rights and Women

The Indian Constitution, drafted under the chairmanship of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, stands as a testament to the nation's commitment to gender equality and social justice. Various constitutional provisions were included to uplift women and marginalized communities, ensuring their empowerment and equal participation in all spheres of life.

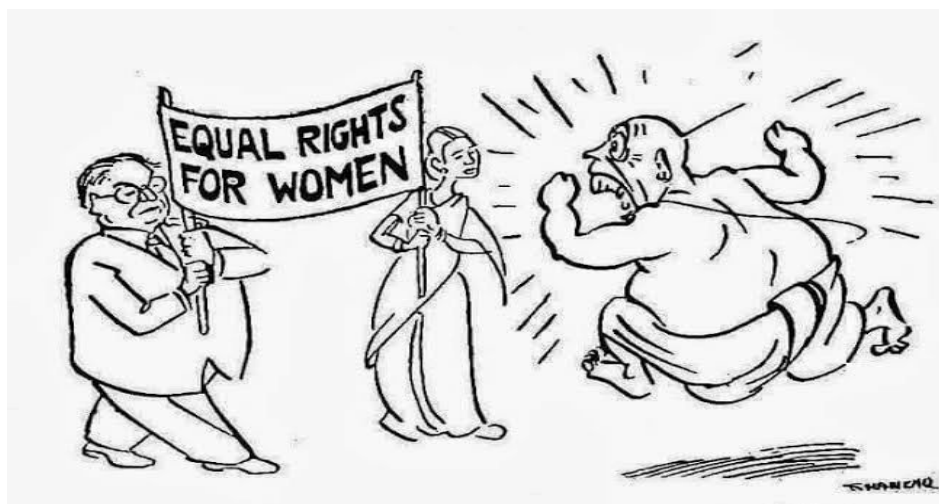
Key articles of the Constitution address women's rights explicitly.

Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the law, while Article 15 prohibits discrimination based on sex. Importantly, Article 15(3) allows for positive discrimination in favour of women, enabling the state to take special measures for their advancement. Similarly, Article 16 ensures equality of opportunity in employment and public office without discrimination. Provisions like Article 39(d) emphasize equal pay for equal work, and Article 42 mandates the state to ensure humane working conditions and maternity relief. Article 51(A)(C) obligates citizens to renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity. In addition, Articles 243D (3), 243T(3), and 243R(4) reserve seats for women in local governance systems like the Panchayati Raj, empowering women at the grassroots level.

Educational Rights for Women and Marginalized Communities

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the chief architect of the Constitution, prioritized education as a means to eradicate inequality. He believed that education was critical for empowering women and the depressed classes. Special provisions were embedded in the Constitution to ensure their educational rights.

Article 30(1) grants linguistic and religious minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions, while Article 30(2) prohibits the state from discriminating against such institutions while providing aid. Similarly, Article 29(2) protects against denial of admission in state-aided institutions on grounds of religion, caste, or language. Additionally, Article 46 directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections and protect them from exploitation.



(A Cartoon of a Brahmin frightened by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and women marching with the banner of “Equal Rights for Women” | Source: K Shankar Pillai, Shankar's Weekly, January 1950 issue via The Dalit Voice, Twitter)

8.14 EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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In his fight against the oppressive Hindu social order, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar launched powerful agitations to challenge caste-based and gender-based inequalities. His journals, *Mook Nayak* (1920) and *Bahishkrit Bharat* (1927), highlighted the plight of women and the oppressed while advocating for education and gender equality. These publications became important platforms to voice the issues faced by women and call for their empowerment.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's commitment to women's empowerment extended beyond his writings. In January 1928, he and his wife, Ramabai, founded the Women's Association in Bombay, creating a platform for women to unite and advocate for their rights. He encouraged women to speak boldly, as seen in Radhabai Vadale's powerful address during a press conference in 1931, where she proclaimed that it was better to die than live a life of shame. Ambedkar's belief in the courage and leadership of women underscored his conviction that they were vital agents of social change.

8.15 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S CONFERENCES AND SPEECHES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, renowned as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was a tireless advocate for women's rights. His speeches, writings, and legislative efforts reflected his unwavering commitment to empowering women and addressing the entrenched inequalities they faced in society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed legal reform as a crucial instrument for uplifting women and securing their rightful place in an equitable social order.

On January 11, 1950, during a speech at Siddhartha College, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar highlighted the progressive roots of Indian tradition regarding women's rights. He referenced ancient texts like the *Dayabhaga*, *Parashara Smriti*, and *Brihaspati Smriti*, which supported women's rights to property and divorce. His aim with the Hindu Code Bill was to align these ancient principles with the realities of modern society while challenging patriarchal inequalities.

Addressing the Belgaum District Scheduled Castes Federation Conference on December 26, 1950, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar reiterated the Bill's purpose: to eliminate the legal barriers that obstructed women's social advancement. Similarly, on November 24, 1951, he passionately appealed to women to support the Bill, emphasizing that it was designed to enhance their status and grant them greater rights. However, by December 25, 1952, he expressed deep dissatisfaction with the diluted version of the Bill, likening it to "milk spoiled by a bitter acid," a metaphor reflecting his disappointment with the compromises made in its final form.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy extended beyond legislative efforts. At the All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference in Nagpur on July 20, 1942, he championed resolutions advocating for women's rights to divorce, the abolition of polygamy, equal pay for equal work, compulsory education for girls, and reserved seats for women in legislative bodies. These resolutions underscored his holistic vision for gender equality.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings, including *The Riddle of the Women* and *Caste in India*, along with his journals *Mook Nayak* (1920) and *Bahishkrit Bharat* (1927), fiercely criticized Hindu texts like the *Manusmriti* for perpetuating gender discrimination. His symbolic burning of the *Manusmriti* in 1927 was a bold act of defiance against its oppressive doctrines, marking his rejection of the traditional caste-based and patriarchal order. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's disillusionment with Hinduism's treatment of women eventually led him to renounce the religion. In 1956, he embraced Buddhism, a faith he believed upheld the values of gender equality and social justice. Drawing from Buddhist history, he frequently highlighted the empowered lives of women such as Vishakha, Amrapali, and Queen Mallika, who thrived within the egalitarian framework of Buddhist teachings.

In his seminal work, *The Annihilation of Caste*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that true liberation required freedom from the oppressive doctrines of the Shastras. He envisioned a society founded on the principles of equality, dignity, and fraternity, where both men and women could live as equals. Through his relentless efforts, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar laid a strong foundation for women's empowerment, blending the wisdom of ancient traditions with progressive reforms to create a just and inclusive society. His vision continues to serve as a guiding light in the ongoing struggle for gender equality in India.

8.16 RELEVANCE OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a staunch advocate for women's dignity and rights. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution and the first Law Minister of independent India, he sought to rebuild Hindu society on the principles of liberty and equality. Deeply critical of the *Manusmriti* for its role in institutionalizing gender discrimination, Ambedkar's reformist vision aimed to liberate women from centuries of oppression.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized social justice and enumerated constitutional provisions to ensure equality for women. Having faced the harsh realities of untouchability, he was deeply committed to uplifting marginalized communities, including women. He introduced progressive laws such as the Women's Labour Protection Act, Women's Labour Welfare Fund, laws prohibiting women's work in underground mines, and the Maternity Benefits Bill. These reforms granted women essential rights, including voting rights, adoption rights, property inheritance, marriage age

restrictions, and maintenance after legal separation. His vision for gender equality laid the foundation for empowering women in modern India.

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Despite constitutional safeguards and gradual progress, social evils such as domestic violence, dowry, honor killings, and gender-based crimes persist, highlighting the incomplete realization of Ambedkar's vision. Nearly 46% of Indian women remain illiterate, reflecting the need for greater awareness and education about their rights. Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar's dream of an egalitarian society can only be fulfilled through collective efforts by the government and society, along with a transformative shift in societal attitudes. While his reforms have advanced women's rights, much remains to be done to achieve true equality.

8.17 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's relentless efforts to empower women and bring about social justice were epitomized in his advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill. As a visionary reformer and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar sought to dismantle the oppressive social norms entrenched in Hindu society that perpetuated gender inequality. The Hindu Code Bill was a groundbreaking attempt to grant women equal rights in marriage, inheritance, adoption, and property, challenging centuries-old patriarchal practices.

Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar viewed the empowerment of women as fundamental to societal progress, asserting that true democracy could only thrive in a society where women enjoyed equal rights and opportunities. His belief in education, economic independence, and legal reform as tools for liberation laid the foundation for modern feminist thought in India. Through his speeches and writings, he inspired women to rise above societal limitations, emphasizing the transformative power of knowledge and self-respect.

Despite facing immense opposition, Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar remained steadfast in his commitment to women's rights. Although the diluted Hindu Code Bill fell short of his vision, it sparked a significant shift in public discourse on gender equality and legal reform. Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar's work continues to serve as an enduring source of inspiration, reminding us of the need for an unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and human dignity. His legacy underscores that empowering women is not just a moral imperative but a prerequisite for building an equitable society.

8.18 QUESTIONS

- 1) How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of women's empowerment reflect in his advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill?
- 2) What challenges did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar face during the parliamentary debates on the Hindu Code Bill?

- 3) In what ways did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's speeches and conferences empower women to fight for social justice and equality?
- 4) Why did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believe education was essential for women's empowerment, and how did he address this in his policies?
- 5) What was the significance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for equal rights for women in shaping modern Indian society?
- 6) How is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to women's rights through the Hindu Code Bill relevant in contemporary India?

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PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

c) States and Minorities: Future Model of Indian Constitution

Unit Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's view on states and Minorities
- 9.3 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision of Fundamental Rights
- 9.4 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Safeguards for the Scheduled Castes
- 9.5 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's and Minority Rights
- 9.6 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision, State Socialism and economic democracy
- 9.7 The Future Model of the Indian Constitution
- 9.8 Summary
- 9.9 Question
- 9.10 Additional Readings

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To Ensure constitutional safeguards for the social, economic, and political rights of minorities.
- 2) To Eliminate discrimination through strict legal measures and equal opportunities.
- 3) To Prevent majoritarian dominance and ensure minority inclusion in governance.
- 4) To Establish "one man, one value" as the foundation for equitable economic structures.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution, one of the world's most comprehensive and progressive documents, draws heavily from the vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who is widely regarded as its principal architect. His commitment to social justice, equality, and the protection of minority rights shaped the constitutional framework that sought to rectify centuries

of oppression and marginalization. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas, rooted in his deep understanding of the caste system, communal tensions, and the need for economic democracy, were aimed at creating an inclusive society where all citizens, regardless of their caste, religion, or social standing, could live with dignity and equal opportunity.

Throughout his life, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar advocated for a system of governance that went beyond political rights, emphasizing economic justice, social equality, and the protection of vulnerable groups. His contributions to the Indian Constitution reflect a nuanced approach to addressing the complex realities of a deeply diverse nation. The discussions surrounding his vision reveal a constitution that guarantees political and civil liberties and seeks to build a just and equitable society, free from historical injustices.

As we reflect on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision and its implementation in the present day, it becomes evident that while significant strides have been made, there are still challenges to overcome in ensuring that the Constitution lives up to its promise of equality and justice for all. This dialogue between Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy and the evolving socio-political landscape of India is crucial in shaping the future of the Indian Constitution, ensuring that it remains a dynamic and adaptive document capable of addressing the changing needs and aspirations of the nation.

9.2 DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON STATES AND MINORITIES

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's States and Minorities is a significant document submitted to the Constituent Assembly on March 15, 1947, on behalf of the All-India Scheduled Caste Federation. It was presented to the Fundamental Rights Committee, of which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a member. The memorandum was drafted in the form of constitutional articles, as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that this format ensured clarity and precision in discussing critical issues. For better understanding, these articles were divided into sections and parts. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also included explanatory notes and statistical data to assist the Working Committee of the Scheduled Castes Federation. The document comprises 64 pages, including a preface written by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar himself.

The primary focus of this memorandum was to highlight the issues of Fundamental Rights, safeguards for Scheduled Castes, Minority Rights, and State Socialism. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar particularly addressed the question of whether the Scheduled Castes could be considered a minority. He argued, "Anyone with a fresh and free mind, reading it as a general proposition, would be justified in saying that it is capable of double interpretation. I interpret it to mean that the Scheduled Castes are more than a minority and that any protection given to the citizens and the minorities will not be adequate for the Scheduled Castes".

By this, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that the Scheduled Castes faced far worse socio-economic conditions compared to the majority Hindu population and other minorities. He believed that special safeguards were necessary to protect the Scheduled Castes from discrimination and oppression by the majority. In *States and Minorities*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar outlined these safeguards in specific sections, such as Article II Section IV, which detailed protections for Scheduled Castes, and Part III, which discussed sanctions and amendments to these safeguards. Additionally, Part IV focused on the protection of Scheduled Castes in the Indian princely states. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar redefined the concept of a "minority" by asserting that religious differences were not the sole criteria. Instead, he argued, "Social discrimination constitutes the real test for determining whether a social group is or is not a minority. He noted that even Mahatma Gandhi supported this view, stating that social discrimination was a more practical and logical test than religious separation.

Furthermore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar delved into the issues of Fundamental Rights and Minority Rights, highlighting the challenges India faced in addressing the concerns of minorities and integrating the Indian princely states. His memorandum is a testament to his vision of securing equality and justice for marginalized communities and ensuring their socio-economic upliftment in the framework of an independent India. This paper aims to analyze the essence of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's draft constitution, focusing on the Fundamental Rights, safeguards for Scheduled Castes, and his concept of State Socialism.

9.3 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VISION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, placed fundamental rights at the heart of India's democratic framework. His insistence on their justiciability — meaning that these rights could be enforced in a court of law — was crucial for establishing a rule of law where citizens could seek judicial recourse to uphold their rights. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar understood the inextricable link between political, social, and economic equality. He believed that political democracy could only thrive if it was underpinned by social and economic democracy. This principle is rooted in his strong critique of India's caste system and his efforts to address caste-based discrimination through constitutional guarantees of equality.

1) Equality of Opportunity: A Cornerstone of Fundamental Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar regarded equality of opportunity as one of the most vital aspects of fundamental rights. He recognized that without equal access to opportunities, India's social system would remain mired in inequalities, hindering any meaningful progress. His understanding of equality transcended formal equality, meaning mere legal equality before the law. Instead, he advocated for substantive equality, where everyone has equal chances for social, economic, and educational advancement. The

right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution, as well as Article 15, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, reflects this idea.

2) Social and Economic Inequality as Barriers to Full Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's view was that political democracy alone, without addressing social and economic inequalities, would be insufficient. He famously noted that "Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy." His commitment to the idea of full democracy — a democracy where people enjoy relative equality in living standards, literacy, and equal opportunities — was foundational to his vision of a just society. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a fair and just democracy meant more than just political rights like voting and free speech. It also involved economic security, access to education, and the breaking down of caste-based hierarchies.

3) Gender Equality: A Progressive Vision

Another pivotal aspect of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision was his insistence on gender equality. He believed that gender inequality was deeply entrenched in India's social fabric, especially through Hindu customs and traditions, which oppressed women, particularly those belonging to lower castes. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the progress of women was essential for the advancement of the entire community. He argued that empowering women through education, property rights, and divorce rights was integral to establishing a more equitable society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concern for gender equality is most notably reflected in his advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to reform Hindu personal laws, granting women rights to inheritance and divorce — issues that were often denied to them under traditional Hindu law.

4) The Hindu Code Bill and Gender Equality

The Hindu Code Bill was one of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's landmark proposals for gender reform in India. The Bill aimed to establish equality between men and women in matters of inheritance, marriage, and divorce and was a bold challenge to entrenched patriarchal norms. Though the Bill faced stiff opposition, especially from conservative factions within the legislature, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of gender equality laid the foundation for subsequent women's rights reforms in India.

5) Economic, Social, and Political Equality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of equality was holistic. While political and civil rights — like the right to vote, freedom of speech, and protection from discrimination — were vital, they needed to be coupled with economic equality to make meaningful democracy a reality. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's emphasis on land reforms, access to education, and the eradication of untouchability reflect his larger concern for social justice. This was a sharp contrast to the concept of equality articulated in

the French and American revolutions, where political equality was prioritized without much focus on social and economic inequalities.

9.4 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S SAFEGUARDS FOR THE SCHEDULED CASTES

Many of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's safeguards were eventually incorporated into the Indian Constitution after independence. Key provisions such as reservations in education, employment, and the legislature were introduced to ensure that the Scheduled Castes had adequate representation and could participate fully in the social, economic, and political life of the nation. Few are followings

1) The Poona Pact and Representation for the Scheduled Castes

The Poona Pact (1932) between Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi was a pivotal moment in the history of Dalit rights. It resulted from Gandhi's fast unto death to protest against the separate electorates for the Depressed Classes (Scheduled Castes), which were proposed in the Communal Award by the British government. The Pact provided for a joint electorate with a certain number of reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes in the legislature, which would be filled through elections where Dalit voters would have the right to vote for candidates from their community. This was a compromise between Gandhi's insistence on Hindu unity and Ambedkar's demand for political empowerment of the Scheduled Castes.

2) Quantum of Representation: Ambedkar's Critique

In Article II-Section IV of the memorandum, the quantum of representation for the Scheduled Castes was defined proportionally. The allocation of seats for the Scheduled Castes was based on the remaining seats after the allocations for other communities and special interests had been made. While this proportional representation aimed to ensure political inclusion, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that this system had resulted in grave injustice. His critique highlighted that the weightage given to the Scheduled Castes was insufficient compared to other communities, and in some cases, it was completely absent. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar contended that the weightage system created inequitable outcomes, with some groups receiving more representation while the Scheduled Castes, despite their historically disadvantaged status, received too little.

3) The Double Controversy: Weightage and Distribution

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar pointed out the unequal distribution of weightage among minorities, which created a situation where some minorities, such as Muslims and Sikhs, received greater weightage, while the Scheduled Castes received significantly less. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that this created a systemic injustice, where the Dalit community was further marginalized within the political framework. He called for reform in the way weightage was allocated and suggested that it be

distributed based on an intelligible principle to ensure a fair and just representation for all marginalized communities.

4) Electoral Systems: Joint vs. Separate Electorates

One of the core issues in the Poona Pact was the electoral system for the Scheduled Castes. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that if a minority group, such as the Dalits, desired a joint electorate, the majority community should respect their choice. In cases where the minority was too small to influence the majority, separate electorates might be preferable to avoid being submerged within the broader electorate. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized that the political realities of India were complex, and the electoral system needed to be adaptive to the size and political power of the minority.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's flexibility in allowing for either joint or separate electorates for the Dalits reflected his pragmatic approach to achieving political representation. He was keen on ensuring that the Dalits had a mechanism that would guarantee them political visibility and representation regardless of the majority community's preferences.

5) Safeguarding the Rights of the Depressed Classes

In his memorandum titled "A Scheme of Political Safeguards for the Protection of the Depressed Classes", Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar provided a comprehensive framework for protecting the rights of the Untouchables. His proposals were deeply reformist and aimed at addressing both political and social inequities. Some of the key points he advocated for included:

- **Access to Public Places:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar demanded the right for the Dalits to access public places, which had been restricted under the caste system. This was critical in challenging the physical and social segregation that Dalits faced.
- **Criminalizing Social Boycotts:** He proposed that social boycotts against the Dalits should be treated as a criminal offense. This measure was aimed at protecting the Dalits from the social ostracism and discrimination they faced in various spheres of life, such as education, marriage, and public space.
- **Positive Discrimination:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar advocated for positive discrimination within the electoral system, especially because he doubted the effectiveness of the universal adult franchise in ensuring equal political rights for the Dalits. He felt that affirmative action was necessary to provide a level playing field for the historically oppressed communities.
- **Separate Electorates:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was also in favour of separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes, at least in the early stages, to ensure that the community could build its own political base free from the pressure of Hindu orthodoxy and the potential influence

of caste-based majorities. This provision, he felt, would allow Dalits to develop their leadership and not be dominated by the majority caste groups.

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6) Constitutional Implementation: Post-1947 India

Many of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's safeguards were eventually incorporated into the Indian Constitution after independence. Key provisions such as reservations in education, employment, and the legislature were introduced to ensure that the Scheduled Castes had adequate representation and could participate fully in the social, economic, and political life of the nation. While Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision laid the foundation for these constitutional safeguards, the effectiveness of these measures has been debated over the years, with some arguing that the implementation of affirmative action policies has been insufficient or inconsistent.

9.5 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Clause 1: Executive Power and Minority Representation

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to executive power concerning minorities, as stated in Clause 1, is a sophisticated adaptation of the American executive model for India. The fundamental idea was to ensure that minorities had adequate representation in governance while addressing potential oppression by the majority. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that the appointment of Ministers did not have to be restricted to those directly elected to the Legislature, echoing the British system, where Ministers could be appointed from among elected representatives but had to be re-elected before taking up their ministerial positions.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's argument here is pragmatic: He was in favour of creating a system that provided flexibility and minority representation without rigidly adhering to traditional forms of governance. His stance was not controversial in the sense that it did not challenge the principle of responsible government, but rather sought to adapt the system to the practical realities of India's complex society, where minority protection was paramount.

Clause 2: Remedy Against Tyranny – Inquiry, Publicity, and Discussion

In Clause 2, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proposed a mechanism to prevent tyranny by the majority through inquiry, publicity, and discussion. This provision was meant to ensure that issues concerning minorities were addressed openly and transparently, thereby preventing oppressive practices and policies from taking root in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was keen on creating a political framework where minority rights were constantly examined and evaluated, ensuring that discriminatory practices would be subject to scrutiny. This idea found support in the Sapru

Committee Report of 1945, which highlighted the necessity of resolving minority issues and promoting social justice. The committee's work aligned with Ambedkar's view that minorities should have a platform to express their concerns, and the government should ensure that these concerns were given a fair hearing.

Clause 3: Social Boycotts and Protection from Oppression

In Clause 3, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar took a strong stance against social boycotts—a prevalent form of oppression against Dalits and minorities in colonial India. He referenced the 1928 Bombay Government Committee, which had investigated the social boycott of Depressed Classes. The committee's findings revealed widespread violence against Dalits and a lack of economic independence for them, with many Dalits depending on the orthodox classes for their livelihood, often in exploitative conditions.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's response was straightforward: social boycotts should be criminalized. He drew from the Burma Anti-Boycott Act of 1922, which was a legal tool to address discriminatory practices. By advocating for such legal provisions, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to empower minorities by providing them with legal recourse against social exclusion and economic dependency. His call for the criminalization of social boycotts was intended to combat the pervasive caste-based discrimination that crippled the lives of Dalits, who were subjected to violence, exclusion, and economic oppression.

Clause 4: Government Spending for Minority Welfare

Clause 4 guaranteed the power of the government to spend money for the welfare of minorities, specifically allocating resources for their benefit. This provision echoed the Government of India Act of 1935 and reinforced the idea that financial resources should be directed towards addressing the needs of marginalized communities. Ambedkar's proposal was grounded in the understanding that true social justice requires the state's active participation in eliminating disadvantages faced by minorities, including financial support for their upliftment.

By placing these safeguards within the constitutional framework, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar aimed to ensure that minorities—particularly Dalits—had access to resources that would facilitate their social mobility, reduce economic deprivation, and promote political empowerment.

9.6 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S VISION, STATE SOCIALISMANDECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

A) State Socialism in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of state socialism was revolutionary and rooted in the economic needs of the newly independent India. He believed that the state should play a central role in managing the economy, ensuring that the key industries, essential resources, and wealth were

controlled and distributed equitably. His proposal included the following key elements:

- **State Ownership of Key Industries:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned the state taking control of the basic industries essential for the country's development. This would include sectors such as manufacturing, energy, transportation, and others, which were vital for economic independence and reducing the influence of foreign or private entities.

- **State Monopoly in the Insurance Sector:**

By controlling the insurance sector, the state would ensure that resources could be directed towards social welfare rather than private profits. This control would help in achieving greater financial inclusion and security for all citizens, especially marginalized groups.

- **Subsisting Rights in State Industries:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed in ensuring that workers had rights and security within state-run industries, ensuring that the labor force benefited from economic progress.

- **State Ownership in Agriculture:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also saw the need for the state to play a role in agriculture. He proposed state ownership or at least significant involvement in agricultural land, suggesting that land reform and the nationalization of land would promote social and economic equality.

- **Regulation of Agricultural Contracts and Production:**

His idea extended to regulating agricultural contracts, ensuring that farmers weren't subjected to exploitation by landowners or corporations. This included measures such as levying charges on agricultural production and imposing penalties for violations of agricultural contracts.

Despite the comprehensiveness of his vision, state socialism was a concept that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had reservations about in terms of its practical implementation. He proposed that this scheme of state socialism would operate for only ten years starting from the adoption of the Constitution. This time frame was intended to allow the state to build a foundation for an equitable society, after which private enterprises could gradually resume.

Unfortunately, Ambedkar's state socialism vision was largely rejected by key figures in Indian politics. Sardar Patel and J. B. Kripalani were among those who did not agree with his economic model. Later, he sought support from Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad to include these ideas within the Constitution, but both denied his requests, leaving Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar disillusioned with Nehru's Objectives Resolution. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar felt that the Resolution was a retreat from

socialism, particularly in its failure to endorse land nationalization, which he saw as critical to ensuring social, political, and economic justice for all Indians, especially the marginalized.

B) Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Economic Democracy: One Man, One Value

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not just concerned with political democracy but with economic democracy as well. He firmly believed that true democracy cannot be realized without addressing the economic structures that uphold inequality. His principle of economic democracy, summarized as "one man, one value", aimed at ensuring that every individual had equal economic opportunities and freedom.

- **Economic Democracy Over Political Democracy:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar focused more on economic democracy in his States and Minorities text. He recognized that while political democracy could be achieved through universal adult suffrage and the granting of fundamental rights, economic democracy required a more intentional framework to eliminate the inequalities created by capitalism and class disparities.

- **The Failure of Political Democracy:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was critical of the Indian National Congress, which, at the time, had no clear economic program for India's economic structure. He was disheartened by the lack of a concrete plan for economic reforms that would address poverty, inequality, and the socio-economic gaps present in Indian society. He saw political democracy as insufficient unless accompanied by economic democracy.

- **Constitutional Responsibility for Economic Structure:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that constitutions should not merely focus on political structures and civil rights but should also explicitly describe the economic structure the state seeks to build. He criticized constitutional lawyers who paid little attention to the economic implications of governance and suggested that India, as a latecomer in the constitutional field, should avoid copying the mistakes of other nations that had failed to build economic justice into their constitutional frameworks.

Criticism of Existing Systems:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's critique was not just directed at India but at global constitutional practices. He pointed out that many Western democracies were structured to uphold the interests of the privileged

9.7 THE FUTURE MODEL OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

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The future model of the Indian Constitution, based on the ideas of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and contemporary scholarly perspectives, could be envisioned as a dynamic framework that addresses the complexities of communal identities, promotes individual political agency, and ensures group-specific protections for minorities. Here are key points for such a model:

1) Recognition of Fluid and Contingent Identities:

The future Constitution should move away from rigid, fixed communal identities, such as the classification of people as either part of the majority or minority. Instead, it should recognize identities as fluid and subject to change based on individual political agency. This would allow for a more inclusive, evolving definition of who belongs to which community, as opposed to the colonial approach of fixed, territorial identities.

2) Promoting Economic and Social Democracy:

Inspired by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision, the future Constitution should focus on political democracy and economic democracy. This means ensuring that the state plays a central role in addressing economic disparities, guaranteeing access to basic needs, and promoting social justice, particularly for historically marginalized groups like Dalits and backward classes. State socialism, while challenging to implement fully, should be seen as a guiding principle for reducing economic inequality.

3) Empowering Minorities through Representation:

Rather than a majoritarian conception of the nation, the Constitution should ensure that minority communities are not only represented in governance but also given protection against domination by the majority. This could be achieved through community-specific minority rights and ensuring that minorities have a real stake in decision-making processes at all levels.

4) Addressing Caste as a Social and Political Issue:

The future Constitution should directly address caste-based discrimination, not just as a social issue, but as a political one. Dalits and other marginalized groups should be recognized as distinct political minorities, ensuring that their interests and concerns are not subsumed under the broader Hindu identity. The Constitution should also include provisions for combating caste-based violence and discrimination, along with mechanisms for the empowerment of these communities.

5) Secularism as Inclusive Nationalism:

Secularism in the future model of the Constitution should not be seen as a mere opposition to communalism but should be redefined as an inclusive

nationalism that accommodates all communities, including religious minorities. The idea of the nation should not be based on religious homogeneity but should embrace pluralism and diversity, respecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious or caste backgrounds.

6) Ensuring Protection for Vulnerable Groups:

The Constitution should guarantee that vulnerable groups, including women, religious minorities, and lower-caste communities, are protected from discrimination and oppression. These protections should go beyond mere legal equality and should include affirmative action, special provisions in education, employment, and access to social services.

7) Flexible Constitutional Amendments:

The Constitution should provide a mechanism for continuous evolution, allowing for the adaptation of laws and policies to address emerging challenges in Indian society, especially in terms of social justice, economic equality, and communal harmony. This flexibility would allow India to better address the changing needs of its diverse population and promote a more inclusive society.

8) Emphasis on Political Agency and Deliberative Democracy:

The future model should empower individuals to act as agents in their political and social spheres, ensuring that citizens can make informed decisions and participate in governance. It should encourage deliberative democracy, where individuals and communities engage in dialogue and decision-making processes that reflect their evolving needs and aspirations.

In summary, the future Indian Constitution should move beyond the legacy of colonial structures and static identities. It should embrace fluidity in communal identities, economic democracy, and minority protection while promoting the agency of individuals and fostering a more inclusive and deliberative political system. This would ensure that the Constitution continues to be a living document, capable of adapting to the dynamic and diverse needs of Indian society.

9.8 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for the Indian Constitution underscores the importance of creating a political and social framework that ensures justice, equality, and protection for all citizens, especially marginalized and minority communities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions, particularly in terms of safeguarding the rights of Scheduled Castes, religious minorities, and economically disadvantaged sections, highlight the need for a constitution that is both inclusive and responsive to the evolving socio-political landscape of India. His ideas of state socialism, economic democracy, and communal harmony point to the necessity of addressing both political representation and economic empowerment as integral parts of nation-building.

The future model of the Indian Constitution should prioritize the dynamic interaction between individual rights and collective protections, ensuring that no community is left vulnerable to majoritarian dominance. It must also remain adaptable, accommodating the fluid nature of identity and addressing emerging challenges like communalism, caste discrimination, and socio-economic inequalities. By embracing a more inclusive and equitable approach, the Constitution can lay the foundation for a society that not only respects individual freedoms but also upholds the principles of justice and equality for all its citizens, regardless of their caste, religion, or social standing. Ambedkar's vision of a truly democratic India, where the marginalized are empowered and the diverse identities of its citizens are acknowledged and respected, should continue to guide the evolution of the Indian Constitution in the future.

9.9 QUESTIONS

- 1) What was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's primary objective in drafting States and Minorities: Future Model of the Indian Constitution?
- 2) How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar propose to address the economic inequalities in his future model of the Indian Constitution?
- 3) What safeguards did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar suggest for minorities in his vision for the Indian Constitution?
- 4) How did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar define "state socialism" in the context of his future constitutional model?
- 5) What measures did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recommend for ensuring social and economic justice for the Scheduled Castes and minorities?
- 6) In what ways did Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar criticize the existing constitutional models while presenting his future vision?

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LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

a) Indian Constitution : Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy

Unit Structure :

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand and explain the philosophical foundations of the Indian Constitution as envisioned by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, particularly in relation to liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity.
2. To analyze Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's role as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, with specific reference to the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs).
3. To evaluate the significance of Article 32 (Right to Constitutional Remedies) and its characterization by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar as the "heart and soul of the Constitution."
4. To critically examine the relationship between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, assessing how both components interact in shaping the Indian welfare state.
5. To assess the continuing relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy in addressing contemporary issues such as caste inequality, social justice, and minority rights.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, remains one of the most profound legal minds and social reformers in modern Indian history. As a jurist, political thinker, and visionary leader, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to the making of the Indian republic were not merely institutional or procedural—they were fundamentally ethical, philosophical, and deeply humanist in their essence. His legal and constitutional legacy continues to shape India's democracy and jurisprudence in lasting and foundational ways.

This unit, *Legal and Constitutional Perspectives of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar*, is an academic inquiry into the multidimensional nature of his thought. It aims to explore and critically evaluate Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to constitutionalism, legal theory, jurisprudence, and institutional reform. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar played a central role in framing the Constitution of India—an extraordinary document that enshrines the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and fraternity. He ensured the inclusion of provisions that safeguarded fundamental rights, introduced social and economic justice, and laid the groundwork for affirmative action to uplift historically marginalized communities.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a staunch advocate of constitutional morality—a concept he believed was essential to the functioning of a true democracy. He emphasized the supremacy of law over the arbitrary will of individuals and was critical of majoritarian tendencies that could undermine the rights of minorities and the oppressed. His insistence on legal safeguards for Dalits and other disadvantaged groups, including the provision of reservations in education, employment, and legislatures, remains one of the most debated and impactful aspects of India's legal framework.

Beyond his role in constitution-making, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's scholarship in law and economics provided a critical foundation for legal reform and social transformation. His writings on the Hindu Code Bill reflect his bold attempt to reform personal laws and establish gender equality. His legal philosophy was rooted in the idea that the law must serve as a vehicle of social change and that justice must be accessible to all, not just the privileged few. In doing so, he redefined the purpose of law in a stratified society.

In a time when democratic values are increasingly being tested, revisiting the legal and constitutional ideas of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar becomes an urgent scholarly necessity. His vision was not just of a political democracy, but of a social democracy that guarantees dignity, justice, and equal opportunity for every individual. This book brings together diverse scholarly perspectives that examine Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional vision, his critique of caste-based inequality, his

understanding of federalism and parliamentary democracy, and his enduring relevance in contemporary legal debates.

By engaging with these themes, this volume seeks to reaffirm Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's role not only as the Father of the Indian Constitution but also as a transformative legal philosopher whose ideas transcend time and geography. His work remains a beacon for those striving to understand and implement the true spirit of constitutionalism in the pursuit of an egalitarian and just society.

10.2 INDIAN CONSTITUTION: PREAMBLE

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, known as the *chief architect of the Indian Constitution*, played a pivotal role in shaping the foundational pillars of the Indian polity. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, his vision and intellectual influence pervaded the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)—three key components that reflect the moral, political, and legal philosophy of the Indian State. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's scholarship in law, economics, and political theory informed his efforts to craft a Constitution that ensured not only political democracy but also social and economic justice for India's most oppressed and marginalized communities.

This unit explores Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's specific contributions to these constitutional elements, analyzing their significance and enduring relevance in contemporary Indian governance.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Preamble: Framing the Constitutional Soul

The Preamble to the Indian Constitution is often described as the "soul" of the Constitution. It encapsulates the essence, vision, and aspirations of the Indian Republic. Drafted in the aftermath of colonial rule and amidst the challenges of caste discrimination, economic disparity, and communal divisions, the Preamble was envisioned not merely as a statement of intent but as a moral compass for the newly independent nation. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, played a central role in shaping the constitutional ethos embodied in the Preamble. His deep engagement with issues of social justice, equality, and democratic governance informed the formulation of the Preamble's core values: Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

The Preamble to the Indian Constitution encapsulates the ideals and objectives that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisioned for an independent, inclusive, and democratic India. Although the language of the Preamble was finalized by a committee, its essence was deeply influenced by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thought.

He emphasized that the Constitution must guarantee liberty, equality, and fraternity—the three ideals he had drawn from the French Revolution and the teachings of Buddha. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, these principles

were not abstract; they were essential tools for the annihilation of caste and the realization of human dignity.

In his final speech to the Constituent Assembly (November 25, 1949), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stated:

“We are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality, and in social and economic life we will have inequality... If we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life, democracy will be put in peril.”

Thus, his vision of the Preamble was to lay the ideological foundation for a social democracy that could harmonize individual liberty with collective welfare.

I. The Philosophical Foundations of the Preamble

The Preamble is rooted in the values of the Indian freedom struggle and draws from the philosophical traditions of liberalism, socialism, and humanism. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, these values were not abstract ideals but concrete principles necessary for the transformation of Indian society.

1. **Justice:** Social, economic, and political justice formed the bedrock of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy. He believed that without justice, particularly social justice, India could not become a true democracy. The inclusion of social justice was a revolutionary act aimed at dismantling the caste hierarchy and ensuring dignity for all citizens.
2. **Liberty:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized the importance of individual freedoms, including freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship. These freedoms were to be guaranteed not only in letter but also in spirit.
3. **Equality:** The principle of equality, particularly legal and political equality, was crucial for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He fought relentlessly against caste discrimination and advocated for equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.
4. **Fraternity:** Perhaps the most distinct and personal contribution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to the Preamble was the inclusion of fraternity. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, fraternity was essential to ensure unity and integrity in a deeply divided society. He argued that without fraternity, liberty and equality would remain hollow.

II. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Role in Drafting the Preamble

While the text of the Preamble was formally proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru through the Objectives Resolution (1946), its final shape and language were crafted by the Drafting Committee under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. His role was not merely technical but deeply ideological and philosophical.

In his speeches to the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar consistently highlighted the interconnectedness of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He argued that these were not separate values but a triad that formed the basis of true democracy.

"We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty... On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions... In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality." (Ambedkar, Constituent Assembly Debates, 25 November 1949)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's warning about the potential contradictions within the democratic framework underscores his insistence on embedding social transformation within constitutional principles.

III. Justice as a Transformative Ideal

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of justice was deeply influenced by his experiences as a member of the oppressed Dalit community and by his academic exposure to Western political thought. He argued that true justice required more than legal formalism—it demanded structural change.

1. **Social Justice:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that caste was a form of social tyranny that needed to be abolished for justice to prevail. The inclusion of social justice in the Preamble was a direct challenge to the caste order.
2. **Economic Justice:** He advocated for the redistribution of wealth and state intervention to reduce inequality. Although the Constitution stopped short of adopting a full-fledged socialist economic model, the Directive Principles reflected Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's economic concerns.
3. **Political Justice:** For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the right to vote and participate in governance was essential for the empowerment of the marginalized. Universal adult franchise, which he strongly supported, was a means of ensuring political justice.

IV. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Triad

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar consistently argued that liberty, equality, and fraternity must operate together:

- **Liberty without equality** leads to privilege and exploitation.
- **Equality without liberty** leads to oppression.
- **Without fraternity**, both liberty and equality are unsustainable.

This triad, borrowed partly from the French Revolution, was reinterpreted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Indian socio-political context. He saw fraternity not as mere emotional solidarity but as a constitutional principle necessary for national integration and the annihilation of caste.

“Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians... It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life.” (Ambedkar, CAD, 25 November 1949)

V. The Preamble and the Rest of the Constitution

The values enshrined in the Preamble are operationalized through various parts of the Constitution:

1. **Fundamental Rights (Part III):** Encompass the principles of liberty and equality. Articles 14–18 guarantee equality before the law, while Articles 19–22 protect various freedoms.
2. **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):** Reflect the ideals of justice and economic democracy. Articles 38–51 guide the state in promoting welfare, reducing inequality, and ensuring social justice.
3. **Fundamental Duties (Part IVA):** Introduced later through the 42nd Amendment (1976), these reinforce the principles of fraternity and civic responsibility.

VI. Debates and Critiques

Some critics have argued that the Preamble is symbolic and lacks legal force. However, the Supreme Court of India in the **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)** judgment affirmed that the Preamble is a part of the Constitution and reflects its basic structure.

Additionally, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s emphasis on fraternity has often been marginalized in constitutional discourse. Scholars like Eleanor Zelliot and Gail Omvedt have argued that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s moral vision of society is essential for the realization of the constitutional goals.

VII. Contemporary Relevance

In contemporary India, where questions of inequality, caste discrimination, and religious intolerance persist, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s interpretation of the Preamble remains profoundly relevant. The debates around citizenship, secularism, and social justice must be informed by the foundational values articulated by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Movements for Dalit rights, gender justice, and minority protections often invoke the Preamble as a source of legitimacy and inspiration. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s insistence on constitutional morality—respect for the spirit of the Constitution—is a guiding light in times of political and social turmoil.

10.3 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: DR.BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S LEGAL SHIELD FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Fundamental Rights are the cornerstone of the Indian Constitution. Enshrined in Part III, these rights are designed to protect individual liberties and uphold the dignity of all citizens. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, these rights were not merely legal entitlements but were central to a transformative vision of India. As the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar saw Fundamental Rights as an essential mechanism to dismantle centuries-old hierarchies of caste, religion, and class. His contributions in this regard were both theoretical and practical, ensuring that the Constitution would serve as a legal shield for social justice.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to the Fundamental Rights (Part III) of the Constitution was profound. He believed that without rights, especially for the oppressed, freedom was meaningless. His efforts ensured the inclusion of rights that protected individuals not only from State tyranny but also from social oppression, particularly caste discrimination.

Key Contributions:

- **Right to Equality (Articles 14–18) :** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a relentless crusader against caste discrimination. He saw Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability) as a transformative measure that attacked the core of Hindu social orthodoxy. It was revolutionary in its legal recognition of a centuries-old social evil.
- **Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32) :** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar described Article 32 as the “heart and soul of the Constitution” because it made the Fundamental Rights enforceable in courts. It gave real substance to the notion of a rights-based democracy.
- **Freedom of Religion (Articles 25–28) :** While respecting religious freedom, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was insistent on limiting religion's role in infringing upon social equality and legal order. His own conversion to Buddhism was a political and philosophical statement against the caste-based discrimination legitimized by Hindu orthodoxy.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also supported affirmative action through reservations in jobs and education (Article 15(4), 16(4)) to empower Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes—measures that were later incorporated in practice through constitutional amendments and judicial decisions.

I. The Philosophical Foundations of Fundamental Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for Fundamental Rights was deeply influenced by his experiences with caste discrimination and his study of Western liberal thought. He believed that for democracy to be meaningful, it must guarantee substantive equality, not merely formal equality.

- 1. Natural Rights and Social Contract:** Drawing from Enlightenment thinkers such as Rousseau, Locke, and Mill, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that individuals possess inherent rights that must be protected by the state.
- 2. Social Justice and Human Dignity:** For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the idea of justice transcended legalism and demanded the reconfiguration of social relations. He often emphasized that political democracy must be accompanied by social democracy.
- 3. Equality as the Core Principle:** Among all rights, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered the right to equality as the most vital. He understood that legal equality must combat structural and institutional inequality, especially that perpetuated by caste.

II. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Drafting of Part III

Part III of the Indian Constitution, which deals with Fundamental Rights (Articles 12 to 35), reflects Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's firm belief in civil liberties, equality, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

“The basic principle underlying the Constitution is that every individual is equal before the law and is entitled to equal protection of the laws.” (Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Constituent Assembly Debates)

The Fundamental Rights were broadly categorized as:

- **Right to Equality (Articles 14-18)**
- **Right to Freedom (Articles 19-22)**
- **Right against Exploitation (Articles 23-24)**
- **Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25-28)**
- **Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29-30)**
- **Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32)**

Among these, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar gave special importance to Articles 14, 15, 17, and 32.

III. Article 14 and the Principle of Equality Before Law

Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of laws. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, this article was not merely symbolic but was to be the foundational stone of a casteless society.

- He viewed legal equality as a tool to eradicate the deeply entrenched caste system.
- He insisted that laws must address historical disadvantages to be truly equal.
- The judiciary later expanded this interpretation through the doctrine of "reasonable classification" and "equal protection."

IV. Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's commitment to anti-discrimination was shaped by his personal struggles as a Dalit.

- He championed the cause of positive discrimination (affirmative action).
- Sub-clause (4) of Article 15 was later added through the First Amendment (1951) to allow special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, a development rooted in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy.

V. Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

Article 17 abolished untouchability and declared its practice a punishable offense. This was perhaps the most revolutionary provision inserted in the Constitution.

- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar saw untouchability as the worst form of inhuman treatment and a denial of basic human dignity.
- He had earlier declared, "Turn in any direction you like, caste is the monster that crosses your path."
- The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, was enacted to give effect to this article, followed by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

VI. Article 32: The Right to Constitutional Remedies

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar famously called Article 32 the "heart and soul" of the Constitution. It empowers individuals to approach the Supreme Court for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.

- Without enforcement, he believed, rights would remain empty promises.
- This article institutionalized judicial review and made the Supreme Court the guardian of the Constitution.

"If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important ... I would not refer to any other article except this one. It

is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it." (Ambedkar, CAD, 9 December 1948)

VII. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision and the Debate on Social and Economic Rights

Although Fundamental Rights mostly addressed civil and political liberties, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that these must be linked to social and economic rights.

- He supported the inclusion of socio-economic rights in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV), but regretted their non-enforceable nature.
- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar often warned that political democracy would be a sham if it was not accompanied by economic and social equality.

VIII. Critiques and Contemporary Interpretations

Some critics argue that the Indian Constitution, though liberal in design, has failed to fully realize Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's social justice vision.

- **Implementation gaps:** Laws such as the SC/ST (PoA) Act face enforcement issues.
- **Judicial interpretation:** Courts have sometimes diluted the impact of equality provisions through narrow interpretations.
- **Socio-political backlash:** Reservations and affirmative action have been contested by dominant groups.

Despite these challenges, Fundamental Rights have served as a powerful tool for marginalized groups to assert their dignity and demand justice.

IX. Relevance in Contemporary India

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of Fundamental Rights is more relevant than ever.

- Movements for Dalit rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and gender justice continue to invoke Fundamental Rights.
- Public Interest Litigations (PILs) have become an instrument for social justice.
- The judiciary has interpreted rights expansively to include the Right to Privacy (Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, 2017), Right to Education (Article 21A), and Right to a Clean Environment.

The ongoing struggle for equal citizenship and protection of minority rights reflects Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's enduring influence.

10.4 DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY: VISION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) enshrined in Part IV of the Indian Constitution represent one of the most transformative and visionary components of the constitutional framework. These principles, though non-justiciable, are fundamental in the governance of the country and provide the ideological and philosophical foundation for a welfare state. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, played a pivotal role in incorporating the Directive Principles into the Constitution as instruments to achieve socio-economic democracy and egalitarianism.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar envisaged the Directive Principles as the moral compass of the Indian state, emphasizing their importance in ensuring that political democracy is supplemented by social and economic justice. His conceptualization of the Directive Principles stemmed from his understanding of Indian society's entrenched inequalities and the necessity of state intervention to ensure basic rights and dignities for all citizens.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar acknowledged that Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) were non-justiciable, yet he regarded them as fundamental to governance. These principles were deeply aligned with his concept of social justice and aimed to transform India into a welfare state.

Key Features Reflecting Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision:

- **Article 38:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's insistence on reducing income and status inequality between individuals and groups is reflected in the goal of creating a social order based on justice.
- **Article 39:** These directives address economic rights—equal pay, right to livelihood, and protection for women and children—issues Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had long championed in his legislative career.
- **Article 41:** Right to work and education echoes Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's firm belief in empowering the poor through access to employment and education.

Though DPSPs were not enforceable by courts, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar understood them as guiding principles for future legislation. They provided a constitutional roadmap for achieving the ideals set in the Preamble and protected by Fundamental Rights.

In the Constituent Assembly, he clarified:

“The Directive Principles have a great value, for they lay down that our ideal is economic democracy. Because we did not want merely to lay down a mechanism to enable people to come and capture power... We also wanted to lay down the goal for that power.”

Historical and Philosophical Background

The roots of the Directive Principles can be traced to the Irish Constitution, which inspired many provisions of the Indian Constitution. However, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar imbued these principles with a uniquely Indian relevance by contextualizing them within the caste-ridden, economically stratified social order of India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was deeply influenced by liberal democratic thought, the Buddhist ethics of compassion, and his own experiences of social exclusion and economic deprivation. These influences shaped his belief that legal equality must be complemented by substantive equality, achievable only through affirmative state policies and economic redistribution.

In the Constituent Assembly Debates, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stated:

“The Directive Principles are like the instrument of instructions which were issued to the Governor-General and to the Governors of the Colonies and they are intended to be guidelines to the legislature and the executive.” (CAD, Vol. VII, November 19, 1948)

He made it clear that without socio-economic democracy, the political rights guaranteed in Part III of the Constitution would be hollow for the majority of India’s population.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Vision: Bridging the Gap Between Political and Social Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strongly believed that independence and political democracy were meaningless unless they brought material benefits to the socially and economically marginalized. He warned against the dangers of maintaining political democracy in an unequal social structure:

“We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy.” (Constituent Assembly Debates, November 25, 1949)

The Directive Principles, in his vision, were the tools for actualizing social democracy. They were designed to guide the state in ensuring:

- Equitable distribution of wealth and resources
- Elimination of social inequalities
- Provision of adequate livelihood and social security
- Protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups

Key Provisions Reflecting Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Ideals

Several Articles in Part IV of the Constitution directly reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s commitment to social justice:

- **Article 38:** Securing a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people
- **Article 39:** Principles of policy to be followed by the State, including equal pay for equal work, protection of the health of workers, and prevention of concentration of wealth
- **Article 41:** Right to work, to education and to public assistance
- **Article 42:** Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief
- **Article 46:** Promotion of the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections

These articles underscore the commitment to not only eliminate discrimination but also to create enabling conditions for equality.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Article 46: Empowerment through Education and Economic Justice

Among all the Directive Principles, Article 46 particularly resonates with Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's lifelong struggle for Dalit empowerment through education. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that education was the key to emancipation and social mobility. By including this provision, he institutionalized the constitutional mandate to uplift the most oppressed communities.

He believed:

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a family.”

Thus, Article 46 not only reflects his concern for Dalits but also for other socially and economically backward communities.

Directive Principles and the Economic Model of Development

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar advocated for state-led industrialization and land reforms to eradicate poverty and unemployment. Although he did not explicitly mention socialism, his economic vision was closely aligned with democratic socialism. The Directive Principles, especially Articles 38 and 39, mirror this orientation towards redistributive justice.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also supported cooperative farming, nationalization of key industries, and control over economic monopolies, which align with the egalitarian spirit of the DPSPs. He viewed the state not merely as a passive arbiter but as an active agent of socio-economic transformation.

Judicial Interpretation and the Evolution of DPSP

Initially, the judiciary viewed Directive Principles as subordinate to Fundamental Rights. However, over time, through landmark judgments

such as **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)**, **Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980)**, and **Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993)**, the judiciary began to harmonize DPSPs with Fundamental Rights.

The courts recognized that both are complementary and essential to the basic structure of the Constitution. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of a harmonious relationship between rights and directives thus found belated but meaningful recognition in constitutional jurisprudence.

Challenges to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision

Despite the constitutional mandate, the implementation of the DPSPs has faced numerous hurdles:

- **Economic Inequality:** The wealth gap continues to widen, contradicting Article 39(c).
- **Caste Discrimination:** Social justice remains a distant dream in many parts of India.
- **Lack of Political Will:** Many DPSPs remain unimplemented due to political apathy.
- **Judicial Limitations:** Non-justiciability of DPSPs weakens enforceability.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had foreseen some of these challenges and had warned that the Constitution, no matter how well-written, would only be as good as its implementation.

Relevance in Contemporary India

In the era of globalization and neoliberal reforms, the relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's socio-economic vision as embodied in the DPSP has become even more significant. Issues like labor rights, environmental sustainability, rural employment, and universal healthcare demand a revival of the values enshrined in the DPSPs.

Recent legislations like the **Right to Education Act (2009)**, **National Food Security Act (2013)**, and **MGNREGA (2005)** reflect the realization of some DPSPs, though much remains to be done.

10.5 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles of State Policy are central to the spirit and function of the Indian Constitution. His vision of social democracy—rooted in liberty, equality, and fraternity—was embedded in these three components, offering a legal and moral framework for an inclusive Indian state.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not merely a legal drafter; he was a moral architect of modern India. His commitment to social justice, his opposition to caste hierarchy, and his vision of constitutional morality continue to guide India's legal and political institutions.

His legacy reminds us that the Constitution is not just a legal document, but a social contract to build a just, equitable, and humane society.

10.6 QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the philosophical foundations of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. How do the concepts of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of social democracy?
2. Examine the enforceability and limitations of Fundamental Rights in India. How have these rights evolved through constitutional amendments and judicial interpretations?
3. "Article 32 is the heart and soul of the Constitution." Critically assess Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's statement in the context of the protection of Fundamental Rights.
4. Compare and contrast Fundamental Rights (Part III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV). Can these parts be harmoniously interpreted in practice?
5. Discuss the constitutional significance of Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability). How does it reflect the transformative potential of the Constitution?
6. Discuss the role of Directive Principles in promoting a welfare state. How far has the Indian state succeeded in implementing these principles?
7. What is the importance of the "Right to Equality" under Articles 14–18 in dismantling caste and gender-based hierarchies in Indian society?
8. Discuss the judicial approach towards balancing Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles, especially in cases involving socio-economic rights.
9. How does the Preamble serve as an interpretive tool in constitutional adjudication? Cite relevant Supreme Court judgments.
10. Critically examine the relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy in the contemporary Indian polity. How do current challenges relate to his constitutional vision?

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LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

b) Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe and OBCs

Unit Structure :

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Castes
- 11.3 Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes
- 11.4 Constitutional Safeguards for Other Backward Classes
- 11.5 Summary
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11.0 OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the historical background and constitutional basis for safeguards provided to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in India.
2. Analyze the role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in formulating constitutional provisions for the protection and empowerment of marginalized communities.
3. Identify and interpret key constitutional articles (e.g., Articles 15(4), 16(4), 17, 46, 330, 332, 338, 338A, 340, 341, 342) related to SCs, STs, and OBCs.
4. Evaluate the significance of affirmative action policies (like reservations in education, employment, and political representation) as tools of social justice.
5. Critically assess the implementation challenges of constitutional safeguards, including issues such as caste-based discrimination, land alienation, and cultural erosion.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution, considered one of the most progressive documents in the world, stands as a beacon of hope for social justice, particularly for historically marginalized communities. Among the key features of the Constitution is its explicit provision of constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). These safeguards, introduced as a direct response to centuries of social, economic, and political oppression, were strongly advocated for by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a towering figure in Indian history and the principal architect of the Constitution.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, having endured the oppressive caste system, recognized the necessity for legal mechanisms to dismantle the social hierarchy and uplift the oppressed. His life's work and vision were instrumental in ensuring that the Constitution of India would not only guarantee equality in principle but would also institutionalize affirmative action to protect and promote the welfare of SCs, STs, and OBCs. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for these communities was not just a reaction to the caste-based discrimination but also a vision for a democratic, inclusive society, in which all citizens had the opportunity to realize their full potential.

This chapter delves into the key constitutional provisions that ensure the protection and advancement of SCs, STs, and OBCs, exploring Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions in shaping these safeguards. The Constitution's provisions related to reservations, protection of civil rights, and the establishment of commissions for the welfare of these communities are examined within the broader framework of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's social and political vision. Additionally, the chapter analyzes the challenges and debates regarding the implementation of these safeguards in the present context, offering insights into the continuing relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions in contemporary India.

11.2 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR SCHEDULED CASTES

The Concept of Scheduled Castes: A Historical Perspective

The Scheduled Castes, previously referred to as "Untouchables," form a significant segment of India's population. These communities have historically been subjected to severe social exclusion, deprivation, and discrimination. The British colonial administration, recognizing the need to address social and economic inequalities, categorized these communities as "Untouchables," later known as Scheduled Castes, and identified them for affirmative action policies. The Indian Constitution took this further by providing constitutional safeguards that were crucial for their dignity, social justice, and representation.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's personal experiences with caste discrimination were central to his advocacy for the rights of Dalits. As an academic, activist, and legal expert, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar understood that legislative reform alone would not suffice in addressing the deep-seated social inequities faced by these communities. Thus, he pushed for constitutional provisions that would not only guarantee civil and political rights but also ensure economic justice through affirmative action.

The Constitution of India incorporates various provisions to ensure that the Scheduled Castes are protected from discrimination and have access to opportunities for socio-economic empowerment. These safeguards are scattered across multiple articles and parts of the Constitution. The most notable provisions are found in Part XVI and Part XVIII, which address the rights of SCs, their political representation, and affirmative action policies.

1. Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination on Grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex, or Place of Birth

Article 15 of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. It specifically allows the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, including the Scheduled Castes. This provision serves as the legal foundation for affirmative action policies and sets the stage for social welfare measures targeted at SCs.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized that mere abolition of untouchability and legal guarantees of equality would not be sufficient to elevate SCs to the level of social and economic parity with the rest of the population. Article 15 thus provides for special measures that allow the state to step in and ensure that SCs receive the opportunities they need to uplift themselves.

2. Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

Article 17 explicitly abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form. The abolition of untouchability was a direct response to the centuries of oppression and discrimination faced by Dalits. This provision was a revolutionary step in the Indian Constitution and provided the legal basis for the eradication of caste-based segregation.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who had personally encountered untouchability, was determined to make it illegal and punishable under law. He considered the abolition of untouchability as the first step towards securing dignity for Dalits and removing the stigma of social inferiority.

3. Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Weaker Sections

Article 46 mandates the promotion of the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections of society. This provision is central to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's

vision of social democracy, as he believed that education and economic upliftment were crucial to the emancipation of Dalits.

By including this provision in the Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sought to ensure that the state would not only protect the rights of SCs but also actively work to improve their status through state-sponsored education programs, scholarships, and economic reforms. The state, therefore, had the responsibility to ensure that Dalits were not excluded from educational and employment opportunities that could enable their socio-economic advancement.

4. Article 330 and 332: Reservation of Seats in the Legislature

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was acutely aware of the need for political representation for the Scheduled Castes, particularly in legislative bodies. Articles 330 and 332 of the Indian Constitution ensure that a certain number of seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes in the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and the State Legislative Assemblies. This provision ensures that Dalits have a political voice and can directly influence the legislative process that affects their lives.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for reserved seats was based on his belief that the political system would otherwise remain closed to the needs of the oppressed. The reservation system provided a mechanism to bring Dalit voices to the political table and ensure that their concerns were represented in the formulation of laws and policies.

5. Article 341: Specification of Scheduled Castes

Article 341 gives the President of India the power to specify, by a public notification, which castes shall be recognized as Scheduled Castes. This provision allows the state to identify and target communities that have historically been subjected to untouchability and are in need of special provisions.

This provision is crucial for the identification and recognition of marginalized communities and ensures that state support reaches the most disadvantaged sections of society.

6. Article 338: National Commission for Scheduled Castes

Article 338 provides for the establishment of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, an autonomous body tasked with investigating and monitoring the safeguards provided to SCs under the Constitution. The Commission has the power to report on the implementation of these safeguards and suggest measures to the government to improve the welfare of Scheduled Castes.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that an independent body was essential for ensuring that the rights of Dalits were protected and that their grievances were heard and addressed by the state. The establishment of such a commission ensures accountability and oversight, which is critical for the effective implementation of the constitutional safeguards.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision and the Realization of Constitutional Safeguards

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for the Scheduled Castes was rooted in the idea of social justice, which he saw as inseparable from political and economic justice. He envisioned a society where SCs would not only enjoy legal equality but also have the means to achieve social, economic, and political parity. Through the incorporation of various safeguards in the Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar aimed to create a framework that would allow SCs to overcome centuries of systemic exclusion and oppression.

His understanding of the caste system and the deep-rooted social hierarchies that it perpetuated led him to argue that affirmative action was necessary for the upliftment of Dalits. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for reservations, educational and economic support, and political representation were essential components of his vision for a just society.

While the provisions for Scheduled Castes in the Constitution were groundbreaking, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was acutely aware of the challenges that would arise in the implementation of these safeguards. The persistence of caste-based discrimination, even after independence, posed significant obstacles to the effective realization of constitutional guarantees. However, he remained hopeful that the state, through its legal and constitutional machinery, could gradually change the social order and ensure that Dalits were no longer at the margins of society.

Challenges in Implementing Safeguards for Scheduled Castes

Despite the constitutional safeguards, the implementation of these provisions has faced several challenges:

- 1. Caste-Based Discrimination:** The persistence of caste-based discrimination in rural and urban areas has hindered the effective realization of the rights of SCs. Discrimination in education, employment, and public spaces continues to be a problem in many parts of India.
- 2. Political Manipulation of Reservations:** Reservations, particularly in education and employment, have sometimes been subject to political manipulation, with some sections of society using reservations for electoral gain rather than genuine empowerment.
- 3. Economic Inequality:** While legal safeguards provide a foundation for social equality, economic inequality remains a persistent issue for SCs. Access to quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities is still limited for many Dalits.
- 4. Judicial Interpretations:** The implementation of reservations and other affirmative action measures has often been challenged in courts, and judicial interpretations have sometimes diluted the impact of these provisions.

11.3 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR SCHEDULED TRIBES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Legal and Constitutional
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The Indian Constitution stands as a landmark document in the history of the world, not only for its focus on equality and justice but also for its explicit provisions for the protection of marginalized communities. Among these communities, the Scheduled Tribes (STs) hold a unique place. For centuries, indigenous tribal communities in India have faced systematic neglect, exploitation, and exclusion from mainstream social, economic, and political processes. The Constitution of India, under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, sought to correct these historical injustices by providing specific safeguards for the Scheduled Tribes, recognizing their distinct social, cultural, and economic conditions.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, played a crucial role in ensuring that the tribal population, who were largely dependent on forests, agriculture, and local economies, would be included in the governance and progress of independent India. This chapter aims to explore the constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Tribes (STs) under the Indian Constitution, with a focus on their legal, social, and political implications. These safeguards are not just a product of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's commitment to social justice but also a reflection of the broader vision of a fair, inclusive, and just India.

The Concept of Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Context

Scheduled Tribes are communities that, under the Constitution of India, are recognized as socially and economically backward and are entitled to special provisions for their protection and advancement. Unlike other marginalized groups such as the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are defined by their distinct cultural, linguistic, and geographical characteristics. They predominantly live in the tribal areas of India, including forests and remote hilly regions, and have traditionally been outside the mainstream social and economic systems.

The categorization of these communities as Scheduled Tribes was based on their distinct social practices, geographical isolation, and backwardness. These tribes had a unique social structure, with their customs and laws often differing from the rest of Indian society. However, the advent of colonialism, along with the gradual intrusion of mainstream society and economic systems, led to the marginalization of these communities, exposing them to exploitation, displacement, and alienation from their traditional livelihoods.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, in his constitutional framework, recognized the need for specific protections for these tribes to ensure their cultural, economic, and social integration into the mainstream without compromising their unique identity.

Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes

The Indian Constitution, while guaranteeing fundamental rights to all citizens, also enshrines provisions that specifically address the needs and rights of the Scheduled Tribes. These provisions, found primarily in Part XVI and Part XVIII of the Constitution, deal with a range of issues, including land rights, education, political representation, and social justice.

1. Article 15(4): Special Provisions for the Advancement of STs

Article 15(4) of the Indian Constitution allows the state to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes, including the Scheduled Tribes. This provision serves as the foundation for affirmative action policies aimed at improving the educational and socio-economic status of tribal communities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's insistence on the inclusion of such a provision was driven by the belief that legal equality was not enough for the upliftment of these communities; instead, the state needed to actively intervene to bridge the gaps in social and economic development.

2. Article 16(4): Reservation in Public Employment

Article 16(4) provides for the reservation of posts in public employment for the Scheduled Tribes. This provision ensures that individuals from tribal communities have the opportunity to participate in the civil services and government employment, which are essential for socio-economic mobility. The reservation policy is one of the primary tools for ensuring that STs, who have traditionally been excluded from the benefits of modern state mechanisms, are provided with an equal opportunity in government jobs and services.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, recognizing the systemic barriers to equal access to education and employment faced by STs, championed this provision as a necessary mechanism for their social integration and empowerment. The reservation in public employment has played a pivotal role in providing upward mobility for many in the tribal communities, helping them break free from the constraints of traditional occupation systems.

3. Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests of STs

Article 46 of the Indian Constitution mandates that the state must promote the educational and economic interests of the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of society. This provision is foundational to the state's role in ensuring that tribal communities are not left behind in the development process. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's inclusion of this article was reflective of his commitment to the socio-economic development of marginalized communities.

Through this provision, the Constitution empowers the government to set up educational institutions, scholarships, and economic programs that

cater specifically to the needs of STs. The aim was to ensure that tribal communities have access to education and employment opportunities that would allow them to participate meaningfully in India's democratic and socio-economic framework.

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4. Article 244: Tribal Areas and Scheduled Areas

Article 244 defines the governance structure for Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas in India. It gives special status to tribal areas and allows the states to have a separate system of administration and control. This provision has significant implications for the autonomy of tribal communities and their ability to retain control over their land, culture, and resources.

This article is particularly important because it acknowledges the need for a separate administrative system for tribal areas that takes into account the distinctive social, cultural, and economic conditions of tribal communities. The Constitution empowers the President of India to specify areas as Scheduled Areas and to make special regulations for their governance.

The establishment of autonomous councils, such as the Sixth Schedule areas in northeastern states, is an example of how the Constitution has sought to preserve tribal autonomy while allowing for their integration into the national mainstream.

5. Article 338A: National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

Article 338A establishes the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. This autonomous body is tasked with safeguarding the rights of the Scheduled Tribes by monitoring the implementation of constitutional safeguards and policies. The Commission investigates and evaluates matters relating to the welfare of STs and submits reports to the President of India, who is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for a separate commission for the Scheduled Tribes was rooted in the recognition that the protection and promotion of their rights required an independent body that could ensure accountability and advocate for the needs of these communities. The Commission plays a critical role in addressing issues such as displacement, land rights, and cultural preservation for tribal communities.

6. Article 342: Specification of Scheduled Tribes

Article 342 empowers the President of India to specify by a public notification which communities shall be recognized as Scheduled Tribes. This provision is essential for ensuring that the most marginalized tribal communities are legally recognized as entitled to the protections and benefits provided by the Constitution.

The process of identifying Scheduled Tribes and providing them with legal recognition is crucial for the effective implementation of constitutional safeguards. By ensuring that the benefits of affirmative

action policies are extended to those who need them most, this provision helps in directing resources and support to tribal communities that have long been neglected.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision for Scheduled Tribes

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for the Scheduled Tribes was shaped by his belief in social justice and his vision for an inclusive India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who had himself experienced the dehumanizing effects of discrimination, understood that without proactive steps, marginalized communities such as the STs would continue to suffer from inequality and exclusion. His emphasis on special provisions for STs reflected his recognition of their distinct social and cultural characteristics, which required specific legal protections.

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the struggle for tribal rights was part of the broader fight for social democracy, which was centred on the idea of uplifting the most disadvantaged sections of society. His vision included not just legal and political equality but also the creation of a welfare state that would actively work to integrate tribal communities into the national fabric while respecting their autonomy and distinctiveness.

Challenges in the Implementation of Safeguards

Despite the constitutional safeguards, the implementation of these provisions for Scheduled Tribes has faced numerous challenges:

- 1. Land Alienation:** One of the most significant issues faced by STs is the loss of land and displacement due to industrialization, mining, and large-scale infrastructure projects. Tribal lands have often been appropriated by the state or private industries, leading to the displacement of tribal populations and the erosion of their economic base.
- 2. Cultural Erosion:** The push for integration into the mainstream economy and society has sometimes led to the erosion of tribal cultures, languages, and traditions. The challenge remains to strike a balance between modern development and the preservation of tribal identities.
- 3. Inadequate Implementation of Laws:** While the Constitution provides several safeguards for STs, the actual implementation of these provisions has been inconsistent. Issues such as poor access to education, lack of healthcare facilities, and under-representation in governance persist in many tribal areas.
- 4. Judicial Intervention:** There have been instances where judicial interpretations have diluted the impact of these safeguards. The legal system's response to issues such as land rights, displacement, and reservations for STs has not always been favourable.

11.4 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES

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India's struggle for independence and the subsequent formation of the Indian Constitution was deeply rooted in the principles of justice, equality, and social transformation. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the principal architect of the Constitution, played a critical role in designing a framework that would uplift the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of Indian society. The caste system, one of the most deeply entrenched social structures in India, was a significant obstacle to achieving equality. While much of the focus of the Indian Constitution was on Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) also represented a vast section of the population that had been historically marginalized.

The provisions for the protection and advancement of the OBCs were a critical aspect of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for a just and inclusive society. Although the Constitution does not explicitly mention "Other Backward Classes," it provides the legal foundation for their protection and upliftment through various provisions. This chapter explores the constitutional safeguards for OBCs in India, focusing on the legal provisions, the role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in shaping these safeguards, and the ongoing challenges in the implementation of these provisions.

The Concept of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

The term "Other Backward Classes" refers to a diverse group of communities that fall between the upper castes and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the social hierarchy. OBCs, like SCs and STs, have been historically subjected to social and economic discrimination, but their plight was often overlooked in the early decades after independence. They represent a broad category, including those who are socially and economically backward but do not fall under the definitions of SCs and STs.

The socio-economic backwardness of OBCs is characterized by low literacy rates, poor health indicators, limited access to quality education, and underrepresentation in government and other sectors of employment. This category includes various communities with diverse traditions, languages, and practices, which makes the provision of adequate safeguards a complex challenge.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to addressing caste-based discrimination and promoting social justice laid the foundation for addressing the issues faced by the OBCs in post-independence India. Although the term "OBC" itself was not part of the original Constitution, provisions aimed at improving the condition of the backward classes were later incorporated in response to the evolving socio-political landscape of the country.

Constitutional Safeguards for OBCs

The Indian Constitution provides several provisions that empower the state to take affirmative actions to improve the socio-economic conditions of backward communities, including OBCs. These provisions are spread across different articles and are designed to ensure equality and opportunities for those who have been historically excluded from mainstream society.

1. Article 15(4): Special Provisions for the Advancement of Backward Classes

Article 15(4) of the Constitution grants the state the power to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens, including OBCs. This provision enables the government to enact laws and policies to provide for affirmative action, such as reservations in educational institutions and government employment.

While this provision was initially meant to cover Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it was extended to OBCs by the judiciary and subsequent legislation, particularly the Mandal Commission Report (1980). The landmark decision to include OBCs in this provision laid the foundation for policies such as reservations in higher education and public employment.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's belief in affirmative action for the marginalized is reflected in this provision. His vision was not merely to provide legal equality but to ensure that the state actively intervened to correct historical social and economic inequalities. By including OBCs under the purview of Article 15(4), the Constitution recognized their need for specific safeguards to enhance their opportunities in education and employment.

2. Article 16(4): Reservation in Public Employment

Article 16(4) of the Constitution authorizes the state to make provisions for the reservation of posts in public employment for the backward classes. This article ensures that backward communities, including OBCs, have a fair chance of representation in government services and the civil administration.

The provision of reservations in public employment has been a cornerstone of India's affirmative action policy. It allows OBCs to access positions of power and responsibility within the government, enabling their participation in decision-making processes and creating a more inclusive public administration. These reservations are designed to redress the historical disadvantages faced by OBCs, providing them with opportunities that were previously denied to them.

The Mandal Commission Report of 1980, which recommended 27% reservations for OBCs in government jobs, was a key milestone in the

implementation of Article 16(4). Although controversial at the time, this policy has since played a pivotal role in improving the socio-economic status of millions of OBC families.

3. Article 340: National Commission for Backward Classes

Article 340 of the Constitution empowers the President to appoint a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and recommend measures for their advancement. This provision has been instrumental in the establishment of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), which works to monitor the implementation of reservations and safeguards for OBCs.

The NCBC is tasked with ensuring that OBCs are given their due share of benefits in education, employment, and political representation. The Commission has the authority to investigate complaints and make recommendations regarding the inclusion or exclusion of specific communities from the OBC list. Its role is crucial in addressing grievances and ensuring that OBCs are not left behind in the process of social and economic development.

4. Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests of Backward Classes

Article 46 directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of the backward classes, including OBCs. This provision emphasizes the need for affirmative action not just in the form of reservations but also through policies that foster overall development.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision for the upliftment of the backward classes included providing them with access to quality education, vocational training, and economic opportunities. The state is required to take measures to improve literacy rates, provide financial assistance, and ensure that OBCs are not excluded from the benefits of India's growing economy. This provision is particularly significant in addressing the educational gap between OBCs and other communities, helping to ensure that OBC students have access to schools, colleges, and universities.

5. Article 335: Claims of Backward Classes in Services

Article 335 deals with the claims of backward classes in the services of the Union and the states. It allows for the adjustment of reservations in public employment to ensure that the efficient administration of the state is maintained while simultaneously providing adequate representation to backward classes.

This provision ensures that OBCs are not just granted jobs but are able to function effectively within the bureaucracy and the civil services. It strikes a balance between providing opportunities for backward classes and maintaining the quality of public administration.

The Mandal Commission and the Reservation Policy

The Mandal Commission, set up in 1979 by then Prime Minister Morarji Desai, was tasked with identifying the socially and educationally backward classes in India and recommending measures for their welfare. The Commission's report, published in 1980, played a pivotal role in shaping the affirmative action policies for OBCs. It recommended a 27% reservation in government jobs for OBCs, which was eventually implemented by the government in 1990 under Prime Minister V.P. Singh's administration.

The implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations was a historic moment in the affirmative action movement in India, as it extended reservations to a vast section of the population that had been previously overlooked. While the policy faced significant opposition, particularly from the upper castes, it led to significant changes in the socio-political landscape of India, providing millions of OBCs with opportunities for upward mobility.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for affirmative action can be seen as the intellectual precursor to the Mandal Commission. His assertion that social justice required not only the removal of legal discrimination but also the provision of special privileges for the backward classes was realized through the Mandal Commission's recommendations.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Legacy and the OBCs

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contribution to the inclusion of OBCs in the constitutional framework was instrumental in shaping India's policies for social justice. His deep understanding of the caste system and its impact on social and economic mobility led him to argue for comprehensive legal measures to uplift the backward classes.

Although Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's focus was primarily on the Scheduled Castes, his broader vision of social justice and equality for all marginalized communities laid the groundwork for the inclusion of OBCs in the constitutional framework. His call for affirmative action, reservations, and the provision of educational and economic opportunities for the disadvantaged can be seen as the foundation for the Constitutional safeguards provided to OBCs.

11.5 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes in the Constitution of India were a revolutionary step towards ensuring social justice and equality. These provisions, including the abolition of untouchability, affirmative action in education and employment, and political representation, laid the foundation for the upliftment of Dalits. However, the realization of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision requires continuous effort from the state, civil society, and individuals to combat caste-based discrimination and ensure that these constitutional safeguards translate into tangible social change.

The Indian Constitution provides a robust framework for the protection and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes, recognizing their distinct social, cultural, and economic position in Indian society. The provisions enshrined in Articles 15(4), 16(4), 46, 338A, and 342 reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's deep commitment to social justice and equality for all. However, the realization of these constitutional safeguards requires constant efforts to address the challenges of implementation, land rights, cultural preservation, and social integration. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive and just India for the Scheduled Tribes remains relevant today, as their rights continue to be a central concern in the ongoing struggle for social justice in the country. Only through continued efforts and vigilance in enforcing these constitutional provisions can we ensure that the promise of justice and equality for Scheduled Tribes is fully realized.

The constitutional safeguards for Other Backward Classes reflect the Indian state's commitment to achieving social justice and equality for all its citizens. Through provisions such as Articles 15(4), 16(4), 340, 46, and 335, the Constitution has provided OBCs with legal protections to ensure their advancement in education, employment, and politics.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of an egalitarian society, where every individual has equal access to opportunities, remains the cornerstone of India's social justice framework. Although challenges remain in the implementation of these provisions, particularly in the areas of caste-based discrimination and exclusion, the constitutional safeguards for OBCs represent a significant step in addressing the historical injustices faced by these communities.

As India continues its journey toward social and economic development, the constitutional provisions for OBCs will play an essential role in ensuring that no citizen is left behind, and the vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for a just and inclusive society is realized.

11.6 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the role of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in framing constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), and how these safeguards reflect his vision of social justice.
2. Critically examine the provisions of Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 46 of the Indian Constitution in the context of the educational and economic upliftment of SCs, STs, and OBCs.
3. Discuss the significance of Article 17 in the abolition of untouchability and evaluate its effectiveness in contemporary India.
4. Assess the constitutional mechanisms for political representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. How effective are Articles 330 and 332 in ensuring their political empowerment?

5. Analyze the historical evolution and constitutional recognition of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) with reference to the Mandal Commission and Article 340.
6. “The constitutional safeguards for STs are a balance between integration and autonomy.” Examine this statement with reference to Articles 244 and 338A.
7. How do Articles 341 and 342 function as tools of state recognition and categorization of marginalized communities? What are the possible socio-political implications of such classification?
8. Critically analyze the challenges in the implementation of constitutional safeguards for SCs, STs, and OBCs despite a robust legal framework.
9. Imagine you are part of a policy review committee. Suggest legal or institutional reforms to strengthen the National Commissions for SCs and STs under Articles 338 and 338A.
10. Using examples from recent judicial rulings or policy debates, discuss the tension between merit and social justice in the context of reservation policies for SCs, STs, and OBCs.

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c) Constitutional Safeguards for Women, Labour and Minorities

Unit Structure :

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12.1 Introduction

12.2 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Feminist Vision: A Historical Context

12.3 Constitutional Safeguards for Labour in the Constitution of India

12.4 Constitutional Safeguards for Minorities in The Constitution of India

12.5 Summary

12.6 Questions

12.7 References

12.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of social justice and how it informed constitutional safeguards for women, labourers, and minorities in India.
2. To identify and analyse key constitutional provisions—such as Articles 14, 15, 16, 21, 25–30, 38–43A, and 51A(e)—that protect the rights of women, workers, and minorities.
3. To evaluate the impact of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's feminist interventions, especially through his work on the Hindu Code Bill and his advocacy for gender justice in constitutional and legislative reforms.
4. To assess the constitutional and legislative measures that aim to ensure just and humane conditions of work, equal pay for equal work, maternity relief, and participation of labour in management.
5. To discuss the relevance of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's labour jurisprudence in the context of neoliberal reforms, informalization, and erosion of labour protections.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution, envisioned as a transformative document, aims to build a just, egalitarian, and inclusive society. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar played a pivotal role in ensuring that the marginalized and vulnerable sections of society—particularly women, labourers, and religious and cultural minorities—were provided comprehensive constitutional safeguards. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision was deeply rooted in the ideals of social justice, equality, dignity, and freedom for all.

This chapter seeks to examine the constitutional provisions that safeguard the rights and welfare of women, the working class, and minorities through the lens of Ambedkarite thought. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, constitutional guarantees were not merely legal formalities but instruments of social emancipation and human dignity. His advocacy for economic justice for workers, gender equality, and cultural freedom for minorities is reflected in various parts of the Constitution, particularly in the Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and affirmative action clauses.

Drawing upon historical analysis, constitutional provisions, and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings and speeches, this chapter explores how his emancipatory ideology influenced the drafting of provisions that continue to shape India's social, legal, and political landscape. It also critiques the contemporary challenges in realizing the full potential of these safeguards.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was not only a crusader for social justice for the Scheduled Castes and marginalized communities but also a profound advocate of women's rights. His vision was rooted in the belief that genuine democracy could not be achieved without gender equality. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the emancipation of women was central to the idea of a just society.

In a patriarchal society where women were historically marginalized and oppressed, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach was radical. Through constitutional mechanisms, he aimed to ensure legal safeguards that would empower women and dismantle centuries of gender-based discrimination. This chapter explores the Ambedkarite vision of gender justice and the constitutional safeguards for women as enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

12.2 DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S FEMINIST VISION: A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's commitment to women's rights predated the Constitution. As early as the 1920s, he organized conferences of Dalit women and supported social reforms such as the abolition of the devadasi system, equal access to education, and property rights for women.

In the Hindu Code Bill debates (1951–1956), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar championed women's right to property, divorce, and adoption, which were revolutionary at that time. He believed that without reforming Hindu personal laws, no real emancipation of Hindu women could occur. Although the Bill faced opposition and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar eventually resigned from the Cabinet, his efforts laid the groundwork for future legal reforms.

1. Constitutional Provisions Safeguarding Women's Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ensured that the Constitution contained comprehensive provisions that secured the civil, political, and socio-economic rights of women. These safeguards can be grouped as follows:

2. Fundamental Rights (Part III)

- **Article 14** – Equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
- **Article 15(1)** – Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- **Article 15(3)** – Allows the State to make special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 16** – Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

These provisions reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's belief in *substantive equality*, not just formal equality. By including Article 15(3), he ensured that affirmative action for women was constitutionally valid.

3. Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)

- **Article 39(a)** – Equal right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women.
- **Article 39(d)** – Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42** – Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

These principles reflect Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's vision of a welfare state. Though not enforceable in courts, they form the guiding principles for legislation and governance.

4. Fundamental Duties (Part IVA)

- **Article 51A(e)** – To renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

This provision emphasizes citizens' responsibility in creating a gender-just society.

5. Legislative Safeguards Influenced by Ambedkarite Thought

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideological framework continues to influence legislative reforms for women's empowerment. Some of the key laws aligned with the constitutional vision include:

- **The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976**
- **The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961**
- **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**
- **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**
- **The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**

These laws operationalize constitutional ideals and attempt to address the structural barriers women face in public and private life.

6. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Women's Political Empowerment

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar supported the political empowerment of women. In the 1940s, he proposed voting rights and political representation for women, understanding that without political power, other rights would be ineffective. Today, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments provide for one-third reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions, a reflection of this legacy.

A future constitutional amendment for 33% reservation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies (Women's Reservation Bill) is a long-overdue step in fulfilling Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's feminist vision.

7. Challenges to Gender Justice: The Way Forward

Despite constitutional provisions and progressive laws, Indian women continue to face violence, discrimination, and inequality in various spheres. The gap between law and practice is wide. Caste, religion, and patriarchal traditions often intersect to marginalize women, especially Dalit, Adivasi, and OBC women.

An Ambedkarite approach urges us not only to recognize the law but to transform society through education, agitation, and organization – Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's triad of social change.

12.3 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR LABOUR IN THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The Constitution of India is a visionary document that not only outlines the structure of the state but also encapsulates a commitment to socio-economic justice. Central to this vision is the protection and upliftment of the working class, especially labourers. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and the first Labour Minister

in independent India, was deeply committed to the cause of labour rights. His ideas on labour were rooted in his broader philosophy of social justice, human dignity, and equality. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar viewed labour welfare as essential to achieving economic democracy, which he considered inseparable from political democracy.

This chapter explores the constitutional safeguards for labour in India from an Ambedkarite perspective. It delves into relevant constitutional provisions, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's legislative and policy interventions, and the lasting impact of his labour jurisprudence on India's legal framework.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Labour Philosophy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's engagement with labour issues predates his role in the Constituent Assembly. As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942–1946) and the Labour Member, he introduced several measures for labour welfare including:

- Fixed working hours
- Paid leave
- Equal pay for equal work
- Health insurance
- Maternity benefits
- Workers' participation in management

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of labour justice was not just about employment or wages but included conditions of dignity, health, housing, and security. His labour policy was a combination of state responsibility and legal empowerment of the worker, consistent with his belief in constitutional morality and social democracy.

Constitutional Provisions Safeguarding Labour Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ensured that labour welfare was enshrined in multiple parts of the Constitution, particularly in the Directive Principles of State Policy, Fundamental Rights, and Part III and IV. These provisions reflect both enforceable rights and guiding principles for state policy.

1. Fundamental Rights (Part III)

Although the fundamental rights are general in nature, several directly affect labour:

- **Article 14** – Equality before law and equal protection of laws.
- **Article 15(1)** – Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of caste, sex, religion, etc., applicable to working conditions.
- **Article 16** – Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

- **Article 19(1)(c)** – Freedom to form associations or unions (vital for trade unions).
- **Article 21** – Right to life and personal liberty (interpreted to include the right to livelihood, humane working conditions, and health).

Reference: *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, AIR 1986 SC 180, wherein the Supreme Court held that the right to livelihood is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21.

2. Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar considered the Directive Principles as the “**instrument of instructions**” to the legislature and executive. Many labour-related directives are enshrined here:

- **Article 38** – Promotes welfare of the people by securing a social order based on justice: social, economic, and political.
- **Article 39** – Provides for adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work, and protection of labour from exploitation.
- **Article 41** – Right to work, education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement.
- **Article 42** – Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- **Article 43** – Living wage and decent standard of life for workers.
- **Article 43A** – Participation of workers in the management of industries.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Note: During the debates on Article 43A, Ambedkar emphasized that “*industrial democracy is as essential as political democracy in a republic.*”

Ambedkar’s Legislative Contributions to Labour Welfare

As the Labour Minister, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made path-breaking contributions that laid the foundation of labour rights in India:

1. **40-Hour Work Week:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was among the first to introduce the idea of limiting the workweek to 48 hours.
2. **Maternity Benefit Bill (1942):** Secured the right to paid maternity leave for women workers.
3. **Indian Factories (Amendment) Act, 1944:** Improved factory working conditions, especially for women and children.
4. **Health and Insurance Schemes:** Initiated the idea of Employees' State Insurance (ESI).

5. Minimum Wages: Advocated for fixed minimum wages in public and private sectors.

Quote: “Labour is not a commodity. It is the primary force for the transformation of society.” – Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Views on Economic Democracy

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that **political democracy** must be accompanied by **economic democracy**, where:

- Wealth is equitably distributed
- Workers have job security
- The means of livelihood are accessible to all

He argued that **constitutional rights without economic stability are hollow**. Thus, labour rights were central to his idea of a dignified life.

Reference: *Annihilation of Caste* and *States and Minorities (1947)* – Both documents emphasize state responsibility in ensuring livelihood and preventing economic exploitation.

Judicial Interpretation and Labour Rights

Indian judiciary, post-Ambedkar, has expanded the scope of labour rights by interpreting constitutional provisions progressively.

- **Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India (1984):** The Supreme Court recognized bonded labour as unconstitutional.
- **Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997):** Extended protection to working women from sexual harassment under Articles 14, 15, and 21.

The judiciary has, thus, furthered Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s goal of protecting labourers through a proactive constitutional framework.

Challenges and Critique in the Contemporary Context

Despite Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s visionary framework, several challenges persist:

- Informalization of labour
- Erosion of trade unions
- Dilution of labour codes
- Gender-based wage discrimination
- Contractual and precarious employment

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s constitutional vision is being undermined by neoliberal economic policies that ignore labour rights in favor of capital.

Relevance of Ambedkarite Labour Vision Today

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach provides a framework for resisting the growing **commodification of labour**. His call for "*liberty, equality, and fraternity*" applies equally to workers' conditions today, especially in:

- Gig economy and platform work
- Migrant labour management
- Labour law reform discourse

Reinvigorating Ambedkarite principles can ensure constitutional morality prevails over market morality.

12.4 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR MINORITIES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

India's pluralistic society comprises various religious, linguistic, and cultural minorities. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, was deeply aware of the dangers posed by majoritarianism in a diverse society. For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, democracy was not merely the rule of the majority but the protection of the minority. His deep philosophical commitment to liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice shaped the constitutional framework that guarantees minority rights in India.

This chapter explores constitutional safeguards for minorities from an Ambedkarite perspective, focusing on how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar approached the question of minority rights in India's democracy. It also reflects on how the Constitution embodies these concerns and the extent to which they have been realized in practice.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision of Minority Rights

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that democracy without minority protection is merely a tyranny of the majority. He maintained that minorities, particularly religious and cultural minorities, needed both political representation and cultural autonomy to survive in a democratic setup.

In the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stated:

"Minorities are an explosive force which, if it erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State. Hence, it is the duty of the majority to realize their responsibility and be sympathetic to them."

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized that true constitutional morality requires the State to be a neutral guardian of rights, ensuring equality without enforcing uniformity.

Constitutional Safeguards for Minorities in India

Legal and Constitutional
Perspectives of
Dr. Babasaheb
Ambedkar

The Constitution of India provides various safeguards for minorities, broadly categorized under:

1. Fundamental Rights (Part III)

These rights are enforceable by courts and provide the most direct protection.

a) Article 14: Equality before law

Ensures equal protection to all persons, including minorities.

b) Article 15(1): Prohibits discrimination

No citizen shall be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

c) Article 16(1)(2): Equality in public employment

Bars discrimination in government employment, ensuring equal opportunity.

d) Article 25: Freedom of religion

Grants individuals the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate religion.

e) Article 26: Freedom to manage religious affairs

Minorities can maintain institutions and manage religious affairs.

f) Article 29: Protection of culture and language

Protects the rights of minorities to conserve their distinct language, script, and culture.

g) Article 30: Right to establish and administer educational institutions

Religious and linguistic minorities can establish and administer their own educational institutions.

Reference: *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka*, AIR 2003 SC 355, affirmed the autonomy of minority institutions under Article 30.

2. Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)

Though non-justiciable, these principles guide State policy in promoting minority welfare.

- **Article 38:** Promotes a just social order and reduces inequality.
- **Article 46:** Promotes educational and economic interests of weaker sections, including minorities.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ensured these provisions act as **guiding principles for inclusive governance**, keeping the spirit of social justice alive.

3. Other Provisions

a) Article 350A: Instruction in mother tongue

Enables linguistic minorities to receive primary education in their mother tongue.

b) Article 350B: Appointment of Special Officer for linguistic minorities

An institutional safeguard for minority languages.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Role in Minority Rights in the Constituent Assembly

While drafting the Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in balancing majority rule with minority rights. He was cautious about creating communal electorates but strongly supported educational, cultural, and linguistic autonomy. He insisted on equal citizenship but recognized that equality does not imply sameness.

Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD), Vol. XI: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that the minority problem was not about religion alone, but also cultural survival, political participation, and economic justice.

In *States and Minorities* (1947), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar emphasized:

- Representation in government services
- Right to education
- Safeguards against discrimination in public life
- Protection of religious practices

Minority Rights and Ambedkarite Principles

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to minority rights is rooted in:

1. Constitutional Morality

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that the Constitution must serve as a **moral framework** beyond legal text. The treatment of minorities is a measure of this morality.

2. Social Justice

For Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, minority rights were not about privilege but **equal dignity**. This aligns with the idea of **distributive justice** where the marginalized get special protection.

3. Fraternity

Fraternity, for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, was essential for national integration. But it cannot be forced; it must come through **respect for diversity and constitutional protection of difference**.

Challenges to Minority Rights in Contemporary India

Despite constitutional safeguards, minorities in India—particularly Muslims, Christians, and certain linguistic groups—face:

- Discrimination and exclusion in employment and housing
- Violence and hate crimes
- Suppression of cultural and religious practices
- Political underrepresentation
- Attacks on minority institutions and autonomy

Government policies like **National Register of Citizens (NRC)** and **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** have been criticized as discriminatory, violating the **Ambedkarite spirit of equality and fraternity**.

Reference: United Nations Human Rights Office (2020) raised concerns about the CAA undermining minority rights.

Judicial Interpretations Upholding Minority Rights

The judiciary has played an important role in upholding minority rights:

- *Kerala Education Bill Case* (1958): Reaffirmed Article 30 rights.
- *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi* (1992): Affirmed minority institutions' right to reservation for their own community.
- *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986): Protected students refusing to sing the national anthem on religious grounds under Article 25.

12.5 SUMMARY

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar laid the foundation for gender justice in India by embedding women's rights into the constitutional fabric. His approach was both legalistic and moral, recognizing that mere legal reform was insufficient without a transformation of societal values. His efforts in shaping the Constitution, advocating legal reform, and supporting women's rights remain unparalleled in Indian history.

As we continue to battle gender-based discrimination, revisiting Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's feminist legacy provides not just inspiration but a robust constitutional framework to build an egalitarian India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's contributions to labour welfare are foundational to the Indian constitutional framework. His vision of social justice, economic democracy, and dignity for labour continues to inspire policies and jurisprudence. However, the effectiveness of these safeguards depends on their implementation and the political will to uphold them. Reclaiming Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's labour philosophy is crucial in the current era of capitalist restructuring, labour exploitation, and widening inequality.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's understanding of minority rights was visionary and rooted in constitutionalism, human rights, and pluralism. His contribution ensures that India, while being a secular democratic republic, is also a mosaic of diverse cultures, languages, and faiths protected under law.

In today's political climate, where majoritarian nationalism threatens minority existence, it is imperative to return to the Ambedkarite vision of an India that respects difference as a constitutional value, not as a threat.

12.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideological contribution to the inclusion of constitutional safeguards for women, labour, and minorities in the Indian Constitution. How do these reflect his vision of social justice?
2. Critically evaluate the role of Articles 15(3) and 16 in promoting gender equality through affirmative action in the context of Ambedkarite feminism.
3. How do the Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 38, 39, 41, 42, and 43) serve as instruments of economic justice for labourers? Analyze with reference to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of economic democracy.
4. Explain the relevance and effectiveness of Article 30 of the Indian Constitution in safeguarding the cultural and educational rights of minorities. How does this relate to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's notion of constitutional morality?
5. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar argued that "political democracy must be accompanied by economic and social democracy." Evaluate this statement in light of constitutional provisions for labour rights.
6. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a pioneer in linking gender justice with constitutional guarantees. Analyze his role in the Hindu Code Bill and its significance for women's legal rights in India.
7. Compare and contrast the judicial interpretations of Article 25 (freedom of religion) and Article 29 (cultural rights) in protecting minority identities. What would be Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's stance on these interpretations?

8. Discuss the challenges faced in the implementation of constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes, minorities, and labourers in contemporary India. Suggest Ambedkarite solutions to bridge the gap between law and practice.
9. Critically examine how the contemporary erosion of labour protections in neoliberal economic policies contradicts Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional vision.
10. In what ways does the triad of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" guide the constitutional treatment of marginalized groups? How is this principle foundational to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's constitutional philosophy?

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