

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR

A Man of Millennium and A Catalyst for Women Rights and Social Justice

Editors

Dr. Prakash Yadav

Dr. Geeta Joshi

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Women Rights and Social Justice**

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Dr. Prakash Yadav

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Preface

Every book is born from a moment of inner awakening—moments when thought, experience, and purpose quietly come together. This book is the result of such a moment. It has been inspired by the timeless philosophy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, whose ideas continue to illuminate the path of equality, dignity, self-respect, and social justice for countless individuals. With this inspiration Department of Social Work organised National Conference on **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A man of Millennium and a Catalyst for Women Rights and Social Justice** on 29 & 30th April, 2025 at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

We express our sincere gratitude to our Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Geetali Tilak, and Hon'ble Registrar, Dr. Suvarna Sathe, for their constant support and encouragement. We are deeply thankful to Mr. Sunil Ware, Director General, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute (BARTI), Pune, for the valuable financial support and collaboration. We are honoured to have Prof. Ramdas Atram, Hon. Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mahow State University, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, for Inaugural function of Conference and Shri. J.V. Pawar, Renowned Ambedkarite Laureate, as Chief Guest, Prof. Vijay Khare, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune for Valedictory program. We are privileged to have Prof. Sanghmitra Acharya, Professor, Department of Community Medicine, JNU, New Delhi, as key note speaker for this conference. We also have significant dignitaries such as Prof. Suresh Babu, Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, JNU, New Delhi, Dr. Sunita Savarkar, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chh. Sambhaji Nagar, Prof. Ajay Chaudhary Chair Professor, Ambedkar Chair, Symbiosis International University, Pune, Prof. Shruti Tambe, Professor & Head, Department of Sociology, SPPU, Pune, Prof. G. Nagaraju, Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, University of Hyderabad, Prof. Jagdish Solanki, Chair Professor, Dr. Ambedkar Chair, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, Gujrat as plenary session speaker. Several research scholars, academician and field practitioner contributed in this conference from distant places of India. We are very happy to publish selected significant papers.

This book is a humble attempt to reflect those experiences and to present the inner message of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's philosophy in a simple, accessible manner. It is written not only for scholars or experts, but for every reader who seeks inspiration, courage, and clarity in their personal and social journey.

If this book encourages even one reader to think deeply, act justly, and believe in the power of self-transformation, its purpose will be fulfilled. I offer this work with gratitude, respect, and hope that it serves as a small step toward a more conscious and compassionate society.

Dr. Prakash Yadav

Dr. Geeta Joshi

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>iii</i>
1. Women's Rights and Empowerment : Perspective of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar	1
<i>Sanghmitra S. Acharya</i>	
2. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Reforms on Women's Rights and Social Justice: Awareness among MSW Students	15
<i>Dr. Bhaskar Vishnu Igawe</i>	
3. Empowering Rural India: A Step Towards Social Justice and Sustainable Development in Ambedkar's Vision	21
<i>Shruti Ganbote</i>	
4. Reflections on Dr. Ambedkar's Vision on Freedom for Women from the Socio-Cultural Perspectives	33
<i>Dr. Palke R.B.</i>	
5. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Perspective on Women Empowerment and Democracy: Reference Points for Social Work Education and Practice in India	38
<i>Sandeep Jagdale</i>	
6. Whither Marginalised Women's Educational Empowerment?: Failures and Way Out	47
<i>Dr. Santosh D. Sabale</i>	
7. Dr. Ambedkar's Visionary Approach to Women in Politics	66
<i>Dr. Bhanje Vijaykumar Pralhadrao</i>	
8. A Study of the Challenges and Impacts of Employability Training Programme for Weaker Section Women Residing in the Urban Slums of Pune (Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to Women Rights and Empowerment)	71
<i>Arshiya Iqbal Walikar and Dr. Rekha Shelar – PhD Guide</i>	
9. Conceptualising Social Justice and Economic Empowerment: Dr. Ambedkar's Vision for Dalit Entrepreneurship	84
<i>Mr. Ajay Bagale and Dr. Sudhir Maske</i>	

10. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision for Women Empowerment: An Analysis of his Writings and Speeches <i>Ms. Arti Jadhav</i>	98
11. Social Justice: A Meta-Analysis of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Views <i>Dr. Kartiki Subakade</i>	105
12. Studying Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts and Contributions on Prostitutes <i>Asha Appa Pakhare and Dr. Rohini Sudhakar</i>	110
13. Dr. Ambedkar's Vision on Freedom for Women in Context of Socio-cultural Practices: Effect of Umed Training on Women Empowerment in Tribal Area <i>Sushma Pilane and Dr. Geeta Joshi</i>	120
14. Examining the Plight of Women's Education in Modern Times using Ambedkar's Lens of Social Democratic Liberalism <i>Smita Warghade</i>	127
15. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Contributions to Women's Rights and Empowerment <i>Sanjay Pundalik Kedar and Dr. Hares A. Qureshi</i>	133
16. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Enduring Legacy: Championing Women's Education as a Catalyst for Social Justice <i>Ms Swanandi Indrajeet Pawar and Dr. Manisha Shukla</i>	140
17. Exploring the Relationship between Academic Pressure, Social Support, and Mental Health among Women MPSC Aspirants in Pune City <i>Ms. Pooja D. Bhalerao and Dr. Prakash S. Yadav</i>	144
18. डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांना अपेक्षित असलेल्या महिला सक्षमीकरण योजनांची वर्तमानकालीन स्थिती : एक अभ्यास <i>दिपाली विनोद ननावरे</i> <i>डॉ. पद्मजा भालचंद्र कस्तुरे</i>	152
19. डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांचे स्त्री विषयक योगदान <i>श्री संजय नाना बागल</i>	158

Dr. Ambedkar's Vision on Freedom for Women in Context of Socio-cultural Practices: Effect of Umed Training on Women Empowerment in Tribal Area

Sushma Pilane

MSW II Year Student, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Dr. Geeta Joshi

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Abstract

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a prominent social reformer and architect of the Indian Constitution, envisioned a society rooted in gender equality and social justice. His pioneering efforts laid the ground work for the empowerment of women and the marginalized sections of society (Kareem, 2024).

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar sacrificed his life for the betterment of underprivileged society. His constitutional contribution helped a common man to fight against injustice. He brought a movement for upliftment of the women through his thoughts and belief. Ambedkar and his beliefs on society based on equality are yet to be recognized for reforming the Indian society and making the life of women better (Devi K.M.2020). To eradicate poverty in the rural areas of the state, the Central Government launched the National Rural Livelihoods Mission in the year 2011. The pillars of the mission are social inclusion, economic inclusion, financial inclusion, and access to public services and benefits from development schemes. All kinds of capabilities of women members are being developed. Women's skills are being increased. Women of self-help groups are starting agriculture-based and non-agriculture-based industries. **Aim:** The present paper highlights women contribution in family and rural development and challenges faced by women to become economically independent. **Methodology:** Descriptive research design was used to describe present status of women participation in social and economic sphere. 60 tribal women participated in study from Purandar Block. Probability sampling method with stratified sample and interview schedule was used. Descriptive data analysis was applied. **Results:** It shows that 50% women among completed training have started their own business however other are still working in their farm and

don't want to start any business due to some socio cultural reasons. Those who started their business now they have multiple livelihood sources and income increases.

Key words: empowerment, entrepreneurship, participation training, women.

Introduction

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of social justice and gender equality emphasized that true freedom for women could only be achieved by dismantling oppressive socio-cultural practices and creating opportunities for education, employment, and participation in decision-making. For him, women's liberation was not merely a question of rights but a foundation for building an equitable and democratic society. In contemporary India, this vision continues to resonate strongly, particularly in tribal and rural regions where structural inequalities, poverty, and cultural barriers hinder women's empowerment.

In line with Ambedkar's ideals, the Government of Maharashtra launched the **Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM)** in 2011, popularly known as '**Umed**', to reduce rural poverty through social, financial, and economic inclusion. Umed adopts a comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation by promoting self-help groups (SHGs), community institutions, and livelihood opportunities, while also strengthening access to government schemes and financial services. The mission particularly prioritizes women, organizing them into SHGs and federations to build collective strength, financial discipline, and social awareness.

The **Umed training programs** focus on capacity building through vocational training, enterprise development, agriculture-based livelihoods, and financial literacy. These interventions not only generate income opportunities but also enhance women's decision-making power, self-confidence, and social mobility. For tribal women—traditionally marginalized due to intersecting layers of caste, class, gender, and geography—such training becomes a pathway to both economic independence and social empowerment. By integrating skill development with financial access and community participation, Umed seeks to transform women from passive beneficiaries into active contributors to household and community development.

This research, therefore, situates Ambedkar's vision of women's freedom within the framework of socio-cultural practices that continue to shape tribal life, and critically examines the **effect of Umed training on women's empowerment in tribal areas**. The study explores how Umed's interventions address barriers of poverty, patriarchy, and exclusion, while fostering women's agency in economic, social, and political domains. It also assesses whether such initiatives align with Ambedkar's ideals of equality, dignity, and justice for women, and to what extent they contribute to sustainable empowerment in marginalized communities.

Review of Literature

Women's empowerment is central to social, cultural, political, and economic progress (HDR, 2015). Programs like *Sanjeevani* (Karnataka, 2016) and Grameen Bank (Yunus) demonstrate how SHGs and microfinance improve women's livelihoods, financial independence, and reduce violence. The *Bharat Microfinance Report (2017)* highlighted the scale of SHG-bank linkages across India.

Studies show SHGs as effective tools for empowerment, enhancing confidence, reducing isolation, and promoting financial inclusion (Mishra & Pati, 2023). Government and NGO initiatives in Gujarat (Shah, 2022) and Haryana (Singh, 2022) indicate that legal reforms, training, and microfinance improve women's status, though gaps in execution remain.

Research in Tamil Nadu (Vijaya Malleeswari, 2023; Vimala, 2022) confirms SHGs boost financial literacy, decision-making, and income generation, though issues like poor training and loan management persist. Similar findings from Karnataka (Balachandar, 2021), Punjab (Sandhu, 2015), and Madurai (Senthamaral Kannan, 2008) reveal SHGs raise income, assets, confidence, and social participation.

Globally, microfinance has proven effective in poverty reduction and women's empowerment, despite challenges of regulation and financial mismanagement (Ravi, 2013). Overall, literature affirms that SHGs and microfinance strengthen women's economic independence, leadership, and social integration, but sustainable support systems and market linkages remain necessary.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic background of tribal women in the context of Dr. Ambedkar's vision of women's freedom and equality.
2. To analyze the extent to which UMED-trained women have initiated businesses and its impact on their livelihood and empowerment within prevailing socio-cultural practices.
3. To identify the challenges faced by tribal women in initiating and sustaining employment or entrepreneurial activities despite UMED training.
4. To assess the gap between UMED training and actual entrepreneurship **outcomes** in light of Ambedkar's ideals of social justice and women's emancipation.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine the effect of UMED training on women's empowerment in tribal areas, in light of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of freedom and equality for women.

The universe of the study consists of 16 villages from the Purandhar block of Pune district, Maharashtra, where UMED training programs have been implemented. From this universe, a sample of 60 women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)—including both entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs—was selected.

A purposive non-probability sampling technique was applied, focusing specifically on women who have undergone UMED training to assess its socio-economic and cultural impact.

For data collection, an interview schedule was used as the primary tool to gather socio-economic information, perceptions of empowerment, and experiences of entrepreneurship. Additionally, observation was employed to understand women's participation in SHGs, livelihood activities, and their engagement in decision-making processes within families and communities.

The analysis of data was carried out using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics to summarize socio-economic profiles and empowerment indicators, along with inferential statistics (t-test) to measure differences in outcomes between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs.

This methodology allows for both a quantitative and qualitative understanding of how UMED training influences women's empowerment within the socio-cultural practices of tribal communities, and how it resonates with Ambedkar's ideals of equality, dignity, and justice.

Analysis

Income before joining SHG (monthly) * Income after joining SHG (monthly) * Status of Women Crosstabulation

Count

Status of Women			Income after joining SHG (monthly)				Total	P value
			0 to 5000	6000 to 10,000	11,000 to 15,000	16,000 to 20,000		
Entrepreneur	Income before joining SHG (monthly)	0 to 3000	5	8	4	1	18	.045
		3000 to 6000	0	4	0	0	4	
		7000 to 10,000	0	2	3	2	7	
		11,000 to 15,000	0	0	0	1	1	
Total			5	14	7	4	30	

Non-entrepreneur	Income before joining SHG (monthly)	0 to 3000	12	11	0	0	23
		3000 to 6000	0	2	2	0	4
		7000 to 10,000	0	0	0	3	3
							.000
Total			12	13	2	3	30
Total	Income before joining SHG (monthly)	0 to 3000	17	19	4	1	41
		3000 to 6000	0	6	2	0	8
		7000 to 10,000	0	2	3	5	10
		11,000 to 15,000	0	0	0	1	1
Total			17	27	9	7	60

Above table shows comparative analysis of entrepreneur and non-entrepreneur women. Table highlight significant difference in increase in income after completion of training and started business. p- value shows ($0.000 < 0.05$). Its shows significant association.

Duration of Member of a Self-Help Group (SHG)? * Status of Women
Cross Tabulation

Count

		Status of Women		Total	P value
		Entrepreneur	non-Entrepreneur		
How long have you been part of a Self-Help Group (SHG)?	1 Year to 2 years	1	4	5	.009
	2 years to 3 years	1	7	8	
	3 years to 4 years	7	10	17	
	4 years and above	21	9	30	
Total		30	30	60	

Findings

The study conducted among 60 SHG women in Purandhar block revealed the following:

- **Socio-economic profile:** Most respondents had higher secondary education (40%), came from farming families (78.3%), and lived in medium-sized households of 4–8 members (66.7%). A majority reported annual family incomes between ₹ 50,000–1,00,000 (61.7%).

- **SHG participation:** Half of the respondents had been SHG members for more than 4 years, with high meeting frequency (98.3%) and regular savings between ₹ 100–₹ 300 per meeting (80%). All members (100%) accessed loan facilities, most commonly between ₹ 20,000–₹ 40,000.
- **Impact on income:** Before joining SHGs, most women earned below ₹ 3,000 per month (68.3%), but after participation, nearly half (45%) reported incomes of ₹ 6,000–₹ 10,000, indicating a significant rise.
- **Training under UMED:** All respondents underwent training; poultry farming (46.7%) was most common. Training was considered sufficient (90%), practical (63.3% field demonstrations), and supportive, with 95% receiving complete guidance.
- **Entrepreneurship outcomes:** Half of the women (50%) started businesses—mainly spice/pickle/papad making and flower decoration—while the rest cited barriers like farm work and lack of finance. Access to loans and share capital were highlighted as essential for entrepreneurship.
- **Empowerment indicators:** Respondents reported increased confidence (26.7%), family and community support (40%), better decision-making, and enhanced self-employment (48.1%). Many also experienced greater political awareness and involvement in children's education.
- **Challenges:** Women entrepreneurs noted competition (23%), financial constraints (17.6%), and supply issues as major hurdles. Marketing was identified as a crucial unmet need (26.5%).

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the **UMED Training Program significantly contributed to women's empowerment in tribal areas**, aligning with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of freedom through social and economic justice. By enhancing women's income, confidence, leadership, and decision-making capacity, UMED fostered both personal and community transformation.

While half of the trained women successfully initiated enterprises, others faced barriers rooted in socio-cultural practices, economic limitations, and lack of market linkages. Thus, empowerment is not only a result of skills training but also of continuous support, enabling policies, and a conducive environment.

The findings highlight that **UMED has been effective in creating pathways for women's self-reliance**, but sustainability requires ongoing mentoring, financial assistance, and stronger focus on marketing and digital skills. Strengthening these aspects would ensure that Ambedkar's vision of women's dignity, equality, and socio-economic freedom becomes a lived reality in tribal communities.

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