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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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, Gujrath 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**

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Keynote Address

Women's Rights and Empowerment : Perspective of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Sanghmitra S. Acharya
Professor at the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

The discourse on women has mostly focused on their reproductive role and their body, or on their economic role as a worker. Treating women as a homogenous group has yielded erroneous frameworks for any enquiry into them. Women, as a homogenised group, has hidden more than revealed the realities of women across social groups. The category of 'women', or even of 'communities', is itself pluralistic. Thus, the discourse on women needs to be disaggregated, keeping aside the unfounded fear of fracturing the 'unity' conceived and believed by the women of the privileged backgrounds. What is observed today as apathy towards gendered consciousness is not ignorance. It is an obdurate commitment to patriarchy, and therefore, the 'consolidated' monolith that got constructed as 'women'. The perils of homogenisation were first voiced by the women at the margins. Subsequently, it became integral to the discourse on women.

Even as mainstream development reflects itself through a spectrum of indicators, women begin to slip down the ladder of gender justice (Kapadia, 2002; Iyengar, 2019; Acharya et al., 2023). Among women, Dalit women bear the larger burden in spaces within and outside the household. Therefore, instead of making marginalised women objects of enquiry, ensuring their engagement as the primary agents of enquiry is essential for transparent research and meaningful discourse. Social identity based on race, religion, ethnicity and caste has been the basis of historical oppression for thousands of years, and despite the nation's constitutional vision of empowerment and upliftment, underprivileged communities, including women, especially Dalits, have continued to be marginalised in India. Social identity has played a crucial role in determining physical and economic access to food, unfolding the forms of graded inequality. Existing literature suggests that maintaining caste integrity is correlated not only with the intake of food and water but also with who cooks or handles it, emanating from the age-old notion of purity and pollution. While the food transporters in the gig economy may defy this, the angawadi food

supplied to the children tells a different story (Mamgain and Diwakar, 2012; Borooah et al., 2021; TNN, 2013; Buradikatt, 2023; Coovercolly, 2023; Singh, 2023; Biraia, 2025; Krishnan, 2025). Mostly rooted in the Hindu psyche, 'CASTE' is often expressed by the other religions too. The 'risk of pollution' if (s)he accepts beverages or cooked food from the hands of people of a 'lower' caste status than one's own. But ironically, as proclaimed by many *Dharmasutras*[1] *(*viz*., Manusmriti* and *Gautama Dharma Sutra)*, the status will not be affected if the man accepts absolutely raw foods, such as uncooked grains, fresh unpeeled fruits and vegetables from anybody, regardless of caste. There are also stipulations for the treatment of women in favour of high caste men. Dr BR Ambedkar devoted his life and rigorously campaigned against social discrimination and categorisation induced by such *sutras.* He vehemently raised his voice against the system of work based on caste and the status of women. He was This magnanimous zeal initiated the language of *'rights'* for the 'depressed' and yielded overt and covert outcomes influencing women and their intersection with health, education, employment and other spheres.

Dr. Ambedkar observed that women were denied their rightful position in Indian culture, regardless of whether they were Hindu or Muslim, or of other religions. He was aware of the pervasive social mechanisms that supported this injustice and was actively looking for ways to undermine them. Ambedkar envisioned a society based on justice, equality, and fraternity in which every individual, including women, was enabled to take advantage of their appropriate position and opportunity. Ambedkar (1942) believed that education could be used to improve society by providing a way out of the repressive systems that tied those at the lower social ranks to the obscurity of ignorance. Scholars who engaged with his thoughts reaffirmed (Keer, 1971; Moon, 2002; Mungekar, 2017). By tackling societal deterioration, especially in Hindu society, he aimed to change society and establish a fair system that would benefit all people (Thorat, 2016, 2017; Waghmare, 2017). His attempts to create educational institutions that supported the growth of underprivileged areas demonstrated his conviction in the ability of education to

1. All the *Dharma sutras* and *Dharma shastras* asserted that the Shudras were to serve the twice-born (Apastamba Dharma Sutra I.1.1.7-8; Mahabharata, Shanti Parva 60.28).Sutra I.1.1.7-8; Mahabharata, Shanti Parva 60.28). To assure the servility of *Shudras,* they were assigned a low ritual status. While several *sanskaras* or rites of passage, from conception to cremation, were prescribed for the high-rankers, they were prohibited for the Shudras, who were not permitted to chant Vedic mantras (Manu Smriti X.127). If a Brahmin committed adultery or rape, merely a fine was imposed on him (Manu Smriti VIII.385). However, if a Shudra had sexual intercourse with a Brahmin woman, he was to be executed, no matter whether the act was consensual or not (Vasishtha Dharma Shastra 21.1). If a Brahmin reviled a Shudra, he paid a small fine (Manu Smriti VIII. 268) or nothing at all (Gautama Dharma Sutra XII.10). But in the reverse case, a Shudra's tongue was to be chopped off (Manu Smriti VIII. 270)

spark change, particularly for women. Ambedkar's vision for women's empowerment is grounded in the principles of equality, democracy, cooperation, education, and universal rights (Omvedt, 2004; Jadhav 2014; Mungekar, 2017). His concern becomes evident in the provisions made in the Constitution. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, and Article 15(3), enables affirmative discrimination in favour of women to uplift their status. Article 42: Provides for humane conditions of work and maternity relief for women. Article 44: Advocates for a uniform civil code, ensuring equal rights for all citizens, regardless of gender. Article 46 promotes the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, including women, and aims to protect them from social injustice and exploitation. Article 47 focuses on raising the standard of living and improving public health, which indirectly benefits women and families. Article 51A(C) mandates the fundamental duty of citizens to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Ambedkar (1942, 1951) held the strong view that gender inequality was deeply ingrained in Indian society; therefore, he advocated for systemic reforms to address the subjugation of women, especially those from marginalised communities. Ambedkar (1942) viewed women's empowerment as an integral part of achieving a just and egalitarian society. He believed that for true empowerment, women must be granted equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of life, including social, economic, and political domains (Omvedt, 2004; Kaur, 2016; Teltumbde, 2017; Thorat, 2016, 2017).

Making of Ambedkar- the humanist and the social thinker

Ambedkar, in all probabilities, is the most learned and most educated Minister that the nation has had in its chequered history of nearly 80 years after independence. He was a great visionary and an erudite scholar who argued, initiated and acted upon ideas which mark a new era for the oppressed (Omvedt, 2004; Jadhav, 2014). Jawaharlal Nehru described Dr BR Ambedkar as *'Jewel of his Cabinet'*. A great visionary, genius and revolutionary in his own right, Dr BR Ambedkar trained himself to become a masterly statesman, a valiant upholder of human rights, social reformer and crusader of the depressed classes. He was an eminent economist, an informed democrat, a committed patriot and a dedicated educationist. He held important positions. He was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, the first Law Minister of independent India, besides being the most vocal voice of the downtrodden people (Das, 2010, 2011). He deeply empathised with the suppressed classes in India who have suffered for ages under the prevailing social system. He used the term 'Dalit' in his Marathi speeches and translated it as 'Broken' human being to refer to them, the *untouchables*.

In the late 1920s, Ambedkar began to consider social justice. Equipped with a PhD and post-doctoral research degrees from world-class universities, including Columbia University, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Gray's Inn—achievements that very few Indians can claim—he went back to India. He is the first PhD holder in South Asia and the first Indian to pursue a doctorate in economics overseas. In addition, he was one of the most educated Indians of his time. Ambedkar completed sixty courses during his three years at Columbia University: twenty-nine in economics, eleven in history, six in sociology, five in philosophy, four in anthropology, three in politics, and one each in elementary French and German! Such was his passion to not only learn but excel beyond all others (Keer, 1971; Jadhav, 2014; Mungekar, 2017).

Constitutional Provisions for Women in India

The constitutional provisions for women in India are established to address and rectify the historical inequalities and discrimination women have faced. These measures acknowledge the essential role of women in the foundation of a just, equitable society and aim to ensure their full participation in all areas of life. By embedding rights and protections for women within the Constitution, India commits to creating a legal and social environment that promotes gender equality. This commitment is not only about fairness but also about recognising the diverse contributions women make to society's development. The provisions seek to empower women, guarantee their rights and enable them to live with dignity and equality, thereby enhancing the nation's progress and upholding democratic values.

Ambedkar's deep concern for women became evident in the Constitutional framework which provides the legal basis for women's empowerment by enshrining gender equality and allowing for positive discrimination, as seen in the Articles guaranteeing equal rights (Article 14), prohibiting discrimination (Article 15), and permitting special provisions for women (Article 15(3)). Key constitutional elements include equal opportunities in employment (Article 16), the right to an adequate livelihood (Article 39), and mandated representation in local government (Articles 243D and 243T). These safeguards can be categorised as follows-

Fundamental Rights and Principles

- **Right to Equality:** Guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination based on sex (Article 15(1 and 2)).
- **Special Provisions:** Empowers the state to create special provisions in favor of women and children (Article 15(3)).
- **Equality of Opportunity:** Provides for equal opportunity in public employment and appointments (Article 16).

- **Adequate Means of Livelihood:** Requires the state to direct its policy to ensure men and women have the right to an adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work (Article 39).
- **Right to Life:** Ensures the right to a dignified life (Article 21), which includes the right to be born, protecting females from sex-selective practices.

Political Empowerment

- **Local Government Representation:** Articles 243D and 243T mandate the reservation of seats for women in local self-government institutions to ensure their political participation.

Social and Economic Empowerment

- **Right to Education:** Article 21A makes education a fundamental right for children between 6 and 14, ensuring girls have access to compulsory and free education.
- **Equal Property Rights:** Supreme Court rulings have affirmed equal coparcenary rights for daughters in Hindu Undivided Family property, establishing inheritance rights by birth.
- **Policy and Programs:** The Constitution serves as the framework for government policies and programs, such as those aimed at social, educational, and economic upliftment. The shift from a welfare approach to one of development and empowerment has been a key part of this strategy, with initiatives like the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 and the National Commission for Women.

Legal and Legislative Framework

- **Legislative Measures:** The constitutional framework has led to various laws designed to protect women, such as the Dowry Prohibition Act, Maternity Benefit Act, and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy/PNDT Act.
- **Shifting Focus:** The focus has moved from merely welfare to empowerment, with a growing emphasis on development, training, and skill enhancement to improve women's employability and economic independence

Constitutional Protections for Women's Participation in Local Governance

Recognising the importance of women's participation in the democratic process and local governance, the Constitution includes specific provisions for the reservation of seats for women in Panchayats and Municipalities in addition to

other provisions. **Articles 243-D(3), 243-D(4), 243-T(3) and 243-T(4) provide for the reservation in Local Bodies.** These articles mandate the reservation of one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat and Municipality for women. Additionally, one-third of the total number of offices of chairpersons in the Panchayats and Municipalities at each level shall be reserved for women. These provisions ensure women's representation in local governance, empowering them to contribute to the decision-making process and address issues affecting their communities.

India's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment is reflected in the Constitution's provisions for women. The Constitution establishes a thorough framework for furthering women's rights and interests by protecting fundamental rights, encouraging economic justice, and guaranteeing participation in local governance. Even while there has been a lot of improvement in many spheres, gender equality is still a distant dream. To realise the constitutional goal of a society where women can live with dignity, equality, and freedom, the state, civil society, and people have to collaborate and cooperate.

Ambedkar's Idea on Women's Empowerment

As Chairman of the Satyagraha Committee of the Dalit Movement in 1927, Dr Ambedkar addressed Dalits (Mahars) at Chavdar Tank in Mahad Taluka, Maharashtra. He began the fight for the right to equality by demanding access to drinking water from the tank, which was denied to Dalits. Besides the concern for social equality, this also echoed his concern for the health of the people. Access to water was essential for life, and therefore for health. The march to the tank was a marker which established the hierarchy evident in untouchability in Hinduism (Das, 2010, 2011). Denying the right to drink water from the same source to the Dalits, despite them being under the fold of the Hindu religion, was evidence of the severe practice of purity and pollution, unlike other religions. It is noteworthy that this movement voiced the need for access to water for the untouchables, **much before the constitution of the BHORE COMMITTEE in 1945, based on the observation of poor health conditions of the people**. Access to safe drinking water was important, especially for the suppressed women. Thousands of women took part in the March 1927 satyagraha along with men, claiming their right to use the water from the tank. This action challenged systemic prejudice and symbolised human dignity.

Encouraging the women to shed all the markers of their low social rank, with the support of Lakshmibai Tipnis, Ambedkar especially urged Dalit women to give up traditions that label them as "untouchable" and to wear full saris that cover their legs like 'high-caste' women. The women supported this appeal. This involvement

was more than simply water. It was a potent protest against socio-psychological oppression, shattering barriers that restricted Dalit women to particular actions and looks. The movement's focus on human rights, including gender justice, laid the groundwork for future Dalit feminist movements.

His ideas on women's health were reflected in the Bombay Legislative Council discussion on 10 November 1938, in which disability of the parents was acknowledged as the prime reason for impacting on children physically, mentally and financially.

- He saw reproductive rights of women as important for their development. He proposed limiting the number of births for **the health of the women and the children,** instead of the conventional stand for controlling the population.
- He also saw this as a measure to **prevent maternal and infant deaths and reduce morbidity** among them. Therefore, he favoured the termination of pregnancy to avoid unwanted births.
- The Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill led to the Maternity Benefits for women mine workers, and working underground was prohibited for women.

Gender Disparity and Ambedkar

He was aware of the gender based discrimination prevalent in the Indian sub-continent. He abolished gender discrimination through Articles 14, 15, 16, 21, 38(2), and 39(i) and (ii) of the Constitution. As Law Minister, he introduced the **Hindu Code Bill,** which showed directions to bring women at par with men. However, the then social system prevailing in India and its political caretakers were not ready for this path-breaking deviance from the norm. The patriarchal structures as well as the polity, opposed the Bill. He resigned from the post of the first Law Minister of independent India when the comprehensive Hindu Code Bill was opposed by Nehru and others, including Sarojini Naidu, on the pretext that it would shake the *foundations* of hierarchical Hindu society. He firmly believed that the development of a country was dependent on the social status of women. The two schools of Hindu Law- Mitakshara and Dayabhaga- denied women any right to inheritance and economic stability in the absence of a male relative. The Hindu Code Bill, proposed by Ambedkar, made women worthy of the rights denied to them. He was thinking much ahead of his time (Das, 2010, 2011). This Bill was key to the liberty of women and had two main objectives—

- Elevate the social status of Hindu women by giving them their due rights;
- Annihilate social disparities and caste inequalities

Some of the key features of this Bill were as follows—

(a) Women could now inherit family property, permitting divorce and adoption of girls;

(b) The code gave both men and women the right to divorce if the marriage was untenable.

(c) Widows and divorcees were given the right to remarry.

(d) Polygamy was outlawed;

(e) Inter-caste marriage and adoption of children of any caste was to be permitted.

Ambedkar fought for three years to get the **comprehensive Hindu Code Bill** passed which gave several important rights to women. Unfortunately, **the Hindu Code Bill** suggested by Ambedkar materialised with much metamorphosis. The comprehensive Hindu Code Bill was dropped by the Indian Parliament. Gender equality was later propagated by the UN agencies to address health and development.

In the present paper, the endeavour is also to argue that deprivation and exclusion often arising of caste- based identity needs to be understood as a social determinant of health. This has been attempted in the light of Ambedkar's ideas on health and the initiatives taken by him in his various roles in governance, both before and after independence. It has often been argued that illness does not discriminate. It affects anyone who could be physiologically vulnerable, irrespective of social and gender identities. However, disparities in health outcomes are visible along multiple axes. Morbidity, mortality and access to health care differ across gender, caste, ethnicity and even region, despite universal access to health care being the vantage point for health planning. Existing literature and data sources reiterate the relevance of recognising these axes, some of which accentuate the vulnerabilities in specific ways.

Therefore, this section will highlight the thinker in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who, amidst his scholarship as an economist, political scientist, statesman and above all, humanist, recognised, underscored and addressed the health concerns.

Ambedkar's Contribution to Universal Access to Health Coverage'

The Constitution of India makes **health in India** the responsibility of state governments. It makes every state responsible for "raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and improvement of public health as among its primary duties. In 1927, Dr BR Ambedkar addressed Dalits (Mahars) in Chavdar Tank in Mahad Taluka of Maharashtra for the right to equality to get drinking water from the tank, which was denied to them. This was **much before the constitution of the BHORE COMMITTEE**. Ambedkar argued that access to safe drinking water was important, especially for the suppressed. Institution and implementation

of health programmes, and judicious use of scant resources for addressing morbidity and its prevention were thus called upon much before the call of the WHO- the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978- 'Health for All'. Inclusion of all levels of stakeholders in planning and policy making for what we recognise today as 'universal health coverage', leaving no one behind, was heralded by Ambedkar in the Mahad Satyagraha. It was furthered in the form of the Mica Mines Workers Fund, subsequently. These evidences engage with Ambedkar's ideas on health and his efforts to make it accessible to all.

The year 2025 marks the 134th birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, who is hailed as 'Father of the Indian Constitution'. As we celebrate the constitution, it is ironic that his efforts to uplift the Dalits or the 'downtrodden' have yielded results, albeit slowly, and a lot remains to be done, especially in the case of health. I am sure we know that Dalit women live 14.6 years less than their privileged sisters. The longevity in general is about 4-5 years less for the SCs and the STs. The estimated life expectancy at birth for SCs at 63.1 years, STs at 64.0 years, for OBCs at 65.1 years, and for "Others" at 68.0 years.

Factors contributing to these Disparities include:

- **Differentials in Health and Nutritional Indicators:** Gaps in health and nutritional indicators, education levels, and poverty levels between STs and non-STs contribute to shorter lifespans.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Marginalised groups face barriers to accessing quality healthcare, including antenatal and postnatal care, and immunisation.
- **Social Inequalities:** Discriminatory social practices and social inequalities may play a role in health disparities.

Caste as Social Determinant of Health : The Ambedkarian Perspective

Graded inequality prescribes access. Any discussion on the social identity based exclusion, will remain incomplete without a reference to the efforts of Dr BR Ambedkar. While his role in upliftment of the underprivileged communities is well publicised, little has been written on his contribution to the cause of health. This concern, however, was evident in 1927 when as Chairman of Satyagraha Committee of the Dalit Movement, he addressed the Mahars in Mahad (Maharashtra). This satyagraha was held three years before MK Gandhi's Dandi march. While salt was at the centre of Gandhi's campaign, drinking water was at the core of Ambedkar's crusade. He led the Dalits to drink water from Chavdar Tank in Mahad, and asserted their right to take water from public water sources, which was to be accessed by all technically. However, due to caste based social hierarchy, this was denied to the 'untouchables' even when the animals could consume water from the tank. This

consolidated the understanding of the inequality prevalent on the basis of caste. He said,

"We are not going to the Chavdar Tank to merely drink its water. We are going to the tank 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."

This marked the need to voice the maladies of inequality, particularly initiated as a quest for the right to equality to get drinking water from the tank, which was denied to Dalits. It echoed the beginning of his concern for the health of the people, nearly two decades before the constitution of the Sir Joseph Bhore Committee on Health Survey and Development in 1945-46. Access to safe drinking water was important, especially for the suppressed, who were deprived of adequate nutrition and experienced poor health. Thus, the 'right' to safe drinking water was closely linked to the appalling health and nutritional status of the depressed.

Ambedkar articulated social justice as an optimist and was hopeful of socio-structural relocation of Dalits on an equal footing with non-Dalits. He was fascinated by the social transformation in Europe, particularly in France, in the wake of the French National Assembly Proclamations of 1789 for political, social and religious reorganisation of the French society. He was influenced by the Proclamation and expressed—

'All human beings are equal by birth, and they shall remain equal till death. They may be distinguished in status only in the public interest. Otherwise, their equal status must be maintained.

Women's Health

His ideas on women's health were reflected in the Bombay Legislative Council discussion on 10 November 1938, in which disability of the parents was acknowledged as the prime reason for impacting on children physically, mentally and financially. He was one of the forerunners who saw the reproductive rights of women as important for their development. He proposed limiting the number of births for the health of the women and the children, instead of the conventional stand, which was for controlling the population. He also saw this as a measure to prevent maternal and infant deaths and reduce morbidity among them. In this vein, he favoured the termination of pregnancy to prevent unwanted births. He also worked for the welfare of the workers, addressing their health and nutrition and working conditions. This is evident from the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill[2], which

2. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was instrumental in establishing the Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946, introducing it to the Central Legislative Assembly to finance welfare activities for mica miners, providing for health, water, education, housing, and recreation, a significant step in India's labour laws that addressed poor conditions in mica mines, following earlier efforts for coal miners and leading to broader labour protections.

owes its genesis to the study of the socio-economic status of workers in the mines. The study provided the inference that the illnesses, mostly respiratory, which mica workers suffered from were directly attributable to mining operations. This was his contribution to the cause of not only the health of the workers, but also the environment, much ahead of his time. Ambedkar introduced the Bill, which was enacted in April 1946 after he originally suggested a welfare fund for mica miners at a meeting in 1944. The Fund aimed to support the mica mine workers who were severely exploited. There were provisions to improve their living conditions, health, sanitation, education, housing, food, and leisure.

Building on his previous work with coal miners (Coal Mines Safety Bill) and adding to the larger framework of Indian labour law, Ambedkar used his position as the Viceroy's Council Labour Member to promote labour welfare, particularly for women. The Act created a fund to support welfare initiatives for mica miners, including better housing, transportation, medical facilities, water supplies, food canteens and educational institutions. The Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Bill led to the Maternity Benefits to women mine workers; and working underground was prohibited for women.

It was his efforts which got the maternity benefits to working women in 1942; Maternity Benefits to women Mine workers were extended, and working underground was prohibited for women. Decades later, as a signatory to The Alma-Ata Declaration, 1978, India professed the same and aspired to achieve it too. Through his intellectual exhumation, he brought the notion of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity to the forefront of the socio-political landscape and sensitised people, especially the downtrodden in contemporary India. In his framework of thought, justice and equality were to be complemented by liberty and fraternity, both at the individual as well as social level, and collectively understood as social justice. His concern for the vulnerable and the marginalised; and for the health, is an obvious culmination of connecting the two for an enquiry.

His passion to disconnect caste based work is evident as he considered it as "the practice of territorial segregation" and said: *"... in India a man is not a scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth, irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not."* (Ambedkar, 1948). His untiring efforts against the practice of manual scavenging, a hideous practice of cleaning the human excreta from latrines manually, were also a recognition that this unclean work was impairing the health of those engaged in it- mentally and physically. The Prohibition of Employment in Manual Scavenging and its Rehabilitation Act, 2013, has done little and much needs to be done yet. Emanating from the recommendations of the Barve Committee, the Malkani Committee, during the 1950s, it took more than 20 years before a Task Force was set up to address the recommendations. While the

legislative measure has been enacted, social efforts to execute it, remain desirable. Those engaging in sanitation are from vulnerable groups – Dalits- and therefore, the access to resources is poor. The belief of impurity encourages segregation and ensures invisibility, hindering the exchange of information, especially health-related, which is of extreme importance for sanitation workers.

It is well recognised that the health of the populations is influenced by a plethora of factors which include working conditions, infrastructure and fiscal and financial environment. By that understanding, It is important to take note of some lesser publicised contributions of Dr. Ambedkar. The very inception of the Reserve Bank of India is one such. The RBI was conceptualised according to the guidelines presented by Ambedkar to the Hilton Young Commission (also known as the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance) in his book, The Problem of the Rupee – Its Origin and Its Solution.

As a member of the Viceroy's Council on Labour from 1942 to 1946, Dr Ambedkar was instrumental in bringing about several labour reforms. He changed the working hours from 12 hours to 8 hours in the 7th session of the Indian Labour Conference in New Delhi in November 1942. He also introduced several measures for workers like dearness allowance, leave benefit, employee insurance, medical leave, equal pay for equal work, minimum wages and periodic revision of scale of pay. He also strengthened trade unions and established employment exchanges across India. All these benefited women directly and indirectly.

Summing up, thus, the versatile Ambedkar, often reduced to the stature of emancipator of the downtrodden, consciously undermining the vastness of his knowledge and wisdom, stands taller than anyone else of his ilk- even today. His farsightedness laid the foundation of gender parity and the pivotal role of health in development discourse. His untiring efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the constitutional, legislative and legal privileges, which we enjoy today. Thus, while there is an impetus to collectivise women and often homogenise experiences for the politics of resistance and advocacy, it is equally critical to localise women's needs, issues, strengths, and perspectives, as a necessary step to reverse this neglect. If grassroots research, action and policy is inherently local, then it will be difficult to ignore individual women's perspectives and needs.

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Reforms on Women's Rights and Social Justice: Awareness among MSW Students

Dr. Bhaskar Vishnu Igawe
Head & Associate Professor, Dept of Social Work, Pune Campus, SNDT Women's University

Abstract

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a pioneering advocate of women's rights and social justice in India. His contributions, particularly in legal reforms, education, and economic empowerment, laid the foundation for gender equality in modern India. As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, he ensured the inclusion of provisions that guaranteed women's rights to equality, dignity, and protection from discrimination. His landmark contribution, the Hindu Code Bill, revolutionized personal laws by granting women legal rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and property, challenging deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. He also advocated for women's education, labor rights, and economic independence, recognizing that sustainable social progress could only be achieved through the empowerment of women.

This study explores the level of awareness among MSW (Master of Social Work) students regarding Dr. Ambedkar's reforms for women's rights and social justice. Given the role of social work professionals in advocating for equality and justice, understanding their knowledge and perspectives on Ambedkar's contributions is essential. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study assesses students' awareness, their perceptions of the relevance of Ambedkar's reforms in contemporary society, and the extent to which social work education integrates his ideology.

Preliminary findings indicate that while students acknowledge Ambedkar's influence on gender justice, there are significant gaps in their understanding of his legal and policy contributions. The study highlights the need for a stronger integration of Ambedkarite thought into social work curricula, along with the promotion of discussions, workshops, and field-based learning on gender justice. By addressing these gaps, social work education can better equip students to carry forward Ambedkar's vision of an equitable and just society.

Keywords: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, women's rights, social justice, MSW students, awareness, Hindu Code Bill, gender equality, social work education.

1. Introduction and Significance of the Study

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy as a nation-builder extends far beyond his role as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He was a visionary thinker and social reformer who championed the cause of women's rights, particularly at a time when patriarchy was deeply rooted in India's social structure. His efforts toward legal, educational, and economic empowerment of women laid a strong foundation for gender justice in independent India. His historic Hindu Code Bill, although only partially implemented during his lifetime, marked a significant turning point in recognizing women's autonomy within personal laws.

Given this backdrop, the current study investigates the level of awareness among Master of Social Work (MSW) students—future social change agents—about Dr. Ambedkar's reforms related to women's rights and social justice. The significance of this research lies in bridging the gap between foundational social justice ideology and the academic training of social workers.

2. Key contributions include:

Constitutional Provisions: Fundamental rights ensuring equality and protection from discrimination.

The Hindu Code Bill: Legal rights to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and property for women.

Advocacy for Women's Education: Support for women's literacy, participation in public life, and labor rights.

This research aims to assess the level of awareness and understanding of these reforms among MSW students—future advocates for justice.

3. Objectives

1. To evaluate the awareness of Dr. Ambedkar's reforms related to women's rights among MSW students.
2. To understand student perceptions regarding the relevance of these reforms today.
3. To assess how social work curricula integrate Ambedkarite thought.

4. Literature Review

Dr. Ambedkar's advocacy for gender justice is extensively documented in his speeches, writings, and legislative efforts. He believed that no society could progress without the upliftment of its women (Rege, 2013). The Hindu Code Bill, although

controversial, attempted to standardize Hindu personal laws and give women rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance, and property—an unprecedented move in post-independence India (Thorat & Kumar, 2008).

Scholars like Gail Omvedt and Sharmila Rege have emphasized Ambedkar's feminist vision as rooted in anti-caste politics. Rege (2013) especially notes how Ambedkar's critique of Brahmanical patriarchy was revolutionary in combining social justice with feminist praxis. However, recent studies (Gaikwad, 2017) indicate a knowledge gap among youth regarding the depth of Ambedkar's contributions beyond the Constitution.

This research builds on these insights by exploring awareness levels in MSW students who are training to become advocates of equity and justice.

5. Methodology

Research Design: Mixed-methods

Sampling: 100 MSW students from two academic centers (Pune and Mumbai)

Tools: Structured questionnaire (for quantitative data) and semi-structured interviews (for qualitative data)

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics (quantitative), thematic analysis (qualitative)

The quantitative component assessed awareness levels across various aspects of Ambedkar's reforms, while the qualitative component explored students' opinions and curriculum-related experiences.

6. Research Questions

- What is the level of awareness among MSW students regarding Dr. Ambedkar's reforms related to women's rights?
- How do students perceive the relevance of Ambedkar's gender justice ideology in today's context?
- To what extent is Ambedkarite thought integrated into the MSW curriculum?

7. Findings & Analysis

7.1 Awareness Levels

The figure below illustrates the awareness levels based on survey data:

- High Awareness : 20%
- Moderate Awareness : 45%
- Low Awareness : 35%

Observation: While students recognize Ambedkar's role in gender justice, few can articulate the specifics of his legal reforms or policy contributions. Students were generally familiar with Ambedkar's identity and broad contributions to social justice, but detailed understanding of his legal interventions for women's rights—such as the Hindu Code Bill—was limited.

7.2 Curriculum Integration

- Only 30% of students reported that Ambedkar's work is substantially covered in their syllabus.
- Majority relied on independent reading or seminars for additional understanding.
- Suggested need for a mandatory module or field assignment on Ambedkarite social thought.

7.3 Perception of Relevance

- 80% of students agreed that Ambedkar's reforms are highly relevant today.
- Many linked his ideas to current issues like gender-based violence, intersectionality, and caste discrimination in institutions.
- Most students (82%) believed that Ambedkar's ideas on gender justice were highly relevant in addressing issues like intersectionality, caste-based violence, and economic exclusion in modern India.

8. Relevance of the Research with the Conference Theme / Sub-Theme

This study directly aligns with conference themes focusing on gender justice, constitutional values, and education for social change. Dr. Ambedkar's feminist vision and legal reforms represent a unique intersection of social justice, legal empowerment, and academic pedagogy. The research reflects on how educational institutions can bridge theoretical knowledge and field-based activism to continue his legacy.

9. Discussion

Dr. Ambedkar envisioned an India where social justice was inseparable from gender justice. His Hindu Code Bill, though resisted during his time, set the precedent for legal gender equality. However, the study highlights a gap in the depth of understanding among social work students—those who are expected to carry forward this legacy.

Curricula often include superficial references, with limited opportunities for experiential or applied learning. This disconnect weakens the capacity of future professionals to advocate effectively for gender justice.

10. Recommendations

- **Curriculum Revision**: Introduce detailed study modules on Ambedkar's legal reforms and gender justice.
- **Curriculum Enhancement**: Introduce comprehensive study units on Ambedkar's social, legal, and feminist philosophies in MSW programs.
- **Workshops & Field Exposure**: Organize field visits to women's organizations working with Ambedkarite principles.
- **Ambedkar Memorial Lectures**: Institute annual lectures/dialogues on his relevance in contemporary social issues.
- **Faculty Sensitization**: Organize capacity-building programs for educators to teach Ambedkarite social justice concepts more effectively.
- **Field Exposure**: Encourage student internships or research in Ambedkarite feminist organizations.
- **Workshops and Lectures**: Regularly conduct guest lectures and interactive sessions on Ambedkar's work with a focus on women's rights and contemporary relevance.

11. Conclusion

Ambedkar's vision of a just and equal society remains relevant today, especially in the realm of women's rights. For social work professionals, a deep understanding of his contributions is not only academic—it is a professional necessity. Strengthening this foundation through education will ensure that future generations continue to uphold and expand his legacy of justice.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions toward gender equality remain a critical pillar in India's journey toward inclusive development. For social work students, understanding his reforms is not merely an academic requirement but a professional imperative. This research underscores the urgency of integrating Ambedkar's gender justice framework into social work education to prepare students for the complex challenges of caste and gender-based discrimination in modern India.

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Empowering Rural India: A Step Towards Social Justice and Sustainable Development in Ambedkar's Vision

Shruti Ganbote
NSS Volunteer, Smt. Kashibai Navale College of Engineering, Pune

Group photo of NSS Volunteers and villagers during the 7-day Winter Camp 2025 at Nigade-Kelad, organized by Smt . Kashibai Navale College of Engineering, Pune.

Abstract

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar envisioned an India where education, social work, and digital accessibility are the pillars of community transformation. Inspired by his vision, a 7-day winter camp was conducted in Nigade-Kelad, Velhe Taluka, Maharashtra by National Service Scheme Volunteers of Smt. Kashibai Navale College of Engineering, Pune. The objective of this camp was to address the key challenges faced by the villagers through engineering expertise and social reach. Before the camp, our volunteers conducted a preliminary survey discussing the challenges faced by the villagers. This helped us design targeted interventions

addressing issues such as water scarcity, improper sanitation, and lack of social awareness.

The camp focused on community development initiatives including Water Conservation (constructed a check dam with 40 lakh liters water storage capacity and 14 soak pits for wastewater management), Social Awareness (performed street plays on addiction, gender equality, and elder support), Education (Taught children through interactive methods), Infrastructure improvement (painted 1 temple and 2 schools to create a welcoming learning environment), Environmental development (planted 21 trees in village area), Digital accessibility (assisted 197 villagers to register E-Shram cards and Ayushman Bharat cards, ensuring economic equality), Community welfare donations (distributed educational materials, and blankets to underprivileged families), Women empowerment (promoted leadership and empowerment through the participation of women volunteers)

These initiatives helped us uplift marginalized societies through social justice, educational access, and welfare initiatives, demonstrating how youth-led social initiatives can drive sustainable rural development that aligns with Ambedkar's vision.

Keywords: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Social justice, Rural development, Sustainable development, Woman empowerment, Education, NSS, Ayushman Bharat cards, Economic equality.

Introduction

Nigade-Kelad is a rural village in Velhe Taluka, Maharashtra, where villagers face challenges like water scarcity, lack of sanitation, limited educational resources, and lack of awareness about alcohol addiction and gender equality. Additionally, many villagers are unaware of welfare schemes provided by the government, due to limited local implementation and outreach (Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2023). These issues relate to Ambedkar's principles of education and empowerment. As engineering students and NSS volunteers, we aimed to apply our technical knowledge and social awareness initiatives to solve their problems.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar envisioned an India where education, social equality, and economic independence serve as the pillars of progress. He emphasized the role of education and social work in empowering marginalized societies. Inspired by his vision, our NSS unit conducted a 7-day winter camp, integrating engineering solutions with community engagement to bring sustainable rural development. Despite government efforts, villages like Nigade-Kelad continue to struggle with such challenges (NITI Aayog, 2022). This study explores how student initiatives can contribute to bridging these gaps and fostering sustainable social justice.

This paper explores how our work contributed to social change while aligning with Ambedkar's vision of social justice. It elaborates on three core areas: Water conservation efforts and their impact on rural sustainability (Government of India, 2023), educational outreach and its impact on rural literacy (National Commission for Women, 2023), and social awareness initiatives focusing on addiction prevention and gender equality. It also examines the political and policy-related challenges that hinder the sustainable social development of rural areas.

By analyzing social justice's past, present, and future through Ambedkar's vision, this paper elaborates that sustainable rural development requires a combination of student initiatives and community participation to drive change. Our NSS camp served as a practical model for bridging the gap between policy formation and its implementation, contributing to Ambedkar's vision of a self-reliant community.

Objectives

The primary goal of the NSS Winter Camp was to apply engineering solutions and social work to uplift rural communities in alignment with Dr. Ambedkar's vision. The specific objectives were as follows:

1. **Water Conservation & Sanitation** : Constructing check dams to increase water retention level and soak pits to solve wastewater management problems.
2. **Education** : Teaching children through live experiments and interactive teaching methods for better understanding.
3. **Women Empowerment** : Encouraging female participation in education and social change initiatives.
4. **Social Awareness** : Performing Street plays to address addiction, parental care, gender equality, and social responsibilities.
5. **Sustainable Development** : Planting trees and improving village infrastructure by painting schools and temples.
6. **Digital Inclusion and Health Checkup** : Facilitating government welfare schemes available to villagers and organizing a free medical camp for health checkups.
7. **Teamwork & Leadership** : Involving students to apply knowledge for community welfare.

Methodology

Methodology – Implementation of Social Interventions

3.1 Water Conservation and Hygiene Management: Check Dams & Soak Pits

Challenge: The village suffered from severe water scarcity during summer,

affecting agriculture and daily life. Also, a lack of sanitation was noticed due to improper wastewater management methods.

Solution: The soak pits contribute to water conservation, preventing soil erosion, and ensuring sustained groundwater levels. Volunteers built a check dam using locally available materials to prevent rainwater runoff and improve water retention. According to the Ministry of Jal Shakti (2023), small-scale check dams can enhance groundwater recharge by 30% in semi-arid regions. A total of 14 soak pits were constructed for wastewater management, leading to reduced contamination and improved sanitation conditions.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: Ambedkar emphasized scientific solutions to socio-economic issues. Water self-sufficiency promotes self-reliance, a key principle in his ideology.

Constructed a Check dam to Improve Water retention in the village.

Constructed 14 Soak pits to Improve Water sanitation in the village.

3.2 Social Awareness

Street Plays on alcohol addiction, superstitions, gender equality

Challenge: Substance abuse, gender inequality, and lack of parental awareness were prevalent social issues.

Solution: Volunteers performed street plays on topics of alcohol addiction, superstitions, gender equality, and responsible parenting, engaging villagers in discussions.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: Ambedkar strongly opposed social injustices, believing that raising public awareness was key to bringing change.

Conducted Street play on Gender Equality and Alcohol Addiction to Spread Awareness.

3.3 Education & Women's Empowerment Initiatives

Challenge: Many children, especially girls, had limited access to quality education and the village lacked proper education resources.

Solution: Volunteers conducted interactive educational sessions covering basic subjects like Marathi, English, Geography, Mathematics and Science. Women were encouraged to engage in social change through awareness via Street plays.

Impact: Increased school participation and interest in continued education, particularly among girls.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: He emphasized women's education as the foundation for breaking social barriers and achieving empowerment.

Empowered Women by giving her the chance to Teach to show her strength and potential to lead.

Conducted Interactive Educational Sessions for Village Children.

3.4 Environmental & Social Welfare Activities

Tree Plantation: Promoted environmental sustainability by planting a total of 21 trees in the village area.

Painting Schools & Temples: Enhanced community spaces for learning and social interaction by painting 2 schools and 1 temple.

Blanket Distribution: Provided essential support to underprivileged families by donating a total of 100 blankets, ensuring warmth and comfort.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: Dignified living conditions and education-friendly environments are crucial for social justice and progress.

Conducted Tree Plantation Drive to Promote Environmental Sustainability.

Painted Schools and Temples to Promote Cultural Pride and Community Development.

3.5 Digital accessibility through E-cards

E-Shram cards and Ayushman Bharat Cards: Online E-Shram cards and a total of 197 Ayushman Bharat Cards were created for villagers, and volunteers to facilitate access to government health policies and financial support under welfare schemes.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: Ambedkar emphasized healthcare access to marginalized communities and economic self-reliance. He believed that marginalized communities must have access to economic opportunities and welfare schemes. This initiative aligns with Ambedkar's vision by formalizing the unorganized labour sector, giving access to financial stability.

Organized Medical Camp to Promote Rural Health and Digital Inclusion Activity for Ayushman Bharat Cards Registration.

3.6 Check dam overflow tackling

Challenge: The constructed check dam exceeded its designed capacity, causing overflow and risk of soil erosion of nearby soil.

Solution: Volunteers created a rapid assessment of water flow and soil stability, by strategically placing an additional layer of sandbags. We increased the dam height, which helped to redirect the excess water towards drainage paths. This method is commonly used in rural flood management and proved effective in stabilizing soil and preventing further erosion.

Link to Ambedkar's Vision: This approach aligns with Ambedkar's emphasis on practical solutions for social progress.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RESULT

Improved Sanitation: Before and After Soak Pit Construction to Support Clean and Sustainable Village Living.

TransformCommunity Spirit.ed Village Temples: Before and After Painting to Revive Cultural Heritage and

Activity	Short-Term Impact	Long-Term Impact
Check Dams	Stored water for immediate use.	Enhanced groundwater retention level, by creating a check dam with water storage capacity of 40 lakh litres.
Soak Pits	Reduced water stagnation and improved hygiene.	Sustainable sanitation management for reducing waste water stagnation for 14 households.
Street Plays	Increased awareness about addiction issues, gender inequality, and lack of parental care.	Behavioural change in the community.
Education	Children learned new subjects through live experiments.	Encouraged long-term literacy growth by making education more engaging and effective.
Women Empowerment	Increased participation in social programs.	Empowered women to take leadership roles in community development.
E-Shram Cardsand Ayushman Bharat Cards	Easier access to government welfare schemes.	Long-term health policy access and economic support.

Linking to Ambedkar's Vision

1. Women's Rights & Education: Dr. Ambedkar believed that a community's progress can be assessed by the degree of progress that women have achieved. Our educational initiatives and awareness programs aimed to empower women by enhancing literacy, promoting self-confidence, and encouraging social engagement.

2. Social Justice & Community Development: Ambedkar promoted self-sufficiency, public participation, and equitable opportunities through his work. Our NSS camp interventions reflect these values by addressing water scarcity, sanitation, and awareness through community-driven initiatives.

3. Behavioural Change Through Spreading Awareness: Ambedkar used newspapers, speeches, and movements to drive social reform. Our street plays and direct engagement with villagers follow a similar model of education-driven social change.

4. Economic Self-reliance and Digital Availability: Ambedkar emphasized the importance of economic self-reliance and digital healthcare access to underprivileged communities. He stated, "The progress of a society depends on the progress of its weakest sections and economic security must precede any form of social upliftment". Our Digitalization team ensured the availability of health insurance cards and financial support to the villagers through Ayushman Bharat Cards and E-Shram Cards creation.

5. Water Conservation and Sanitation: Ambedkar strongly advocated for scientific water management, as seen in his contributions to the Water Policy Framework of India and the Central Waterways, Irrigation, and Navigation Commission. The construction of a check dam and soak pits during the NSS camp is a direct reflection of this vision, addressing rural water scarcity through sustainable methods. Such initiatives align with his belief that natural resource management is key to economic self-sufficiency.

Conclusion

Our 7-day NSS winter camp successfully integrated social work, engineering solutions, and community service, reflecting Ambedkar's vision of equality, education, and empowerment. By constructing check dams and soak pits, we tackled water scarcity and sanitation problems, contributing a long-term resource management. Our educational outreach and street plays on addiction, importance of elder support, and gender equality focused on behavioural change and empowered children.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of social justice, self-reliance, and equality was reflected through our initiatives. His emphasis on education, scientific solutions,

Group photo of NSS Volunteers and villagers after successful completion of the 7-day Winter Camp 2025 at Nigade-Kelad, organized by Smt. Kashibai Navale College of Engineering, Pune.

and community engagement guided our efforts to bridge gaps between challenges faced by the village and the successful execution of related solutions. Our camp had a positive impact in driving long-term sustainable rural development through continued efforts and institutional support. We observed an increase in women volunteers' participation in social engagement after this camp.

This study demonstrates that youth-led social initiatives can be a catalyst for long-term community transformation. However, scaling such initiatives through government participation, and sustained awareness programs can lead to Ambedkar's vision of an equitable society.

Recommendations

1. Expand Water Conservation Initiatives: To ensure long–term water availability, encourage long-term rainwater harvesting through large-scale check dam projects. Encourage governmentNGO collaborations to fund rural water management projects.

2. Strengthen Women's Literacy Programs: Organize follow-up sessions for continued learning. Introduce digital education programs to enhance access to learning resources in villages. Organize regular awareness workshops on women's rights and leadership training.

3. Encourage Policy-Level NSS Involvement: Strengthen local governance involvement in implementing existing welfare schemes. Advocate for government-backed student social work projects.

By integrating technology, awareness, and empowerment, student-led social initiatives can become a driving force in achieving Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive society.

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Reflections on Dr. Ambedkar's Vision on Freedom for Women from the Socio-Cultural Perspectives

Dr. Palke R.B.
Assistant Professor, Shri Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Barshi

Abstract

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar anticipated women's freedom as an important aspect of a just and equitable society. His advocacy for gender justice was rooted in his critique of the socio-cultural practices that propagated caste and patriarchy. He believed that women's oppression was deeply connected to the hierarchical structures of Indian society. He condemned the Manusmriti for legitimising gender-based discrimination. For that he advocated women's rights through legal reforms. He emphasised on the Hindu Code Bill that aimed to ensure equality in marriage, inheritance and property rights. His emphasis is on education and economic independence as vital tools for women's empowerment. His visionary approach extended beyond legal frameworks to a broader social transformation. He expected that women could exercise agency in personal and public spheres free from religious and caste-based constraints. The research paper is trying to explore Ambedkar's progressive views on women's freedom in the context of socio-cultural practices. It analyses his interventions in legislative reforms, his engagement with feminist concerns and his broader vision of an egalitarian society. His contribution remains significant in contemporary time for gender justice and social equity.

Aims

- To examine Ambedkar's critique of traditional socio-cultural practices and their impact on women's status.
- To explore Ambedkar's legal and social interventions aimed at securing freedom and equality for women
- To assess the contemporary relevance of Ambedkar's ideas in addressing gender-based discrimination.

Methodology: Qualitative, analytical, and historical in approach.

Education is fruitless without educated women, and agitation is incomplete without the strength of women. —**Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

This powerful assertion by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar underscores his commitment to the empowerment of women. In a patriarchal society like India, where women were historically subjugated and denied agency, Dr. Ambedkar emerged as a revolutionary thinker and reformer who fought for the dignity, rights, and freedom of women. His vision of women's liberation went beyond political tokenism; it embraced social and cultural emancipation as foundational to real freedom.

Social Context of Women's Oppression

Historically, Indian women were confined to domestic roles, often glorified as mothers but denied basic human rights like education, property ownership, and personal autonomy. The patriarchal structure of society reduced women to dependents, subordinated to male authority at every stage of life – as daughters, wives, or mothers.

Dr. Ambedkar was acutely aware of this systemic injustice. He observed that women's subjugation was not incidental but an integral component of the traditional Hindu social order. In his groundbreaking essay *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* (1916), he explained that caste could not be maintained without controlling women's sexuality and reproductive rights. By restricting women's freedom, especially through endogamy, the caste system preserved its hierarchical structure[1].

Cultural Basis of Patriarchal Control

Culturally, religious texts and traditional beliefs contributed to the oppression of women. Manusmriti, one of the foundational texts of Brahmanical patriarchy, openly denied women independence and agency. Ambedkar vehemently criticized Manusmriti for its dehumanizing stance toward women. He declared that any religion or scripture that degrades women cannot be accepted as a moral or just foundation for society.

In his analysis *The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women*(Chapter 18), Dr. Ambedkar argued that ancient Indian women had once enjoyed a higher status, including access to education and participation in public life. However, with the institutionalization of Brahmanical patriarchy, their status declined drastically. He identified religious orthodoxy and conservative interpretations of scriptures as major reasons behind this degeneration[2].

Rejection of Brahminical Patriarchy

Ambedkar was unambiguous in his opposition to Brahminical patriarchy. In his speech *"Women and Counter-Revolution"*, he highlighted how the counter-revolution led by Brahmins, particularly after the fall of Buddhism, resulted in the systematic curtailment of women's rights. The prohibition of widow remarriage, denial of education, and confinement to domestic spaces were all strategies to keep women subservient[3].

Ambedkar's criticism of Manusmriti culminated in the public burning of the text on 25 December 1927 in Mahad. This act symbolized his protest against centuries of misogynistic thought embedded in Hindu religious practices. He made it clear that without breaking these religious shackles, true women's liberation was impossible[4].

Ambedkar's Legislative Efforts for Women's Rights

Dr. Ambedkar not only theorized about women's rights but also took concrete legislative steps to ensure them. As the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, he ensured that the principles of gender equality were enshrined in the constitutional framework.

Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Indian Constitution guarantee equality before the law and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. Article 21 ensures the right to life and personal liberty, including the right to dignity, which is foundational for women's freedom. Directive Principles of State Policy further advocate for equal pay for equal work, maternity relief, and just working conditions for women[5].

Perhaps his most radical legislative intervention came in the form of the Hindu Code Bill (1951–52), which aimed to codify and reform Hindu personal laws concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. The bill sought to give women the right to divorce, inherit property equally, and remarry. Though it faced strong opposition and was not passed in his lifetime, the bill laid the groundwork for subsequent legal reforms such as the Hindu Succession Act (1956)[6].

Role of Education in Women's Empowerment

Dr. Ambedkar believed that education was the cornerstone of liberation—not only for Dalits but for women as well. He consistently advocated for the education of women, arguing that it would lead to their self-reliance and social participation. He famously said, *"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."*

Through journals like *Mooknayak*, *Bahishkrut Bharat*, and *Janata*, Ambedkar wrote extensively about the importance of women's education and the need to break the traditional barriers that kept them out of schools. He supported widow remarriage

and campaigned against child marriage and dowry, all of which he saw as obstacles to women's advancement[7].

Women's Participation in Social Movements

Ambedkar ensured that women were not passive beneficiaries of reform but active agents of social change. Women participated in large numbers in the Mahad Satyagraha (1927), Chavdar Tale Satyagraha, and the Kalaram Temple Entry Movement. Ambedkar encouraged women to step out of their traditional roles and engage in public life and protest. He believed that the social transformation of India was incomplete without women's active involvement. His slogan *Educate, Agitate and Organise* applied as much to women as it did to the Dalit community at large. His insistence on their political and social participation marked a departure from earlier social reformers, who often saw women as mere symbols of morality or national identity[8].

Ambedkar's Vision: Beyond Sympathy to Structural Empowerment

What distinguished Dr. Ambedkar's approach to women's emancipation was that he did not advocate for reform out of sympathy but out of a deep commitment to justice and equality. He saw women not just as caregivers or homemakers but as citizens entitled to dignity and agency.

His work addressed multiple dimensions of women's lives -legal, social, cultural, economic, and political. He challenged the root causes of their oppression and sought structural transformation. Whether it was through legislation, education, or mass mobilization, his strategies were geared toward building an equitable society.

Contemporary Relevance of Ambedkar's Vision

Ambedkar's vision remains highly relevant in contemporary India. While legal frameworks have improved, the lived reality of many women especially Dalit, Adivasi, and marginalized women—continues to reflect systemic discrimination. Caste and gender still intersect in ways that deny equal opportunity and dignity.

Movements for women's rights today continue to draw inspiration from Ambedkar's radical critique of patriarchy and his unwavering support for constitutional and social justice. Feminist scholars have increasingly recognized Ambedkar as a precursor to intersectional feminism in India. His insistence on linking caste and gender oppressions laid the foundation for a broader understanding of structural inequalities [9].

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a pioneering thinker whose contribution to women's liberation in India was profound and transformative. He challenged religious dogmas, questioned social customs, and legislated for equality. His

approach was holistic addressing both the material and symbolic dimensions of women's oppression.

Ambedkar's work remains a beacon for all those striving toward a just, inclusive, and egalitarian society. His legacy calls upon us not only to protect women's rights but to actively dismantle the structures—social, cultural, and religious—that continue to inhibit their freedom.

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Perspective on Women Empowerment and Democracy: *Reference Points for Social Work Education and Practice in India*

Sandeep Jagdale
Professor, Dept. of Social Work, Walchand College of Arts and Science (Autonomous), Solapur

Abstract

We are all familiar with the name of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as a rebellious, lawyer, revolutionary and highly intellectual man of Indian history. But it will be courageous to say that there is no contribution of him in the most viewed and reviewed freedom struggle of India. On the contrary it's a failure of the analytical practices of social sciences to see him in much narrowed manner, or even politicizing his image as a leader of suppressed class only, which is a matter of great delusion. Every revolutionary man has his own philosophy which is largely based on the seen, observed and lived experiences of contemporary realities of society. Based on which he develops his strategies of accommodation of likeminded people, strengthening bases of their philosophies and struggle. This reflective article attempts to recollect the notions of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar over women empowerment and democratic processes to indicate vital reference points for social work education and practice in India.

Key words: Dr. Ambedkar, Women Empowerment, Democracy, Social Work, Education, Practice.

Introduction

It is difficult to find an academician who is not aware or whose work is not intersected with work or philosophy of a man, most intellectual and influential person Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. He is the man who touched almost everything including philosophy, law and economics, religion and politics, service and democracy and what not. Every time when we read him, we tend to believe that he was the crusader of human rights, peace, social and economic democracy. There is ample of literature available on his life, philosophy and work in different languages

which guide the generations for universal ways to achieve liberal and just society. The present review article intends to recollect his thoughts on women empowerment and democracy to have some vantage points for social work education and practice in Inda.

Women Empowerment

A concept of women empowerment has captured attention and become a universal phenomenon and issue of priority across the nations. It was introduced at the International Women's Conference at Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995 (United Nations, 1995), which defined empowerment as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favor of women (Chutia, 2022). Redistribution of social power and change in the control of resources in favor of women in any society is not possible unless they are healthy, educated and provided with some gainful employment avenues (Rao, 2002). Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. Women empowerment is the process where women gain greater share in control in terms of various resources viz, material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation, and to master power. In other words, empowerment refers to moving from enforced powerlessness to powerfulness (Murthy, 2022).

Robert Admas (1990) emphasizes that empowerment is a process by which individuals, groups, and communities become able to control their circumstances and achieve their goals, in other words, people will be able to maximize quality of their life. Pillai (1995) states empowerment is as an active, multi-dimensional process, that should enable individual to realize their own identity and powers in all spheres of life – personal, professional, social and economic. It consists of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision making to enable them to have greater control over the circumstances that influence their lives and free from restraints imposed on them by custom, belief and practice. Gangarde (2001) also refers empowerment as a means of decentralization of authority and power which aims at getting participation of deprived or marginalized sections of people in policy making processes. The term empowerment conveys different meanings in different contexts. However, in general it is understood to be a process of consolidating, maintaining or changing the nature and distribution of power in a particular cultural context. It is basically the process which tries to change the nature and direction of those systemic forces which marginalize the women.

Untouchability and Women Marginalization

M.K. Gandhi firmly believed that an untouchability issue is an internal conflict within the Hindu religion and its related practices, therefore it can be resolved

through brainstorming efforts within the Hindu communities. Hence, for him the battle against untouchability was essentially a religious one (Lynch, 1974). He therefore, called for a change of heart among the Hindus as an act of expiation and reparation for the centuries of oppression. But Dr. Ambedkar viewed untouchability issue is a structured, institutionalized process of social and religious suppression and oppression and related exploitation by the dominant castes of Hindu religion. He traced the roots of the problem in the structure of the Hindu society and characterized it as a byproduct of the Hindu caste system where the women are most affected by it whichever the caste it is (Keer, 1984).

Caste being a constructed system of social stratification, which has been characterized as a fixed, conformist and ordered social structure. In its conventional form, the caste system, as an ascriptive system of status and hierarchy, integrated society through ordering primary identities along a legitimized hierarchy of status positions that control and direct social, economic and political relationships in the society. There is much evidence of status mobility in caste system in India (Dumont, 1970). Even in the past, the caste system was not absolutely closed, and mobility was possible through many channels such as migration to far-off regions, royal decrees or proclamation, raising a particular caste status, accumulation of wealth and power by some castes which eventually elevated their caste status (Arya & Rathore, 2020).

Shah (2002) said that people who are called 'Dalits' are the utmost disadvantaged segments of the Indian civilization, and it is fair to say that the women section of any caste is subjected to domestic work and responsibilities to adhere religious taboos which are rightly opposed by Ambedkar. According to him the biggest impediment in the way of women's development in India is *Manusmruti*. The book caused worst situation of women, deprived from education, rights and burdened with several severe restrictions and taboos, treated them as man's slaves.

Women Liberation and Ambedkar

Shudras and women are marked out in the Dharmashastras for indignities of every conceivable kind. They are delt with more harshly than others. Their disabilities have been described as grave and burdensome. They are totally excluded from most of the ordinary graces of life. A life of a Shudra, though he is emancipated by his master, is not released from slavery; it is considered that the slavery is innate in him, who can set him free? (The Law of Manu: VII 414)[1]. Particularly women have given the prime responsibility to protect, promote, inculcate and advocate the traditional forms of discrimination. To stick with the religious forms of practices

1. https://sacred-texts.com/hin/manu/manu08.htm

which is great part of one's life in early days of life where one's identity takes shape.

Dr. Ambedkar was fond of reading and his readings took him to look beyond the caste, creed or Varna in respect to slavery of women. He came to conclusion that women irrespective of any Hindu caste is suffering from diverse forms of discrimination imposed and such discriminations are preached and advocated by religious scriptures. No women of independent India irrespective of her religion or caste can deny his contribution endorsed by Indian constitution which confers constitutional rights, Hindu Code Bill intended mainly 1) to establish monogamy as the only legal system and other marriages are illegal; 2) Conferment of right to property and adoption on women; 3) restitution of conjugal rights and judicial separation, Right to Property, accommodation of women in active politics and *Bikku Sangh*, Temple entrance proclamation and action, arranging separate women conferences at Mumbai, Kanpur, Borgaon, Malkapur, Mahad and Nagpur and even his continuous efforts to implement Sharada Bill on Govt. of India. His rage against Hindu culture that protects women from education made him to start Mahila Maha Vidyalaya at Aurangabad. Even Dr. Ambedkar when first burnt Manu Smriti in 1927 as a mark of protest against racial and gender prejudices in the book, at Mahad, had to rely heavily on women. He also commented on the Muslim women's critical situations often criticize wearing Burkha and polygamy practices in his book 'Thoughts on Pakistan'. His iconic act of converting himself to Buddhism has really been in favor of disadvantaged sections of society especially women and aimed at uplifting the status of women in the society by liberating them from socio-religious restraints (Lal, 2023).

Taking all above in mind we can conclude that his thinking about women emancipation was not only limited for the suppressed class women but it also touches the all women in spite of their religious identities. He had very comprehensive thoughts about women empowerment include all spheres of life – economic, social, religious, spiritual, educational and even political.

Feminist Movements and Ambedkar

The upsurge of feminist movement in India that developed in the 1970s was mainly spearheaded by upper castes, middle class, educated, left-oriented women but it is not limited with them only. It was their experiences that were universalized as 'women's experience'. The women's organizations all over the world has highlighted economic issues in terms of women's contribution in labour, production, industry, the issues of access to resources and violence against women. The movement, however, had mere representation of the women of lower castes but steadily increasing. The feminist movement developed a critique on patriarchy and

generated debates on class versus patriarchy but failed to address the issue of caste.

The contemporary literature developed by Ambedkar like 'Castes in India, their mechanism genesis and development', 'The rise and fall of Hindu Women', 'Riddles of Hinduism', 'Boudha and his dhamma' speaks about the freedom of women from all clutches of traditional practices or isms. He said, 'learn to live in this world with respect, you must abolish your slavery yourself, do not depend upon God or Superman, devotion to scriptures would not free you from your bondage, want and poverty, your salvation lies in political power and not in making pilgrimages and observance of fasts'. Again, material good was more important than spiritual food he adheres. If we look at the feminist movements in the light of Ambedkar's philosophy one can find out the roots of struggle, rights and strategies he used.

As Ray (2022) revealed that the women in India have remained a matter of pleasure, pride and a source of reproduction. This fact is further reframed by Hindu Shastras that the woman needs men for her lifespan i.e. father when she was young, husband when she is married and her son when she becomes a mother. This understanding has been challenged by many feminist movements because of the rights struggle inculcated by Dr. Ambedkar. Therefore Kumar (1995)[2] wisely said that the question of untouchability is not independent to only castes in India but also the question of land acquisition and distribution, power dynamics, emancipation of women and many more, therefore Dr. Ambedkar is called as frontier of people's democratic revolution in India.

Democracy and Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a terrible follower of democracy. According to him democracy is not merely a form of government[3]. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. He stressed that without social transformation, political democracy would be ineffective. He argued that the sustainability of democracy depends on the social and moral conscience of the people, requiring continuous nurturing through education and ethical leadership (Jaffrelot, 2005).

He knows that everyone is somehow entangled and encircled with power and its manifestations. Therefore, he stressed that a written constitution was so much required to have assurance of fundamental rights, separation of power and checks and balances (Austin, 1999). It is difficult to have a common rule of law where people follow different paths to control individual and social evils. Under majority rule, he believed that marginalized communities will not have their individual rights

2. www.ambedkaritetoday.com/2019/03/ambedkar-in-and-for-post-ambedkar.html
3. www.mea.gov.in/images/attach/amb/volume_01.pdf

and this will lead to social injustice. He stressed the idea that a political democracy should safeguard the rights of minorities especially Dalits and it should look at carefully that democracy should not become a 'tyranny of the majority (Ambedkar, 1949). One more important feature he advocated that the real representation of people in power structures, which is important to lead the real issues of underprivileged populations therefore he strongly demanded separate electorates for such people (Jaffrelot, 2005).

He was the man who talked about social and economic democracy should become a way of life for people and government (Naik, 2024). He viewed liberty, equality and fraternity as the foundational pillars of any democracy. Under this social and economic democracy, he was suggesting that caste-system was the greatest obstacle to democracy, as it perpetuated inequality and division among people. In his seminal work *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), he called for the complete eradication of caste-based discrimination, asserting that true democracy could not exist in a society where birth determined one's social status and one's prospects. Ambedkar strongly believed that financial democracy was vital for the success of any political democracy. He supported state learned policy interventions in economic affairs to diminish inequality and he asserted for land reforms, labour rights, and public sector employment for Dalits and underprivileged sections of society. He argued that democracy must ensure not only political rights but also economic opportunities for all (Rodrigues, 2002).

Reference Points for Social Work Education and Practice in India

It's ok to argue that formal social work education has started in India in the year1936 but it is difficult to digest that there was no social work practice before that. Social work, as education and practice were not there but we do have a history of great revolutions, reformers, rebels and movements right from Raja Ram Mohan Roy's *Bhrahmo Samaj* to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's *Satya Shodhak Samaj* to great Indian freedom movement.

But most of the reformers are found hesitate to take radical stand when it comes to religion or way of life. But it is not the case with Dr. Ambedkar, he has taken a spade by spade to all issues be it caste system, religious dogma and practices, language and education, politics and power, labor, economy and rupee, nation and nationalism, policy and government and most importantly he never found angry, agitated, harsh in his entire writings. He looked cogent, logical, radical and reformative.

To realize the life and work of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, let's see the global definition of the social work profession-Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion,

and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IASSW, 2014)[4]. The present definition has accepted and approved by International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work (Dula et.al., 2024).

Therefore, Individual rights (Pankaj et al., 2024), importance of others, democratic way of personal and professional life, policy advocacy for grassroot activism, inclusion and affirmative interventions, opposition to poverty, caste and gender oppression (Dhanani, 2024),, women empowerment and social justice, peace and constitutionalism, opposition to functionalism, constructive nationalism etc. are some of the vantage points for social work education and practice which we can relate to as educators, students, NGO's, federations and even governments.

Conclusion

Today's presentation of women empowerment is quite visible and different to all but the roots of it lie in the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar. No one can deny the contribution made by him in respect of rights of suppressed, oppressed, women, education and even political involvement of women. It is clear that Ambedkar and his line of thinking was not only for Dalits or Dalit women but was for all those who are majority in number however disenfranchised by many means. Social work education and practice in India is incomplete without perspective of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. But this profession India has a long way to go because after so many years what we struggling with are somehow same issues of poverty, oppression, othering, ghettoism, limiting rights and prospects, no rule of law, criminalization of politics etc. The author would like to suggest to every stakeholder of social work education and practice to read life and work of Dr. Ambedkar to realize and internalize the work needed the most.

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Whither Marginalised Women's Educational Empowerment?: Failures and Way Out

Dr. Santosh D. Sabale
Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Education, Pune, Maharashtra

Abstract

The question always posed in anyone's mind is that 'Do Dalit (Scheduled Castes) women truly live in a world very distinct from that of so-called 'mainstream society'? This article, therefore, seeks to explore different forms of prevalent mindset of the caste society that dehumanize dalit women in their daily lives. Firstly, it attempts to gain insights into the social and economic status of dalit women by employing the Phule-Ambedkarite worldview to unveil grassroots reality of her misery. Secondly, it calls for debate on the concept of women empowerment by identifying challenges with regard to dalit women's emancipation in contemporary times. Lastly, it also discusses different aspects of delinking Ambedkar's views on equal access to education and social justice to women empowerment in new national education policy's provisions and implementation. This paper employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining policy analysis review and field research to understand complex dynamic surrounding to women empowerment comprehensively in India. The country recently celebrated its 75th anniversary of independence, and dalit women have long been ignored in both dalit intellectual debate and non- dalit feminist discourse. Dalit communities in India have been fighting for basic human and civil rights since the middle of the 19th century. The struggle of dalit women in one arena the realm of formal education and examines a range of interconnected social, cultural and political questions (Paik, 2014). Education plays a decisive role in women's empowerment. Education can empower women which underline in components of the SDGs. Pierre Bourdieu, an educational sociologist, refers to it as 'cultural capital'. Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar is the champion of women rights and their empowerment in India. Ambedkar's contributions to women's rights and empowerment in India are vast and complex, encompassing the articles 14, 15 & 16 in the Constitution. Affirmative action policies, alongwith reservations and quotas through the Constitution were established as one of Ambedkar's conviction to inclusive education. Ambedkar suggested systemic changes that would promote inclusivity in education and enforce strict caste-based discrimination. Soon after

India's independence, the governments developed several policies and programmes for women's empowerment in general, and dalit women in particular, using five-year plans. The Constitution has established safeguards for dalit women's development and empowerment. In post-globalization and with the ascent of neo-liberal economic development, the conventional support that dalits and adivasis have received from State institutions has derailed. At the global level, theorists highlight three dimensions of women's empowerment: economic, social and political. By concluding aspects of dalit women's development, the empowerment of dalit women through socio-economic development in contemporary India is a myth since the all-round development of dalit communities does not exist in the social, political and economic sectors of society. The SC communities continue to fall far behind other social groups by social, political and economic indicators. The paper suggests that the empowerment with regard to women must be critically rethought at changing role of women in developing countries.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Neoliberal Economy, Affirmative Action, Women Empowerment, Social Justice, National Education Policy-2020

Introduction

"I am conscious of the fact that if women are conscientised the untouchable community will progress. I believe that women should organize and this will play a major role in bringing an end to social evils. The progress of the Dalit community should be measured in terms of the progress measured by its womenfolk. Every woman should stand by her husband, not as his slave but as his contemporary, as his friend."

.....An excerpt from speech of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar at Dalit Mahila Federation, 1942.

At the outset, a few questions have always been posed in my mind is that 'Do Dalit (Scheduled Castes) women truly live in a world very distinct from that of so-called 'mainstream society'?; 'What does education mean to dalits? What are the costs they have to pay to seek higher education? Hence, to portray and capture the grassroots reality of the dalit women's worldview on gender and power relations, perspectives of social sciences and sociology have significant importance.

Dalit women's issues have long been overlooking in both Dalit intellectual debate and non-Dalit women's discourse, despite India's recent 75th anniversary of independence. The common practices that dehumanize Dalit women in their day-to-day lives within Indian caste society. Dalit women are dehumanized in many ways and are often seen as a means of entering the caste system, as evidenced by the vulnerabilities that come with being both a woman and a Dalit. Due to ingrained

socioeconomic disparities, the empowerment of Dalit women in India is a crucial issue. It shows that Dalit women participate in the labor force at a significantly higher rate than other women in the general population. To date, though, the government has not created distinct policies for the empowerment of women from the scheduled castes. Women and girls have less decision-making authority, are more likely to experience abuse, and have limited access to health and educational resources under the strict patriarchy and graded inequality. Numerous studies focus on the empowerment of Dalit women, highlighting the importance of education, economics, employment, and health in attaining gender equality for the Dalit community.

As Indian society undergoes a period of change, victims of oppressed groups have been repeatedly dehumanized by various forms of oppression. The Manusmriti Dharmashstra, or Laws of Manu, is a Hindu text that has become wholly exclusive of women's identities over the centuries. The women's education was denied by Manu. By depicting women as a tool for sexual activity and a commodity to satiate one's sexual need, the Manusmriti even exercised control over women's sexuality in a completely inhumane way. Dalit women, therefore, face particular and distinct difficulties, carrying the 'triple burden' of economic disadvantage, caste discrimination, and gender bias. Because they face numerous marginalization as Dalit women, they can be classified as 'mostly vulnerable.'. Dalits have long faced discrimination in India due to the caste system, which keeps them from engaging in mainstream political, social, and economic life.

The following issues have been addressed in the report "Human Rights and Dignity of Dalit Women" (2006) but are not addressed by either women or Dalit activists: a) Dalit women in South Asia experience systematic and structural discrimination three times because they are poor, women, and Dalits; b) Dalit women are underrepresented in the Parliament; and c) Dalit women earn for their families but have no control over their earnings. In addition to other menial tasks, they must perform household chores and deal with domestic violence.

The traditional support that Dalits and Adivasis have received from State institutions has crumbled and been disrupted by the rise of neo-liberal economic development. Neoliberal markets celebrate the exclusive dominance of a small number of corporate entities and entrepreneurs, which is incompatible with ethical principles. The market economy, globalization, and state-sponsored developmental privatization have all played a part in the marginalization of the marginalized that has increased over the past few decades. Additionally, people's caste groups and identities, especially those of the Dalits in India, are impacted by globalization. The impact of globalization has been influenced by social and economic inequality. Consequently, as the public sector contracts due to disinvestment in public assets

and resources that were once the main source of social mobility for Dalit women, the poor and Dalits will continue to face greater disadvantages in all of these processes. There is a significant risk that the weaker and marginalized groups will once more be denied the opportunity, ability, and right to think at a time when the entire educational system appears to be shifting globally toward the marketization of knowledge. There are 130 million girls who are not enrolled in school worldwide, according to statistics. However, some Dalit women have written about their life experiences and testimonies, which help us think about the importance of untouchability as a social and political reality.

This article, therefore, seeks to explore different forms of prevalent mindset of the caste society that dehumanize dalit women in their daily lives. Firstly, it attempts to gain insights into the economic and social status of dalit women by employing the Phule-Ambedkarite worldview to unveil grassroots realities of her misery. Secondly, it calls for debate on the concept of women empowerment by identifying imperatives and challenges with regard to emancipation of dalit women in post-liberalisation economic model. Lastly, it also discusses different aspects of delinking Ambedkar's views on inclusive education and social justice to women empowerment in connection with new national education policy's provisions and its implementation.

To research methodology, this paper employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining policy analysis review, and field research to understand complex dynamic surrounding to women empowerment comprehensively in India. This study utilizes a qualitative review and analysis of existing literature through secondary data on the prevalence of women empowerment and its policy implications in social, economic and political perspectives of development for Dalit women. Relevant peer-reviewed literature such as books, magazines and journal articles, government reports, policy statements, committee reports websites, civil society reports, public debates and documentaries on the proposed topic also referred. The secondary data from these sources was analysed to determine gaps in empowerment models and existing implementation at the levels of government and civil society interventions.

Status of Dalit Women

Caste-based social exclusion from economic, civil, cultural, and political rights has long plagued Dalits in Indian society. In Indian society, women are typically among the most marginalized groups. Dalit women face many particular and unique challenges, including the "triple burden" of economic hardship, caste discrimination, and gender bias. Dalit women must contend with a patriarchal system in their homes as well. Nonetheless, the socio-cultural experiences of women, especially Dalit women, are different from those of non-Dalit women. Caste and patriarchy play a

major role in defining women's status in the Indian social structure, setting Dalit women apart from non-Dalit women. In addition to the multifaceted nature of social exclusion, Dalit women are among the most oppressed groups in Indian society. They have been subjected to the dominance of patriarchal and brahmanical hegemony. The 'woman' connotation in India does not imply to a homogeneous group; women from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslims are disproportionately affected by disparities in economic performance, health status, and educational attainment as measured by human development indicators. In 2011, approximately 16–60% of India's female population were Dalit women, in every human development indicator. For instance, Dalit women perform worse than Dalit men and non-Dalit women in terms of literacy and longevity. Dalits are economically and socially adept.

This 'difference' was essential to understanding the distinctiveness of Dalit women's oppression, according to Guru (1995) in the article 'Dalit women talk differently.' Dalit women experienced two distinct patriarchal systems or situations: a brahmanical patriarchy that severely stigmatized them because of their caste status, and more intimate forms of control by Dalit men over the economic and sexual labor of 'their' women (Guru, 1995). Since the middle of the 19th century, Dalit communities in India have been fighting for fundamental civil and human rights. Examining a variety of interrelated social, cultural, and political issues, the fight of Dalit women focuses on formal education (Paik, 2014). Due to their gender, caste identity, and financial disadvantage, women in this society are subjected to discrimination.

Dalit women are denied social, economic, cultural, and political rights due to discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, and untouchability. Caste and gender increase a person's susceptibility to sexual exploitation and abuse. Dalit women have historically also been the targets of dreadful social and religious customs such as *jogatin* (temple prostitution) or devadasi, which lead to sexual exploitation under the pretence of religion. Dalit women face caste and gender discrimination, which lowers their human development metrics. Compared to Dalit men and non-Dalit women, Dalit women perform poorly on human development metrics like longevity and literacy.

The following facts can be distinguished by comparing the labor participation of Dalit women according to the 2011 Census of India:

1. Two of the most female-intensive urban non-farm industries are domestic work and tobacco product manufacturing, where women make up 80.9% and 77.5% of the workforce, respectively. Eight out of four women are employed in these two industries, compared to just 0.6 out of all men.

2. Only one in five (20.4%) workers in these two industries are female, even though education employs 13.2% of India's urban women and retail trade employs 61% of the country's female workforce.
3. One-third of the women engaged in urban domestic manufacturing (32.2%) are Muslim. Muslim women comprise 39.2% of non-SC/ST manufacturing workers. Hindu women constitute 22.9 per cent, and Hindu Scheduled Caste women contribute to up 20%.
4. Only one in five (20.4%) workers in these two industries are female, although education employs 13.2% of India's urban women and retail trade employs 61% of the country's female workforce. (2011 Census of India)
5. The service industry occupies 44% of women workers with only a high school diploma, whereas 41% of women workers with a college degree work in domestic or manufacturing (NSS EUS 2011–12).

Compared to other women, Dalit women have not earned as much from development. Because Dalit women's progress on human development indicators has lagged behind that of upper-caste women, there are still gaps between Dalit and other categories of women. For instance, the majority of Dalit women rely primarily on wage labor and lack access to regular employment and income-earning assets, according to data from the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). Compared to 62% of upper-caste women, 38% of Dalit women laboured for themselves in 2009–2010, indicating that access to stable sources of income was unequal amongst the groups of women. Additionally, 9 out of 80 Dalit women work as regular salaried employees, compared to 20 out of 8 upper caste women. Compared to 17% of upper-caste women, roughly 52% of Dalit women were employed as agricultural wage labourers in rural areas. Additionally, a significant portion of Dalit women work in scavenging and other supposedly dirty and polluting jobs. Results from the NSSO 61st round are comparable. Approximately 13 percent of all women working as cooks and waiters in urban areas are from Dalit social groups, according to the data, while a larger percentage (33 percent) are from upper castes. Fewer Dalit women are working in the professional, technical, and related occupation category, which primarily consists of regular salaried positions in urban areas.

NSSO Employment statistics from 1993-1994 to 2017-2018 show that wage disparity between SC and upper-caste women has risen substantially. The majority of workers from the 'lower castes' work in the informal sector. Working SC women are constricted at the lowest levels even in the informal labour market, with limited social mobility and social networks to advance and higher transaction costs to enter formal markets. Importantly, most of dalit women are usually involved in 'civic sanitation work' (i.e., manual scavenging, which has been forbidden). The manual

scavengers are usually dalit women who clean human waste from dry pit latrines. Scavengers are considered the lowest class of dalits and face discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2009). In addition to having precarious jobs and unfavourable working conditions, these professions are usually not covered by labor laws and regulations. Hence, they are most often trapped in the lowest-paying jobs requiring hard physical labour. They are also likely to be in roles without written contracts, paid leaves, and shorter periods of engagement with SC women seen mostly constrained to the most wretched obligations, and more improved education and social awareness, and use these vocational skills for jobs. (Chakraborty, 2003) However, the conventional gender division of labor still holds sway here as well, with women performing labor-intensive activities frequently under the direction and control of men. In addition, SC women who were employed and provided for their families were still constrained by patriarchal norms of their communities and male authorities within the household with work environments in both private and public sectors being somewhere between reluctant and vulnerable to caste humiliation and sexual violence, along with gender inequality. (Mosse, 2012; Irudayam, Mangubhai & Lee, 2014)

Most educated SC women could merely find low-paying, temporary jobs in the public sector without social security or labor rights. In this case, the majority worked as teachers in government schools, usually at a level below their level of education. However, educated SC women found greater employment in the private sector after liberalization. These were women who had obtained education through the reservation policies; more than 70% of them were in their 20s and 30s. The majority of them worked for larger companies' subcontractors in the expanding service industry (Singh, 2011). However, SC women barely received almost the minimal wage from small outsourcing companies, and they typically lacking work and welfare benefit's security. However, urban SC women found that the growing NGO sector was a significant source of employment, demonstrating rising awareness of caste and gender discrimination that still exists (Kurian, 2014). In addition to issues with low educational attainment, inexperience, and difficulty obtaining credit or taking out a loan at reasonable interest rates, SC women, particularly those who wish to launch businesses or pursue entrepreneurship outside of their local communities, also encounter difficulties obtaining supplies from upper caste wholesalers. Such self-employment is primarily a distress-driven survival tactic used by the majority of SC women to avoid unemployment and low-paying jobs. They open modest stores and engage in various activities.

Dalit women are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence, according to research that links vulnerability and violence. For example, it has been reported that at least 10 Dalit women are raped in India each day, and that

during the past ten years, their vulnerability to rape has increased by 44%. Regional disparities are indicated by the highest number of such crimes reported by states like Rajasthan, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. Beyond violence, Dalit women frequently experience economic marginalization, being pushed into low-wage occupations like prostitution or scavenging and landless labor. A UN report reveals an unexpected fact: Dalit women die 14–6 years younger than upper-caste women, with an average age of death of 39–5 years versus 54–1 years. This indicates broader health and social disparities.

Policies & Programmes for Marginalized Women

In order to empower women in general and Dalit women (SCs) in particular, the Indian government adopted a number of policies and initiatives using five-year plans shortly after obtaining independence. Ambedkar promoted inclusive education by pursuing several initiatives and policy recommendations to ensure that every member of society had equal access to the best education available. One of Ambedkar's primary suggestions for advancing inclusive education was the establishment of affirmative action policies, along with reservations and quotas through the Constitution. Ambedkar recommended structural adjustments that would uphold stringent caste-based discrimination and encourage inclusivity in education.

Safeguards for the empowerment and development of Dalit women were established by the Constitution. Scheduled Castes comprise 201 million people, or 16.2% of the nation's total population, according to the 2011 Census. According to Ruth (2000), Dalit women make up 16-30% of all Indian women and 49–96% of all Dalit people. It's important to note that, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and successful post-independence policies, Dalits in general and Dalit girls in particular still lack sufficient educational empowerment. Numerous initiatives and policies have not succeeded in attracting and keeping Dalit girls in the field of education. Dalit girls continue to "drop out" of school before completing their eight years of schooling in considerable numbers. Dalit females enrol at lower rates than boys do, and the difference gets bigger as we go up the educational ladder. Even though the State has implemented many education laws, such as the Right to Education Act of 2009, it highlights the extent of socio-economic exclusion. Amongst the educational challenges that Dalit women encounter in both rural and urban slums are poverty, low educational quality, high dropout rates, non-attendance, and educational prejudice. Casteism in rural areas, male control over them, and the monopolization of resources by the middle and upper classes are the three main causes of Dalit women's and girls' low literacy rates.

In the past few decades, the government has implemented several policies aimed at empowering women economically, educationally, and in local governance.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) for women's political participation has somewhat improved the situation nationwide. Additionally, the Maharashtra government, through the Department of Social Justice and Special Assistance, carries out several programs to empower women from Scheduled Castes, emphasizing social justice, economic development, and education. These include the National SC-ST Hub for the promotion of entrepreneurship, the Tejaswini Maharashtra Rural Women Empowerment Program, the Karma Veer Dadasaheb Gaikwad Sabalikaran & Swabhiman Yojana, the Mahila SamridhiYojana (funded by the NSFDC), the Savitribai Phule Scholarship, Mission Shakti, and Stipends to Trainees in Industrial Training Institute. These measures, however, are not enough to lessen the historical injustices and disabilities, nor the differences that exist between them and the rest of Indian society.

As far as gender inequality in land inheritance or proprietary rights is concerned, the history of the Indian society has been one of the subjugation of the women and their deprivation in terms of their rights. The sustained inequality is a result of historical prevalence of legal inheritance rights for sons and not for daughters. The bias against women's land ownership can constitute a serious limitation for their status in the family and society and their economic and professional choices. There is still a lack of awareness in society regarding how women's land title ownership affects their position within the family. The central government repealed gender discrimination in laws affecting access, control, and ownership of land in 2005 by amending the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 to accommodate women's right to land under women empowerment. This move is seen as crucial for the social and economic empowerment of women. By buying this motion, women's inheritance rights increase their autonomy within their marital families. In addition, women's land title ownership was positively associated with their participation in decisions regarding the use of agricultural land and the purchase of productive assets.

Despite several government initiatives, including reservation policies in government and public sector jobs as well as educational institutions, women from SC and ST communities have not made greater strides in their education and careers. As a result of these affirmative action policies, these women are more likely to engage in the public sector; however, reservations have only partially succeeded in opening up job opportunities in public sector, which has prevented lower caste women from obtaining high-quality positions.

Ambedkar on Women's Rights and Liberation

Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar and his philosophy have attracted "great scholarly attention. Ambedkar was a significant feminist leader, but he is unfortunately largely

reduced to a 'Dalit icon'. Such a narrow view fails to encapsulate his vision of modern nation-building. As the chief architect of India's Constitution, Ambedkar redesigned the paradigms of citizenship and justice by including people from the margins, particularly women. So it is clear that Ambedkar had fought tirelessly for the empowerment of women. Ambedkar is known as the champion of India's independence struggle and the architect of the Indian Constitution. He was an impeccable leader who took up the leadership to light a lamp of enlightenment in the lives of crores of marginalized communities in India.

The Indian Constitution's article 46, assures that Ambedkar's overarching vision is aptly encapsulated in the statement, 'The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." Additionally to calling on the government to support the education of the "weaker section,' Ambedkar is teaching the government to be honest with democracy and social justice by articulating the justice principle for commitment to praxis. His contributions to the advancement of women's rights and empowerment in India are numerous and intricate, and include the Hindu Code Bill, the right to vote, the right to equality (articles 14, 15, and 16), women's empowerment via education, social change, political representation, and economic growth. An expansion of Ambedkar's broader dedication to social justice and equality was his vision for women's rights. His influence still has an impact on movements and policies in India that support women's empowerment. He is among India's best examples of an organic intellectual leader who has sparked Dalit women's education and social emancipation. Though implementing these rights is still challenging in Indian society, his work has been crucial in creating legal frameworks that support gender equality. (Sabharwal & Sonalkar, 2015)

Among Ambedkar's contributions and educational philosophy are the educational reforms implemented by the British Indian government in the educational system both before and after independence. Ambedkar enhanced social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's dedication to women's empowerment by learning from him, and Untouchable Dalit women have been able to continue Ambedkar's ideas, becoming both subjects and agents of their own and their communities' advancement. As an educationist, Ambedkar believes that education needs to be connected to human development and interests. Education is central to his radicalism, and he supports an all-inclusive educational system. All classes should attend school, according to Ambedkar, as the first step in fostering subaltern consciousness.

Women's empowerment is crucial to the nation's development. When women are given more authority, they will benefit their families and advance national growth. 'Recasting educational aims for establishing social democracy' is the cornerstone

of Ambedkar's educational philosophy, he claims. According to Ambedkar, democracy cannot result in inevitable casualties. It is not acceptable for entire communities or groups to be excluded from the democratic process in a true democracy. One of Ambedkar's quotes reads, 'One may wonder why the equal justice principle hasn't worked. The solution is straightforward. A statement of the justice principle is one thing. Making it work is a different matter.'

As a leader, he concurs that education is crucial for Dalits and other subalterns to become self-aware and feel that they play an active part in society. His personal experiences using education as a means of gaining political efficacy and mastery can be the most instructive. Despite being imprisoned by untouchability, Ambedkar continued to think. He had the good fortune to finish his studies at prestigious universities with distinction. However, he never saw education as a means of obtaining wealth or a personal advantage, but rather as a gift that should be distributed to others, particularly the less fortunate. He developed great power within himself as a "democratic intellectual" and "integral historian" in this way.

Ambedkar believed that education should be at the top of the agenda and should not only be a means of gaining knowledge; rather, it should be a force that changes the world and a source of wisdom that motivates more action. Ambedkar was aware that true "social justice" could only be achieved when Dalits and subalterns were able to produce their own intellectuals, or 'collective thinkers.' His revolutionary project placed a high priority on education. Ambedkar's Emancipatory Educational mission is not merely a repackaging of Western concepts, as is sometimes believed, but rather a special synthesis of the reconstruction of liberalism, socialism, and Buddhism as the new moral foundation for communal life. He acknowledged that capitalism was the enemy of the Dalits, and Ambedkar believed that caste was the essential and independent component of the Indian social structure that could not be reduced to class.

Shailaja Paik (2014, 2016), one of the great works on the fight of Dalit women, offers a great historical analysis of the most important problems that Dalit women face in their educational journey from modern-day India to the present. For Dalits and other subalterns, "the task of education" has been a daily struggle for centuries, as Paik confirms. By focusing on Dalit women, Paik actually demonstrates the beneficial but frequently contradictory effects of education on the "double discrimination" that this specific group faces, which is caused by both internal and external "double patriarchy" as well as caste and gender inequality.

Reality and Myth in Women's Empowerment Discourse

The social scientist Julian Rappaport is associated with the term "empowerment," which originates from America's community psychology (1981). It started

in the 1960s with the American civil rights movement. Women's empowerment is the process of granting women, regardless of their caste, creed, or colour, the ability to have equal opportunities in all fields. It is believed that women who are empowered are more capable of making their own moral decisions. To raise their standard of living, it is a significant and worthwhile step. Women's status in every field can be improved for the general development through the process of empowering women. It is about making positive changes for women's welfare and a step toward giving them more control over the strategic decisions that impact their lives. Women's overall development is linked to their empowerment.

The concept of power relations implied by the term "empowerment" is not taken into consideration. Every community uses a different term to express the idea of empowerment, so interpretations vary. Empowerment is demonstrated by traits like autonomy, self-direction, self-worth, self-confidence, self-respect, and self-realization. Social, economic, and political are the three main categories into which women's empowerment strategies fall. One of the main elements affecting the well-being and advancement of a society is the empowerment of women. It is said that society cannot advance in the right direction and at the necessary pace if women are not empowered. "Women must step up to play their role in planning, decision making, and implementation; empowerment is a gradual process" (Goel, 2004: 9). National governments and international organizations have acknowledged women's empowerment as a key commitment in their established goals. This also applies to India. Through empowerment programs, women acquire greater control over a range of resources, including financial resources like access to capital and the capacity to make decisions in the home, community, society, and nation, as well as knowledge, information, and ideas. According to Nigam and Kulshreshtha (2010), empowerment means empowering the weak, allowing them to make choices, and allowing them to actively engage in their communities. Developing self-awareness, consciousness, and co-awareness is the process of empowerment.

Women's empowerment in SCs has not been thoroughly and expertly studied. Women's empowerment and socioeconomic realities are closely related, so it cannot be studied separately. Designing developmental, health, and welfare programs and policies requires a systematic knowledge base on the needs of Dalit women in order to empower them and increase their participation in the community. When it comes to social networking, Dalit women lag far behind the well-organized modern day societies. This is the type of socioeconomic disempowerment issue that Dalit women face. In the field of education, Dalit girls in particular and Dalit people in general continue to lack sufficient empowerment. There has been no success in increasing and keeping Dalit girls in the education sector despite numerous plans and policies. Dalit women still endure appalling conditions due to the literacy and

educational dropout rates. The reason for their low socio-economic status is that they are even less represented in higher education than they are proportionately in the population. Many people consider them to be a starting point for the caste system. Dalit women are compelled to lead precarious lives in terms of their finances, education, health, and other fundamental needs. They are denied the opportunity to engage in politics and society, as well as justice and equity. Various barriers to Dalit women's empowerment have been identified by numerous studies. Lack of these studies has been highlighted.

The process of empowerment is not only political; it is also social, cultural, and economic, with the main component being personal empowerment. Political empowerment is unattainable without first achieving economic and social empowerment. The microfinance plan through SHGs empowers women, allowing them to shift from exclusion from the community and marginalization in home decision-making to increased participation. Significantly, socioeconomic empowerment is the process of reviving local communities by giving them greater authority and accountability so they can utilize the resources and opportunities for long-term growth. This process includes social, cultural, economic, skill, and knowledge development. For Dalit women to overcome discrimination, exploitation, and injustice to advance socially, they must be economically empowered.

According to women's development, empowerment is a method for addressing and eliminating obstacles so that a woman can have more control over her environment and her own life. It is a multifaceted, ever-evolving process that empowers women to fully embrace their identities and skills in every aspect of life. One of the most urgent issues facing global development is the empowerment of Dalit women. The concept is intricate, multifaceted, and multi-layered. The process through which women gain more authority over human, material, and intellectual resources as well as decision-making authority within the family, community, society, and country is referred to as women's empowerment. Women's contributions to religion, economics, culture, and society are valued. It is the process of gaining the ability to decide how to advance their cultural and socioeconomic development. Dalit women's empowerment is crucial for any group to see better socioeconomic improvement. Women must participate. The only way to empower Dalit women is to boost their economic and social status. The development and empowerment of Dalit women are continuous processes that entail national, state, and local interventions. Naturally, there are many obstacles to empowerment, including disparities in gender and income. Economic opportunity and the freedom to follow one's life path based on one's traits and skills are key components of empowerment. It's about taking down obstacles.

From a critical standpoint, women's empowerment is also viewed as a myth. It is interpreted differently; each community uses a different word to express this concept. Expressions of empowerment include self-reliance, self-direction, self-assurance, self-respect, self-realization, and self-worth. However, a number of social scientists in the neoliberal development paradigm have claimed that Dalit empowerment is a ludicrous and plausible myth. In scheduled castes, women's empowerment has not been thoroughly and expertly studied. Encouraging people who lack authority to take charge, make choices, and actively engage in their communities is the essence of empowerment. The process of empowerment should start within society and be sustained by the constant mobilization of its underprivileged groups. According to observations, the process of empowering Dalit women is seen as a fierce challenge to long-standing patriarchal and caste structures. It also creates an environment that is conducive to punitive violence, such as atrocities carried out by upper castes, which dehumanizes Dalit women. Approximately 75% of Dalits lack or are almost without land. As a result, much of the Dalit population in rural areas works in agriculture, and their literacy rate are very low in comparison to the general population.

Since there is no all-around progress of Dalit communities in the social, economic, and political spheres of society, the empowerment of Dalit women through socioeconomic development in modern India is a myth. It has also been acknowledged that the biggest obstacles to the development of Dalit women are related to poverty, livelihood promotion, governance, health, education, displacement, forests, and other issues. The data that is currently available also makes it evident that the majority of Dalit income is going toward the advancement of non-Dalit communities in India. One of the main obstacles to the development of Dalits in India is this. Many contend that while the development of Dalit women is not entirely a myth, it is also not a better reality. The myth is currently evolving into a reality. Their development is still a myth in this regard. Control over financial resources and per capita income, educational opportunities, professional opportunities, involvement in economic decision-making, and political opportunities are all indicators of Dalit women's empowerment. Dalit women's access to education is essential to their political, social, and economic empowerment. In the current situation, Dalit women's empowerment is problematic. The nation cannot develop in a meaningful, inclusive way without the empowerment of Dalit women.

Whether women can only be empowered if they are educated and made aware of their rights, which motivates them to prioritize their lives, should be questioned. Only when violence is eliminated from a woman's life can the dream of empowerment become a reality.

Educational Development of Dalit Women

Education is widely acknowledged as a potent instrument for fostering social, cultural, and health advancement. It is essential to the empowerment of women. Women are empowered by education because it gives them the information, abilities, and self-assurance they need to stand up for their rights and achieve their goals. Future generations and families may be significantly and permanently impacted by women's educational achievements. The dominant culture can be converted into wealth and power through the educational system, according to educational sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who calls it 'cultural capital.' Despite having an abundance of resources and labor, rural communities usually lack these things. Through ensuring upward social mobility and releasing individuals from caste, groups, and superstitious beliefs, it has the potential to revolutionize rural or tribal communities in India.

Women can be empowered by education, which supports the need to ensure 'education for all,' which is a crucial element of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) placed more of an emphasis on resolving this issue before the SDGs program. 'Women Empowerment' is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are included. Encouraging women to fully engage in all facets of the economy is essential to strengthening economies, accomplishing globally accepted development and sustainability objectives, and raising the standard of living for men, women, families, and communities. Crucially, MDG addressed the gender gap at different educational levels and the larger percentage of Dalit women who have never attended school. The reasons behind girls' lack of education consist of financial constraints, early marriages, submissiveness, motherhood, and parents' limited views on women's education. The deliberate denial of education to a girl child limits her chances for overall development in the future. Moreover, literacy is crucial for socioeconomic development in any area or region, which is why SC communities in India have witnessed many hardships, such as the loss of land and other resources. They have been denied access to the majority of the country's activities, but this does not protect them from the repercussions of socio-economic developments that affect the entire nation, such as knowledge and education. According to Deshpande (2017), caste and education were both significant factors in women's workforce participation; however, even higher education has not eliminated the disparity in LFPR between social groups. Regarding the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for education in the NSSO data for 2009–10, the GER for girls in the general category indicates secondary education (IC-X) at 58.5 and higher education (13.7). While the GER of higher education for Scheduled Caste is 11.1, the GER of secondary school SC girls is 63.5 compared to 71.2 (total 67.6), and the GER of women is 9.0 compared to 13.0

for SC boys. Additionally, the SC girls' school dropout rates are as follows: IV level: 25.3, I-VIII: 52.0, and IX: 59.7.

Dalit women have fewer educational options than non-Dalit women in higher education. One survey found that only 12–14 Dalit students out of every 100 enrol in school, and that the proportion of Dalit women who do so is much lower than that of Dalit men. Research has also shown that Dalit women's low socioeconomic status contributes to their underrepresentation in higher education when compared to their proportionate representation in the population. Dalit women scholars attend universities in order to further their education, despite coming from a low socioeconomic background. As a result of this, Dalit women scholars are excluded from the upper caste-dominated scientific and academic spheres, which lead to their seclusion and limited mobility. Despite having access to education, women students and members of marginalized communities in India were unable to avoid institutional discrimination in the country's male-dominated upper caste educational institutions.

India was ranked 127th out of 195 countries in the UNDP Human Development Report's Gender Inequality Index and 149th out of 195 countries in the Gender Development Index in 2017. According to the 2019 Oxfam India Report, gender equality programs are an excellent way to empower women. Social reforms can end all forms of oppression of women. It would be beneficial for women because we are working to help them develop and comprehend their rights and responsibilities. In order to eradicate gender bias in all of our public domains, there is an urgent need for a sustained effort at all levels. Women are now doing their best work and occupying prominent roles in every industry in India in the twenty-first century, including higher education, the military, the air force, the navy, medicine, sports, engineering, and politics. It's significant to note that, even though there are still more male students enrolled in higher education than female students overall, more female students have enrolled in scientific programs in 2017–18 and 2018–19. This is in contrast to the prior trend, which showed that male students were more likely than female students to enrol in the sciences. The proportion of female students pursuing undergraduate degrees at the basic level, like B.Sc and B.Com qualifications is still rising, but the number of boys in these groups is declining. Both boys and girls were enrolled in B.A. programs at lower rates. Enrolment in management, teaching, and computer engineering courses is on the decline, as is enrolment in other popular fields like mechanical and civil engineering.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment cannot be studied in a vacuum because it is closely linked to socioeconomic realities. To design developmental, health, and welfare

programs and policies in India, it is imperative to build a systematic knowledge base about the empowerment needs of Dalit women for increased community participation. In recent years, the negative impacts on Dalit women have been very severe. Because of religious, societal, and cultural frameworks that perceive them as having the lowest position in society, they face prejudice not only because of their gender. The stigma attached to untouchability makes them particularly susceptible to discrimination and other sorts of violence. Dalit women have been completely excluded from development strategies and programs in the areas of rural development, health, education, housing, employment and pay, exercising legal rights, decision-making, and political engagement. Given that the nation is founded on the idea of unity in diversity, the attempts made by various governments to improve the status of Dalit women in the interest of an inclusive society seem to fall short. The benefits of health and education initiatives targeted at Dalits remain insufficient and unequal. The rituals and traditions of the Dalit-patriarchal culture are the root cause of women's empowerment issues, which are made worse by crop disruptions, climate crises, and inadequate government. This paper's findings about the critical role Dalit women play in the empowerment process can be summed up in seven points. The first is the issue of decision-making for Dalit women, which is important for women's empowerment because it is frequently noted that their voices are not given enough weight. It is critical to keep in consideration that women have the power to make decisions. True development requires the active participation of women. At the household and community levels, the study examined how Dalit women participated in economic and social decision-making processes. Second, women's autonomy, socioeconomic standing, and empowerment are closely related in any given society. Many socioeconomic factors influence Dalit women's status. Thirdly, an understanding of Dalit women's economic freedom can be gained by looking at their work circumstances and the type of work they do. Being financially independent gives these women the freedom to opt for themselves, and as a result, their views are valued by their families and society in all spheres. Fourth, the amount of money earned by Dalit women and their percentage of household income demonstrate how important they are in determining how women make decisions. This situation makes the impact of income on women's autonomy especially clear. Fifth, the marital status of Dalit women and their age are significant factors; the marital status of the person shows whether or not they are married.

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❑❑

Dr. Ambedkar's Visionary Approach to Women in Politics

Dr. Bhanje Vijaykumar Pralhadrao
Assistant Professor, Shri Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Barshi

Abstract

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, regarded women's participation in politics as a key factor in achieving social justice and democratic equality. He believed that empowering women politically could challenge patriarchal hierarchies and strengthen the democratic fabric of India. His advocacy ensured that constitutional rights such as voting, representation, and legal protection were extended to women, particularly those from marginalized communities. Through initiatives like the Hindu Code Bill, Ambedkar emphasized legal and institutional reforms aimed at gender equality. This paper explores Ambedkar's vision of women's political empowerment, his legislative contributions, and the relevance of his thought in promoting inclusive governance in contemporary India.

Key Words: Women, Politics, Hindu Code Bill, Discrimination, Gender Justice

Introduction

In India's socio-political landscape, women's political participation has historically been limited due to entrenched patriarchal and caste-based hierarchies. Against this background, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideas were revolutionary. He argued that democracy could only be meaningful if women—particularly those from oppressed sections—were included in decision-making processes. This study examines Ambedkar's perspective on women's political empowerment within the broader framework of social transformation and justice.

Aims and Objectives

- To study Ambedkar's perspective on women's political rights and empowerment.
- To explore how his feminist vision intersected with his anti-caste ideology.
- To assess the present-day significance of his ideas in improving women's political participation.

Historical Context: Women's Political Exclusion and Ambedkar's Intervention

Women in Pre-Independence India

Before independence, women's engagement in politics was minimal due to restrictive customs and social taboos. Patriarchal practices confined them to domestic life, while caste divisions further restricted Dalit and lower-caste women from accessing public or political spaces.

Role of Early Reformers

Social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Jyotirao Phule challenged regressive traditions and initiated the discourse on women's rights. Dr. Ambedkar extended this reformist legacy by directly confronting the intertwined systems of caste and gender oppression.

Ambedkar's Radical Stance

Ambedkar openly denounced the *Manusmriti*, which he viewed as a text institutionalizing caste and gender inequality. His public protest symbolized a rejection of any system that legitimized discrimination. He believed that achieving true social justice required dismantling both caste and gender hierarchies simultaneously.

Ambedkar's Vision for Women in Politics

Political Equality as the Core of Democracy

Ambedkar asserted that democracy must rest on the principle of equality. He emphasized that women's active participation in politics was vital not only for ensuring justice but also for shaping inclusive and representative governance. For him, democracy was incomplete without gender equality.

Constitutional Provisions for Gender Justice

Under Ambedkar's leadership, the Constitution incorporated fundamental principles of equality. Articles 14 and 15 guarantee equal rights and prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender, caste, or religion. These provisions became the constitutional basis for subsequent reforms related to women's education, employment, and property rights.

Challenging Traditional Gender Roles

Ambedkar rejected the notion that women's roles should be limited to the private sphere. He argued for their participation in public life and opposed religious and cultural practices that perpetuated subordination. He viewed the empowerment of women as a true measure of a society's progress.

Intersectional Empowerment

Ambedkar recognized that Dalit women faced dual forms of oppression—caste-based and gender-based. His advocacy focused on uplifting these doubly marginalized groups, urging them to engage in political movements and leadership to transform social structures from within.

Women in Politics: Representation and Leadership

Representation and Decision-Making

Ambedkar envisioned a democratic system where women were not passive beneficiaries but active participants in governance. He supported their inclusion in legislative bodies, local governance, and political organizations to ensure that women's concerns—education, healthcare, and social welfare—were adequately represented.

Education as a Tool for Empowerment

He identified education as a crucial factor in developing political awareness and leadership skills among women. His reform efforts emphasized expanding access to education, scholarships, and training programs for women from marginalized backgrounds.

Contemporary Relevance of Ambedkar's Vision

Policy Influence

Ambedkar's ideas continue to inform modern policy frameworks promoting women's empowerment.

- **Reservation Policies:** Quotas for women in local self-governing bodies and proposed parliamentary representation reflect Ambedkar's belief in structural inclusion.
- **Legal Reforms:** Laws addressing marriage, inheritance, and workplace equality align with the values enshrined in the Constitution under his guidance.
- **Education and Leadership Programs:** Gender sensitization and leadership initiatives embody his emphasis on education as a vehicle for equality.

Societal Transformation

Ambedkar's philosophy encouraged women to view themselves as leaders and equal citizens. His ideas influenced feminist and Dalit movements that emphasize intersectional justice and inclusivity in the political domain.

Inspiration for Dalit Feminism

Modern thinkers like Sharmila Rege expanded upon Ambedkar's framework, arguing that feminism in India must address caste and gender simultaneously. Activists today continue to use his ideas to demand genuine representation rather than symbolic inclusion.

Challenges to Ambedkar's Vision in the Present Era

Despite constitutional safeguards, many barriers to women's full political participation persist:

- **Cultural Barriers:** Patriarchal attitudes still limit women's entry into politics.
- **Economic Inequality:** Financial dependency continues to restrict women's agency.
- **Institutional Resistance:** Political parties and bureaucratic structures remain male-dominated.
- **Intersectional Discrimination:** Dalit, tribal, and other marginalized women continue to face multiple layers of exclusion.

The Way Forward

To actualize Ambedkar's vision:

- **Enhance Political Representation:** Implement and expand gender quotas across all levels of governance.
- **Transform Social Attitudes:** Promote awareness campaigns to combat gender stereotypes.
- **Support Marginalized Women:** Develop targeted policies addressing the challenges faced by Dalit and Adivasi women.
- **Strengthen Education and Leadership:** Provide educational access and leadership training for aspiring women politicians.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's advocacy for women's political empowerment remains profoundly relevant today. His inclusive understanding of democracy called for the active participation of every citizen, regardless of caste or gender. By combining social, educational, and legal reforms, Ambedkar laid the foundation for a just and egalitarian society. Although India has made progress in women's political representation, the structural inequalities he identified persist. Revisiting and applying his principles can guide current and future efforts to create a more participatory and equitable democracy.

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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)

Arshiya Iqbal Walikar

Research Scholar, Dept. of Sociology, PGSR, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai

Dr. Rekha Shelar – PhD Guide

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Smt. Maniben M.P. Shah Women's College of Arts and Commerce (Autonomous) Matunga, Mumbai

Abstract

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was a pioneer in advocating for women's rights and empowerment, particularly for marginalized communities. His relentless efforts led to significant legal and social reforms that laid the foundation for gender equality and economic independence. Inspired by his vision, this study examines the challenges and impacts of employability training programs for weaker section women residing in the urban slums of Pune.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar famously stated, "The progress of any society can be measured by the progress of its women." In India, approximately 94% of the female workforce is employed in the unorganized sector, characterized by low earnings, seasonal employment, and job insecurity. In urban areas, the unemployment rate for women stands at 8.4%, higher than their male counterparts. This study examines the challenges and impacts of employability training programs designed for women from weaker sections residing in the urban slums of Pune, aiming to evaluate how these programs contribute to their economic independence, social mobility, and overall well-being.

Employing a mixed-method approach, the research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The study explores key challenges such as socio-cultural barriers, financial constraints, low literacy levels, and inadequate

post-training employment opportunities. Many participants struggle with workplace adaptability, gender bias in employment, and balancing work with domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, the lack of structured mentoring and sustainable job placements affects their economic stability. Employability training serves as a transformative tool, equipping women with skills essential for sustainable livelihoods. However, these programs often face barriers such as socio-cultural constraints, lack of awareness, financial hardships, and limited access to quality training. This research employs an empirical approach to analyse the effectiveness of such programs, assessing their role in enhancing economic independence, self-confidence, and social mobility among disadvantaged women. The study also explores how Ambedkarite principles of education, economic empowerment, and social justice continue to influence modern skill development initiatives.

Findings from this study highlight both the successes and gaps in current employability programs and provide policy recommendations to bridge existing inequalities. By drawing connections between Dr. Ambedkar's advocacy for women's rights and contemporary vocational training efforts, this paper underscores the need for inclusive, structured, and sustainable employment programs that align with his vision of an equitable society.

Keywords: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Employability Training, Women Empowerment, Social Justice, Urban Slums, Vocational Skills.

1. Introduction

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was not just the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, but a lifelong advocate for the social and economic upliftment of women and marginalized communities. His efforts extended beyond legislative frameworks; he emphasized skill development, education, and self-reliance as tools for the liberation of women from caste- and class-based oppression.

The city of Pune, while emerging as an IT and industrial hub, paradoxically shelters a growing population of urban poor in its slums. According to the Pune Municipal Corporation's 2023 estimates, approximately 30% of the population lives in informal settlements, where women disproportionately face unemployment, social discrimination, and economic exclusion.

According to recent estimates, over 30% of Pune's population resides in slums, making it a critical area of concern for urban planners and social workers. The slum population in Pune is diverse, comprising migrants from rural Maharashtra and other states seeking livelihood opportunities. These communities are often marked by low-income levels, high unemployment rates, and limited access to formal education and skills training. The economic activities in these areas are predominantly informal, with many residents engaged in low-paying, unskilled jobs.

Key Urban Slums in Pune

1. **Janata Vasahat:** One of the largest slums in Pune, Janata Vasahat, is situated in the southern part of the city. It is home to thousands of families living in cramped and substandard housing conditions. The area faces severe issues related to sanitation, access to clean water, and educational facilities.
2. **Bhim Nagar:** Located near the industrial belt of Pune, Bhim Nagar is another significant slum area. The residents here primarily work as daily wage labourers in nearby factories and construction sites. The community struggles with issues of health, hygiene, and lack of vocational training opportunities.
3. **Yerwada:** Yerwada is a historically significant area with a large slum population. It is known for its dense housing clusters and inadequate infrastructure. Despite being close to some of Pune's major commercial areas, Yerwada's residents face significant barriers in accessing employment and education. Several government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have initiated employability training programs targeting women in Pune's slums.

There is a pressing need for more comprehensive and inclusive programs that can effectively address the socio-economic barriers faced by women in these communities Employment is essential in human life, not just for earning money but also for doing the work skilfully. Work includes paid work, work for payment or goods and services. Housewives' work is unpaid but has great social importance. Self-reliance is a natural right because it relates to survival. Traditionally, the concept of work has been associated with men, but women working outside their homes face numerous challenges. Many women do not know that employment is their right and, due to a lack of skills, have to accept menial jobs.

The current research focuses on these women, whose aspirations for economic dignity and self-reliance echo Dr. Ambedkar's insistence on equality, self-respect, and empowerment.

Employment Status of Women in the Unorganized Sector

The number of women working in the unorganized sector is relatively high. According to 2023 data, about 52.7% of the total 287 million unorganized workers are women, representing approximately 151 million women. These sectors mainly involve domestic work, home-based work, garbage collection, and construction, street vending, etc.[4] (S.Sundri, Structural Changes and Quality of Women's Labour in India, Journal from Indian Society of Labour Economics, 7 Oct. 2020).

Many research essays focus on the historical development and legal status of Urban Slum of, with less emphasis on women's employment-oriented training and

its consequences. Based on the researcher's experience working on employment-oriented projects for women at Smt. Nathibai Damodar Thakarsi Women's University, the researcher firmly believes that employment-oriented training positively affects the lives of women from socio- economically weaker sections of society

2. Objectives

- To assess the current status of women from weaker sections engaged in employability training in Pune's urban slums.
- To identify and categorize the challenges faced by women before, during, and after employability training.
- To study the impact of employment on women's lives.

3. Review of Literature

Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy stressed the importance of education, economic independence, and women's agency. His efforts in shaping India's constitutional provisions, like the Hindu Code Bill and advocacy for gender equality, were pivotal in giving women the tools for self-empowerment.

Multiple scholars like Naila Kabeer (2005) have argued that empowerment is rooted not only in skill acquisition but also in removing structural barriers. In line with Ambedkar's belief, training for employability provides not only the technical know-how but also the social and psychological strength to challenge patriarchal and economic marginalization.

Kabeer, N. (2005). "Is Microfinance a 'Magic Bullet' for Women's Empowerment? Analysis of Findings from South Asia"
—Economic and Political Weekly

Kabeer's research highlights how vocational and employability training can provide women with more than just income—it grants them agency and the ability to challenge social inequalities. Her findings emphasize that targeted interventions, especially for marginalized women, help build confidence and negotiation power within patriarchal family structures. This directly echoes Dr. Ambedkar's belief in education and economic independence as tools for social upliftment.

Deshpande, S. (2011). "Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India" **—Sage Publications**

Deshpande's work explores Dr. Ambedkar's socio-political framework, advocating for marginalized communities' access to opportunities through constitutional rights and structured programs. Employability training initiatives for urban slum women represent a modern extension of Ambedkar's call for equitable

participation in economic and social life, addressing systemic exclusion by empowering women at the grassroots.

International Labour Organization (2017). "Skills and Employability for Decent Work" —**ILO Policy Brief**

The ILO identifies employability training as a key pathway for poverty reduction, especially among urban slum populations. Women's participation in formal employment is noted as significantly lower, often due to lack of skills and social barriers. The ILO stresses the need for government and community-level interventions to enable social mobility, much in line with Ambedkar's ideals of bridging caste, class, and gender divides.

Bhattacharya, R. (2014). "Urban Informal Sector: Women's Work and Empowerment" —**Social Scientist, Vol. 42(3-4)**

This study focuses on women from weaker sections engaged in informal labor in urban India. It highlights how skill development programs not only enhance employability but also boost women's self-worth and societal standing. Bhattacharya links this shift to a more equitable social order, echoing Ambedkar's emphasis on dignity and economic self-sufficiency as pillars of social justice.

4. Research Methodology

A **mixed-methods research design** was adopted, including quantitative data analysis and qualitative narratives from participants.

- **Population:** Women aged 18-35 residing in Pune's urban slums.
- **Sample Size**:
  - 100 women participants.
  - 10 trainers/facilitators.
  - 5 employers offering jobs post-training.

5. Data Collection Tools

- **Structured Questionnaires:** Designed to collect demographic details, employment status, and challenges faced.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Conducted to gain insights into societal norms and behavioral challenges.
- Observational Studies: **Assessing classroom engagement, infrastructure, and teaching methodologies**

6. Data Analysis

Statistical tools such as percentages, graphical analysis, and thematic coding were used for both qualitative and quantitative data.

Data was analysed using statistical tools such as SPSS for quantitative responses and thematic analysis for qualitative insights.

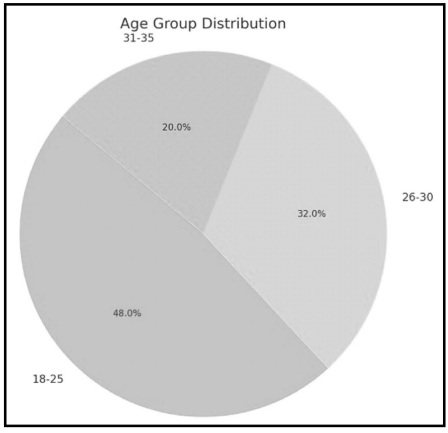
7. Findings

7.1 Demographic Distribution

Age Group	Percentage
18-25	48%
26-30	32%
31-35	20%

The largest portion of women participating in employability training programmes belonged to the **18–25 years** age group (48%).

- **32%** of the participants were aged between **26–30 years**, showing that many women enter training slightly later, possibly due to family commitments.
- Only **20%** of women were from the **31–35 years** group, suggesting a drop in participation as women's household and family responsibilities tend to increase with age.



Graph 1: Age-Wise Distribution of Participants

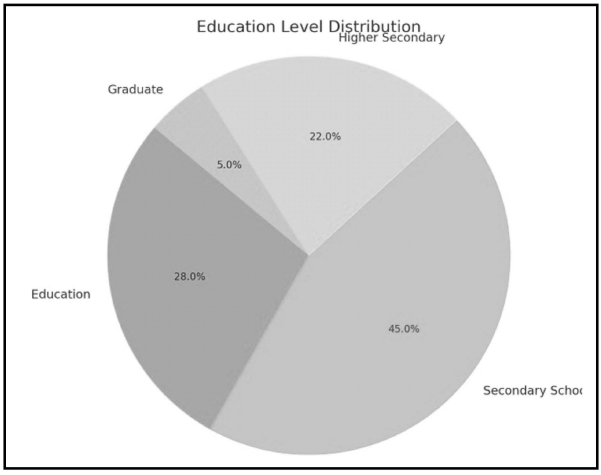
Interpretation

Young women are more likely to enrol in training, underlining the importance of outreach and support for older women to ensure continued learning.

7.2 Educational Background

Education Level	Percentage
Primary Education	28%
Secondary School Completed	45%
Higher Secondary	22%
Graduate	5%

- **45%** of participants completed only **Secondary School**, showing this is the common education level before entering vocational training.
- **28%** had only **Primary Education**, highlighting the need for pre-training literacy or foundation- level support.



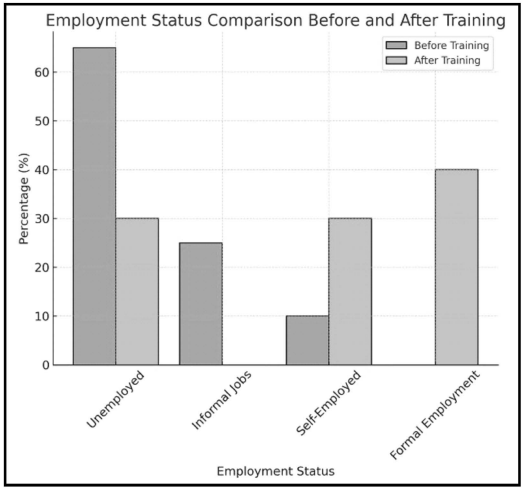
Graph 2: Educational Background of Participants

- **22%** had finished **Higher Secondary**, and only **5%** were **Graduates**, reflecting limited higher education opportunities for women in slum areas.

Interpretation

Training centres should design skill programmes that cater to a range of educational backgrounds, especially those with limited formal schooling.

7.3 Employment Status: Before vs. After Training



- Before training, **65% of the women were unemployed**, indicating a lack of access to sustainable job opportunities.
- **25% were engaged in informal jobs**, which often come with low wages and job insecurity.

- Only **10% were self-employed**, showing limited entrepreneurial activities.
- **0% of participants were in formal employment before training**, demonstrating the lack of direct employment opportunities for untrained women.
- After training, the **unemployment rate dropped to 30%**, showcasing the program's effectiveness.
- **40% of the women secured formal employment**, indicating significant improvement in job placements.
- **30% became self-employed**, suggesting increased entrepreneurial confidence and skill application.
- The informal job category reduced to **0%**, as many transitioned to formal employment or self- employment.

7.4 Identified Challenges in the Training Journey

Challenge	Percentage Reporting
Financial Constraints	42%
Household Responsibilities	34%
Lack of Community Support	14%
Gender Bias & Prejudice	10%

- **42%** of women reported **financial constraints** as the biggest hurdle.
- **34%** struggled to balance **household responsibilities** with training.
- **14% faced** lack of community or family support**.**
- **10%** experienced **gender bias and social prejudice** while trying to access training or jobs.

Interpretation:

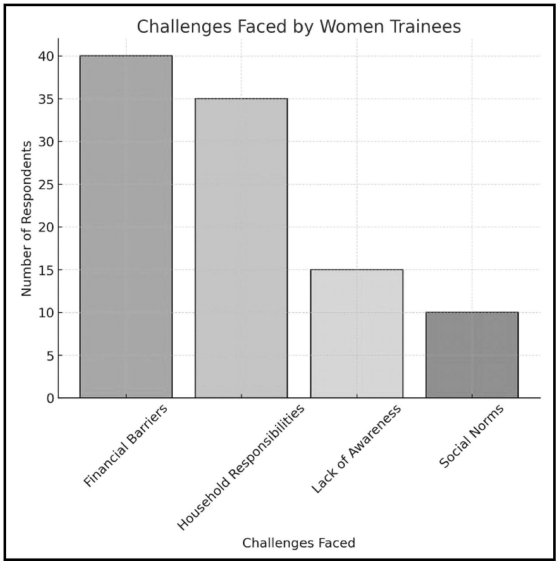
Besides technical skills, social and structural barriers prevent women from fully benefiting from such programs — reinforcing Ambedkar's argument that societal change must go hand-in-hand with individual advancement

7.5 Challenges Identified in Employability Training Programs

Financial Barriers (40%): The most significant challenge, indicating that many women struggle to afford training fees, transportation, or other associated costs.

Household Responsibilities (35%): A major issue, showing that many women find it difficult to balance domestic duties with training commitments.

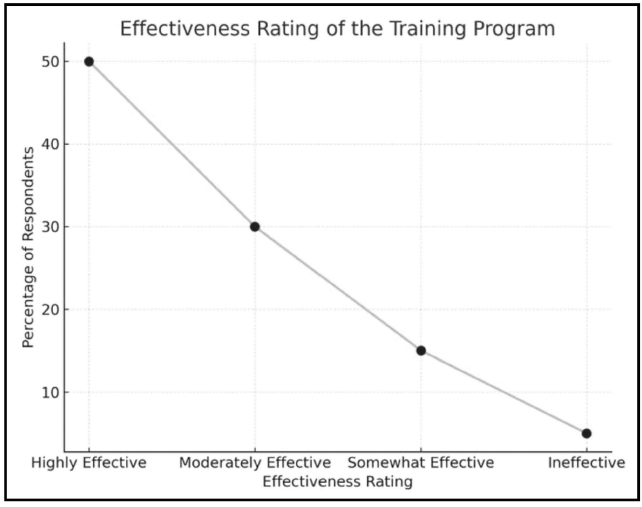
Lack of Awareness (15%): Noteworthy barriers, as a significant number of women are unaware of available training opportunities.



Social Norms (10%): Some women face discouragement from their families or communities, highlighting the role of societal expectations in restricting their participation

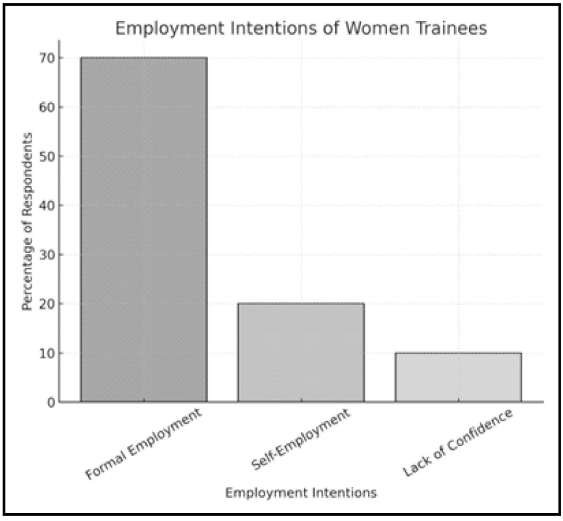
7.6 Training Effectiveness and Satisfaction

- **50% of respondents rated the training as highly effective**, indicating that most women found the training useful in enhancing their employability skills.
- **30% found it moderately effective**, suggesting that while helpful, there is room for improvement in content delivery or practical exposure.



- **15% rated it as somewhat effective**, implying that certain aspects of the training did not fully meet expectations.
- **5% found the training ineffective**, primarily due to the lack of follow-up job placements, highlighting a need for better post-training employment support.

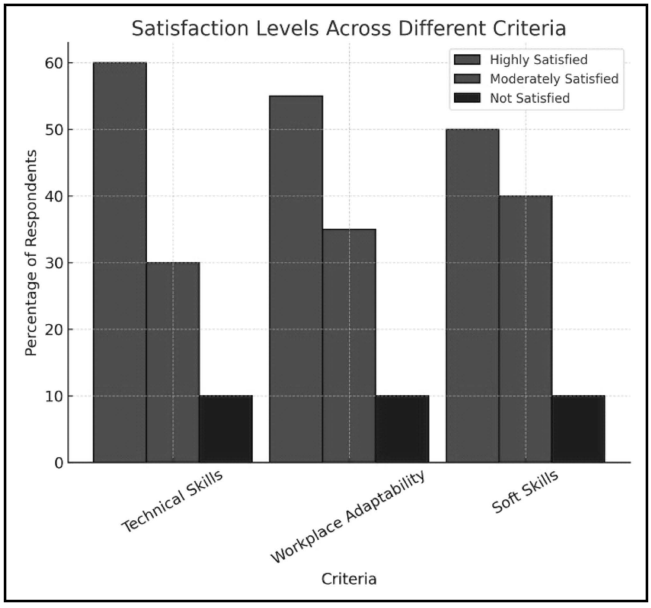
7.7 Intention to Use Training Skills in Employment



- **70% of trained women intended to apply their skills in formal employment**, highlighting the program's success in preparing them for job placements.
- **20% considered self-employment**, suggesting that a portion of trainees feel confident in starting their own ventures.
- **10% lacked confidence in securing jobs**, indicating the need for post-training career support, mentorship, and placement assistance.

7.8 Employer Perspectives on Trained Women

- **60% of employers were highly satisfied with the technical skills** of the trained women, showing the effectiveness of skill development programs.
- **55% found workplace adaptability to be excellent**, while 35% were moderately satisfied, indicating that some women may require additional training in workplace culture and expectations.
- **50% of employers were highly satisfied with soft skills**, while 40% were moderately satisfied. This suggests that communication and interpersonal skills could be further improved to enhance employability.



- Across all criteria, **10% of employers were not satisfied**, showing that there is room for improvement in specific areas of training.

8. Case Studies

Case Study 1: *Savita's Journey from Unemployment to Self-Employment*

Savita, a 24-year-old from Bhim Nagar slum, faced social rejection and extreme poverty. Upon completing the employability training, she began freelancing as a data entry operator. Inspired by Ambedkar's teaching on ¯self-respect, she now mentors other young women in her community.

Case Study 2: *Radha's Story of Liberation through Financial Independence*

Radha, a domestic violence survivor, credits her training for helping her secure a stable job at a private firm. She now educates other women on their rights, much in the spirit of Ambedkar's call for women to educate, agitate, organize.

9. Discussion

Dr. Ambedkar believed that social and economic empowerment were inseparable. This study confirms that employability training offers more than just vocational skills — it empowers women to confront social norms, resist gender bias, and reshape their own futures.

The data confirms that economic self-reliance fosters dignity, a core element of Dr. Ambedkar's vision for an egalitarian society.

10. Suggestions and Policy Recommendations

- **Inclusive Training Models:** Training centres should adopt Dr. Ambedkar's principles of equality, providing skill-based training without discrimination.
- **Social Support Framework:** NGOs and local governments must collaborate to offer child care and family counselling, reducing dropout rates.
- **Financial Assistance:** Government stipends should be tied to training performance, allowing women to sustain themselves during training.
- **Community Sensitization:** Continuous community engagement can help break cultural biases against working women.
- **Incorporation of Digital Skills**: Providing training in digital marketing, e-commerce, and IT-based jobs to align with modern employment trends.

11. Conclusion

This study reaffirms Dr. Ambedkar's assertion that education and employability are essential tools for social justice. Women from Pune's slums who completed employability training witnessed improved employment outcomes and social recognition, thus fulfilling Ambedkar's vision of human dignity, equality, and economic freedom.

For real and sustainable change, policies and training structures must integrate Ambedkar's principles of social justice to empower marginalized women as rightful participants in the workforce and society.

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Conceptualising Social Justice and Economic Empowerment: Dr. Ambedkar's Vision for Dalit Entrepreneurship

Mr. Ajay Bagale
PhD Scholar in the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi
Dr. Sudhir Maske
Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, 3-University Road, University of Delhi, Delhi

Abstract

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's philosophical perspective sheds light on social justice. This paper uses his teachings to look at the past and present fight of Dalits and others who suffer under caste and class systems. The paper makes a strong case that studying Ambedkar's ideas about social justice and equality helps us understand how his core thoughts have an impact on today's efforts to tackle caste-based bias and exclusion in India's economy. It does this by challenging old caste-based job limits. The paper ends by pointing out a way to move society forward. Ambedkar dreamed of a fair society for all, one that changes lives and gives people dignity. This vision could foster a business world open to everyone supporting Ambedkar's idea of a democratic India without caste.

Keywords: Ambedkar, Social Justice, Dalit Entrepreneurship, Economic Empowerment, Caste Discrimination

1. Introduction

This research on '**Conceptualising Social Justice and Economic Empowerment: Dr. Ambedkar's Vision for Dalit Entrepreneurship**' is deeply aligned with the conference theme 'Social Justice: Past, Present and Future' in several significant ways.Itlooks at the history of economic exclusion based on caste that Ambedkar fought against, explores current challenges and opportunities for Dalit entrepreneurs, and proposes models to promote inclusive economic growth. This approach mirrors the conference's focus on social justice through time. Also, Ambedkar's emphasis on ending caste through economic independence offers a unique lens to evaluate how entrepreneurship can drive social change. By exploring

how Ambedkar's ideas can guide policies to boost Dalit entrepreneurship in today's economy, this research adds new insights to the conference's examination of social justice across eras. It links social justice theories with real-world strategies for economic empowerment contributing to ongoing scholarly debates.

Social justice remains out of reach in countries with a history of unfairness. India's caste system has split society and led to unfair treatment for centuries. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who wrote most of India's constitution and was a top Dalit leader, saw that social justice and economic power go hand in hand. This paper looks at how Dr. Ambedkar's ideas about social justice relate to economic power focusing on Dalit entrepreneurs in today's India. We can see how recent economic changes have created chances and problems for Dalit entrepreneurs by looking at success stories. The paper then looks at current projects that help Dalit entrepreneurs, including government plans, programs to join the private sector, and community support networks. Even with laws to protect them and policies to give them a fair chance, Dalits still face big problems in getting money opportunities (Thorat and Newman, 2010). Starting a business has become a way for disadvantaged groups to move up, but not many people have studied this when talking about social justice (Iyer, Khanna and Varshney, 2013).

Five linked objectives targeted in this study seek to reflect Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's theoretical framework clarifying the connection between social justice and economic empowerment, especially by highlighting his writings on economic democracy and caste-based occupational stratification: The main objective is to investigate Ambedkarite ideology and current Dalit entrepreneurship's relationship. The second objective is to examine the current Dalit entrepreneurial landscape in India, charting its development, size, and industry breakdown. The third objective is to assess thoroughly the degree to which entrepreneurship serves as a good means to realize Ambedkar's vision of social justice, exploring both its emancipatory possibilities and drawbacks as a route to decent economic engagement. The fourth objective is to find and evaluate structural hurdles that still prevent Dalit entrepreneurialsuccess, including financial exclusion, social network restrictions, gender-specific obstacles, and human capital development gaps. The fifth objective is to present evidence-based policy suggestions intended to promote economic empowerment for marginalized groups.

The study on how Ambedkarite thought could be linked to the economic empowerment of Dalit entrepreneurs can offer insights in many ways: First, it connects Ambedkar's ideas that go beyond political representation to actual economic empowerment (Ambedkar, 1936), thereby bridging theoretical frameworks with economic practice. Second, this study is focused on how to integrate Ambedkarite thought into the entrepreneurial actions of Dalit entrepreneurs and

fills a major gap in the literature as much has been written about his constitutional achievements and societal changes but not as much attention has been paid to integrating Ambedkar into modern economic empowerment programs (Thorat and Kumar, 2009).Third, the research presents a detailed analysis of changing trajectories of social and economic mobility for historically disadvantaged groups that can be illuminating regarding ongoing challenges and promising pathways to economic inclusion as India's economy grows. Fourth, it offers real outcomes for policy making by highlighting specific initiatives that promote Dalit business activity in ways that can direct finance, education, mentoring, and market access campaigns aligned with Ambedkarite notions of social justice. This study, which is the first to focus on Dalit entrepreneurial experiences, contributes to more general conversations about fair development and inclusive growth, challenging narrow economic frameworks by demonstrating how social justice ideals enhance rather than detract from economic progress, thereby offering a template for redressing historical marginalization through economic empowerment.

In addition, our results indicate social justice and economic dimensions, scale and policy framework, persistent barriers, gender dimensions, human capital development as well.The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the research methodology; Section 3 presents a literature review; Section 4 discusses results; Section 5 provides discussion, while Section 6 concludes; Section 7 offers recommendations.

2. Research Methodology

The methodology used for this study is qualitative secondary research that combines literature on Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy, social justice frameworks, and Dalit entrepreneurship by systematically reviewing:

- Primary sources of Dr. Ambedkar's writings and speeches
- Peer-reviewed academic journals on social justice, caste studies, and entrepreneurship
- Government reports and policy documents
- Case studies of Dalit entrepreneurs and Dalit Chambers of Commerce initiatives
- Reports from non-governmental organizations working on Dalit economic empowerment

Using content analysis, the conceptual framework finds research issues, ideas and concepts across many sources. This method enables a thorough awareness of the theoretical foundations of Ambedkar's vision as well as its pragmatic expressions in modern entrepreneurial environments.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Ambedkar's Vision of Social Justice and Economic Empowerment

3.1.1 Social Justice in Ambedkarite Philosophy

Dr. Ambedkar believed that social justice is a comprehensive framework consisting of social and economic possibilities alongside legal and political ones. His vision for social justice was rooted in the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and was different from most of his friends who placed priority on political independence (Ambedkar, 1949). While many contemporaries prioritized political independence, Ambedkar emphasized that *"Political power cannot be a panacea for the ills of the depressed classes. Their salvation lies in their social elevation"* (Ambedkar, 1945, p. 38).

Zelliot (2013) points out that Ambedkar's definition of social justice differed from Western liberal traditions since it acknowledged the particular difficulties the caste system presented. For Ambedkar, justice meant the *'annihilation of caste'* not only by legal bans but also by basic reorganization of social and economic interactions (Ambedkar, 1936).

3.1.2 Economic Dimensions of Social Justice

Ambedkar championed state socialism and nationalization of strategic industries to provide economic opportunities to the excluded sections as part of his seminal book 'States and Minorities' (1947). Jaffrelot (2005) finds that economic independence was, in Ambedkar's view, a basic prerequisite for genuine social emancipation. Ambedkar advocated land reforms, education, and representation in the economic sphere. His demand for separate electorates and reserved seats in legislatures was also coupled with demands for economic security and opportunities (Omvedt, 2008).

3.1.3 Entrepreneurship in Ambedkarite Framework

Ambedkar may not have specifically theorized entrepreneurship in the modern sense, but there is intellectual basis to view entrepreneurship as a path to liberation because he advocated for '*educate, agitate, organize*'that could be applied to economic self-determination (Thorat and Kumar, 2009). He understood that a primary barrier to economic advancement was caste rules regarding employment. In 'Annihilation of Caste,' Ambedkar (1936) wrote: *"The caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers"* (p. 47). This means underprivileged groups are excluded from the types of entrepreneurial activities usually controlled by dominant castes because of occupational restrictions based on caste. Narayan (2011) argues that Ambedkar also supported cooperatives and group entrepreneurship among Dalits, which demonstrates his recognition that community empowerment must be a complement to individual economic mobility.

3.2 Contemporary Landscape of Dalit Entrepreneurship

A path to entrepreneurship often included migration from rural to urban areas in search of work opportunities(Kapur, Babu and Prasad, 2014). In 2005, the creation of Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI) was a landmark development for organizing and setting up a Dalit entrepreneurship. The DICCI slogan of*"Be job givers, not job seekers"* captures this entrepreneurial spirit that has become increasingly attractive to Dalits. Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney (2013) show that a number of Dalit entrepreneurs establish business ventures out of experiences of discrimination in formal employment markets, thus converting exclusion into opportunity. The emergence of successful Dalit entrepreneurs has countered prevailing perceptions about caste-based occupational hierarchies. The case studies also display instances of resilience and adaptability, like Rajendra Gaikwad, who started with the socially stigmatized activity of rat control but went on to develop his successful venture, GT Pest Control. Rati Bhai Makwana's entrepreneurial journey was driven by the leather-processing tradition of his family, which later induced him to launch a personal leather company (Kapur, Babu, and Prasad, 2014).

3.2.1 Scale and Scope of Dalit Entrepreneurship

Despite greater awareness, Dalit entrepreneurship remains limited; for example, Dalits comprised 16.4 percent of the population but owned just 9.8 percent of businesses, with underrepresentation more pronounced in urban, formal sector businesses that demand higher capital (Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney 2013). Jodhka's (2010) research indicates that the sectoral distribution of Dalit business reveals concentration within particular niches; Dalits are primarily involved in small-scale manufacturing, government contract work, and service industries, while there is virtually no representation in knowledge-intensive sectors such as financial services, pharmaceuticals, or information technology.

3.2.2 Policy Initiatives and Support Systems

Government efforts to promote Dalit entrepreneurship have shifted since India achieved independence in 1947. The Public Procurement Policy (2012) requires that four percent of purchases be from SC/ST enterprises; the Stand-Up India program introduced in 2016 allows at least one SC/ST borrower per bank branch up to loans of 1 crore rupees (Ministry of Finance, 2016). Beyond government initiatives, organizations like DICCI have also created business development services, mentorship programs, and networking platforms for Dalit entrepreneurs; the annual DICCI Trade Fair showcases Dalit businesses and facilitates business relationships (DICCI, 2024).

3.3 Barriers to Dalit Entrepreneurial Success

The case studies (Kapur, Babu and Prasad 2014) show how Dalit entrepreneurs face widespread discrimination and social segregation due to their identity. Thomas Barnabas's story reveals upper-caste groups discriminating against him. They kept him out of his classmate's house, school, and village. Lower castes had separate temples and churches outside the village. Ashok Khade's experience highlights deep-rooted caste-based division. Upper-caste friends prayed inside temples, while he had to pray outside the gates. Murali Mohan points out how people segregated Dalit deities from upper-caste temple complexes, which further proves their marginalization. Manju Rani records her encounter with Brahmin priests rejecting Dalit communities' access to service in villages. A vivid image of the degrading treatment given to Kishan Lal Singla is his report of being barred from drinking water from the same spoon as the upper-caste students and having to use makeshift leafy pipes to slake his thirst. Similarly, Sadhu Thorat's account of being barred from entering his landlord's home during his school years serves as a heart-wrenching reminder of the pervasive prejudice and indignity given to the Dalits. Umesh Chaudhary's report portrays a vivid picture of an event during his schooling years when a professor made a discriminating statement, it was *'We end up teaching horses and donkeys alike'*, further he added to his statement that, *'Amongst horses also, there are black horses and white horses'* (p.33). Chaudhary's choice to build a self-funded hospital with the goal of serving disadvantaged populations and also to eliminate the usage of reservation quotas in government employment was shaped by this specific event(Kapur, Babu and Prasad, 2014).

3.3.1 Access to Capital and Financial Exclusion

Lack of funds presents the main challenge to Dalit entrepreneurship. Because of historic exclusion from property ownership and intergenerational wealth accumulation, there are few personal assets available for business investment(Thorat and Newman, 2010).A 2016 Deshpande and Sharma study finds that Dalit entrepreneurs start with around 35% less capital than their upper-caste counterparts. Banking prejudice makes these problems worse. Prakash (2015) notes that Dalit entrepreneurs' loan requests face more examination, collateral requirements, and rejection rates than those from members of the dominant caste. Loans often have tougher conditions and more expensive interest rates even after approval.

3.3.2 Social Networks and Market Discrimination

Indian corporate ecosystems are still much influenced by caste-based networks. Upper-caste business networks have control over supplier relationships, consumer connections, and market access, according to Jodhka (2010). Typically, Dalit entrepreneurs grumble about being locked out of sector groups, trade exhibitions,

and informal business networks. Market discriminating manifests itself in a number of ways. Instances of clients declining to buy products upon finding out the owner's caste were reported by Iyer, Khanna, and Varshney (2013). Business-to-business (B2B) environments also exhibit these same discriminatory patterns as businesses hesitate to hire Dalit-owned companies as contractors or suppliers even if their pricing and quality are competitive.

3.3.3 Dalit Women's Participation in Entrepreneurship

A significant drawback is the underrepresentation of women entrepreneurship in India. Although the study uses one case study, Manju Rani, a female entrepreneur, with a brief mention of Dr. Jayanti Chaudhary, wife of Dr. Umesh Chaudhary, it misses the diverse experiences and contributions of women in the entrepreneurial sphere (Kapur, Babu and Prasad, 2014). Five distinct case studies among sixteen demonstrate the need of more emphasis on the entrepreneurial activity of women. Further, the book features the extraordinary success of Kamani Tubes' founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kalpana Saroj, Kamani Engineering, and Kamani Metal. A motivational tale given via the book is that of the 'Sargam Mahila Band,' a women's band from Bihar that has secured contracts to perform at several governmental events including ring ceremonies, marriages, inaugurations, and naming ceremonies. Savitaben Parmar, founder of Sterling Ceramic Pvt. Ltd., which produces 5,000 square feet of Sportex Tiles every day; Meera Tai, who founded 250 Swayam SahayataBachat Gats (Self-Help Groups) and 4,000 women's organizations; Dr. Jayanti Chaudhary, gynecologist who, with her husband Dr. Umesh Chaudhary, founded the Chinmay Surgical Centre and Chitvan Surgical Centre to encourage regular deliveries; Manju Rani, founder of a shirt-manufacturing unit; and Dolma Aunty, owner of Dolma Aunties Momos with stores in Central Market and Lajpat Nagar, Delhi, are among the case studies. Members of the Sargam Mahila Band have reached a decent social and financial status in society by means of tenacity and skill. As their husbands, families, and general society first battled to accept their non-conventional activities (Jadhav and Amrale-Jadhav, 2022), the account presents a snapshot of the early era and resistance from society faced by these ladies.

3.3.4 Skill Development and Human Capital

Underrepresentation in business schools, technical institutes, and professional courses affects the growth of managerial and technical skills. Knowledge gaps in business practices, market understanding, and entrepreneurial strategies are caused by the intergenerational lack of business experience in Dalit communities. Variations in schooling affect entrepreneurial abilities. Despite objections in educational institutions, Dalits continue to struggle to get a good education, especially in areas closely connected with business (Thorat and Attewell, 2007).

4. Results

The following results provide social justice and economic dimensions, scale and policy framework, persistent barriers, gender dimensions, human capital development:

Social Justice and Economic Dimensions

Empirical data point to a great link between Ambedkarite social justice and economic empowerment philosophy. Secondary evidence points toward entrepreneurship as now a key tool for achieving Ambedkar's socio-economic liberation aim. As per Ambedkar's concept of economic self-determination as a basis for true emancipation, literature consistently shows that material advancement and dignity for Dalits are guaranteed by financial independence attained through entrepreneurship.

Scale and Policy Framework

The results of the research indicate that Dalit entrepreneurship is still quite underappreciated relative to population representation even with promising expansion. Based on secondary data analysis, the results of government programs including targeted procurement policies and the Stand-Up India scheme have been erratic. Policy frameworks seem to have improved on paper, but implementation gaps persist and bureaucratic hurdles and inadequate monitoring systems limit their effectiveness. Government support, corporate partnerships, and locally based resources seem to comprise a mix of effective models.

Persistent Barriers

The results clearly support a number of connected barriers to Dalit entrepreneurial success: Financial exclusion is also seen as a significant obstacle since secondary sources continuously refer to a pattern of discriminatory lending from institutions. Dalit entrepreneurs experience more stringent collateral requirements, higher interest rates, and greater rejection rates than do their higher-caste colleagues. The study reveals a worrying trend of even competent Dalit entrepreneurs being 'soft rejected' with procedural delays and excessive documentation demands. Another major obstacle is the social network restrictions. Dalit entrepreneurs are normally denied informal business networks, mentorship, and market information channels generally advantageous to upper-caste businessmen throughout ages, according to the secondary data. The exclusion encompasses implicit market discrimination as seen in reported instances of consumer shunning and supply chain exclusion when Dalit ownership is formed, not only informational asymmetries.

Gender Dimensions

The findings demonstrate a great gender gap in Dalit entrepreneurship. Secondary research indicates that Dalit women entrepreneurs face "triple discrimination" on the basis of gender, caste, and class. Their companies are usually smaller, riskier, and concentrated in lower-profit businesses. But the study also discovers that women-led Dalit business networks and fresh self-help organizations are showing promising results in eliminating these intersectional obstacles via solidarity and resource distribution.

Human Capital Development

Secondary analysis of data shows that there are overall gaps in entrepreneurial preparation and skill-building in entrepreneurial education. Despite the rise in Dalit levels of formal schooling, business training, technical education, and entrepreneurial sponsorship remain restricted. Where particular skill-building courses do exist, they are more geared towards employment than entrepreneurship. The most successful interventions to date combine technical training with financial education, business planning, and ongoing mentorship that is intended to counter caste-based obstacles.

The general conclusion of this study is that while Dalit entrepreneurship is a potentially powerful vehicle for the realization of Ambedkarite social justice, there must be significant structural transformation and collaborative intervention to bypass the persistent barriers that limit its complete attainment.

5. Discussion

Empirical data imply that Dalit entrepreneurship is successful to a broad extent, accompanied by large economic mobility. A longitudinal study by Deshpande and Sharma (2013) discovered that Dalit entrepreneurs experienced their mean income increase by 38% in five years, compared to a 17% increase for salaried Dalit employees. Economic gains tend to spill over from individual entrepreneurs to employment generation in the immediate neighborhoods. Entrepreneurship also challenges dominant stereotypes of Dalit ability and constructs visible counter-narratives to long-standing occupational hierarchies. Entrepreneurship also amplifies psychological empowerment through increased self-efficacy and mastery. Jadhav (2005) demonstrates how Dalit entrepreneurs forge stronger caste identities in conjunction with professional ones, typically more overtly connecting their entrepreneurial success with Ambedkarite ideals of dignity and self-respect. While scholars acknowledge advantages of entrepreneurship, they are also cautious against making it a panacea for ending caste discrimination. Market-oriented measures may divert attention from the requirement of more inclusive anti-discrimination legislation and enforcement, argue Carswell and De Neve (2013). Entrepreneurship

could also leave the most marginal Dalit members behind and advantage comparatively privileged segments. As per Mosse (2018), successful Dalit entrepreneurs often belong to sub-castes possessing relatively more access to education or urban experience, which may enhance intra-group inequality.

6. Conclusion

Employing a methodical review of qualitative secondary data, this research has investigated the overlap between Ambedkarite principles of social justice and entrepreneurship among Dalits. Consistently with Ambedkar's vision of economic self-determination as the foundation of social justice, the data indicate that entrepreneurship is a significant route for Dalit liberation. The research has pointed out the entrenched structural hurdles that impede Dalit entrepreneurship. Exclusion from credit under discriminatory conditions, limited access to business networks, gender-based prejudice against Dalit women entrepreneurs, and the absence of inexpensive means for skill acquisition together present a formidable obstacle. Though policy systems have improved, implementation flaws still restrict their efficiency. Our research has highlighted the ambivalent consequences of entrepreneurship on Dalit communities. Among the Dalits, successful entrepreneurs reach notable financial advancement with evidence of much more income growth relative to those aiming for salaried jobs. Apart from financial advantage, company ownership enables psychological empowerment through improved self-efficacy and autonomy and helps overcome ingrained assumptions about Dalit ability. This study also points out possible drawbacks of using entrepreneurship as an emancipatory strategy, though. Moreover, entrepreneurial opportunities may unintentionally accrue to comparatively better-placed segments of Dalit communities, thereby strengthening intra-group inequalities. Going ahead, successful Dalit entrepreneurship promotion calls for a multifaceted approach combining strong anti-discrimination enforcement with targeted policy changes. Programs for financial inclusion must tackle explicit as well as hidden prejudices in loan practices. Particularly along technical training, entrepreneurial education should be incorporated into skill development courses. To overcome intersectional obstacles, particular focus should be given to encouraging women-led business networks and collections. Above all, Dalit entrepreneurship has to be framed inside the greater Ambedkarite setting of all-encompassing social transformation. Though it is not a goal in itself, owning a company enables one to achieve economic empowerment. Rather, it is a component of a bigger struggle for dignity, equality, and justice. Not just by the number of Dalit-owned companies, but also by the extent to which entrepreneurship aids to subvert the institutional bases of caste prejudice in Indian society will finally define success.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of Dalit entrepreneurship through an Ambedkarite lens, this research offers the following recommendations for policy makers, financial institutions, educational bodies, and civil society organizations:

Financial Inclusion and Capital Access

- Financial institutions must reduce their dependence on traditional collateral requirements and social network recommendations by establishing specialized credit evaluation systems that recognize the unique challenges for first-generation Dalit entrepreneurs.
- Establish dedicated angel and venture capital funds for Dalit entrepreneurs, including the private as well as the public sector.
- Implement robust monitoring mechanisms, like regular review of loan rejection patterns by caste categories, to monitor and curb discriminatory lending.

Policy Implementation and Institutional Reform

- By setting up accountability procedures for departments that don't perform on the targets and putting up transparency portals that monitor procurement from Dalit-owned enterprises, we can fortify the enforcement of existing procurement policies.
- Establish integrated business support centers in Dalit-dominated regions that offer various services, including technological advice, market linkage facilitation, and legal support.
- To limit the discretionary authority that allows discrimination, bureaucratic processes in entrepreneurship support programs must be overhauled. To the extent practicable, this ought to involve reviews of applications anonymously.

Human Capital Development

- Where large numbers of Dalits are found, educational institutions should make entrepreneurship learning a part of secondary and tertiary education, emphasizing theoretical knowledge as well as practical business acumen.
- Develop mentorship programs that match future Dalit entrepreneurs with experienced business people, taking special care to arrange networks and industry-specific advice.
- Establish specialized skill-building programs that address specific skills shortages in high-growth sectors, going beyond conventional craft training to include opportunities in the digital economy.

Addressing Intersectional Barriers

- Design woman-centered business projects to address the particular challenges. Such adaptable financial options and support programs acknowledging caregiving responsibilities abound for Dalit women.
- Support and expansion of existing Dalit business networks, chambers of commerce, and industry associations will help to promote community knowledge-sharing and collective negotiating power.
- Fund studies on effective Dalit entrepreneurial models, noting best practices and creating simple-to-understand case studies for instruction.

Beyond Individual Enterprise

- Ensure business development courses incorporate rights awareness and non-discrimination policies, and place entrepreneurial promotion within broader social justice programs.
- Establish stronger enforcement mechanisms for anti-discrimination legislation in market relations that entail penalties for recorded cases of discriminatory business practice.
- To alter public perception and create positive role models for the younger generation, create recognition schemes that highlight Dalit entrepreneurial success.

These suggestions aim to solve the deeper structural injustices which perpetuate economic marginalisation, as well as the direct barriers to the success of Dalit entrepreneurs. These require concerted efforts from diverse groups committed to social justice and economic democracy in accordance with Ambedkarite values.

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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Vision for Women Empowerment: An Analysis of his Writings and Speeches

Ms. Arti Jadhav

Project Manager, Research Department, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Training and Research Institute (BARTI), Pune.

Abstract

Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is the man who was real catalyst for social justice and human rights also he had fight for the dignity and rights of women and marginalized communities. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was expected that there should not be the discrimination based on the caste, colour, creed, gender and religion therefore all the human being should be treated in equal basis. Hence Ambedkar started the work on rights, liberation and empowerment of women. The vision of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the social justice friendly society. He felt that there is gender equality in Indian society but he feels that there is a need of gender equality for surviving into the modern society. Dr. Minara Yeasmin (2018) has studied that the Dr. Ambedkar has given equal status to women as men by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution, for strengthening and upliftment the position of women. The present paper highlights the vision of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for women empowerment. The study is descriptive in nature. The researcher has analysed the writings and speeches of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the content analysis method has been adopted. Based on the content of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar speeches the researcher has made analysis and made inferences on women empowerment.

Key Words: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Vision, Women Empowerment, Analysis, Writings and Speeches.

Introduction

Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who is the principal architect and modern maker of the Indian constitution and as an emancipator of the poor and deprived. He was the only national leader for fighting against the caste system and inclusion and mainstreaming the marginalized communities in the development process. Dr. Babasaheb was the beacon of light for the millions of depressed, oppressed and exploited people of India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who has devoted his entire life for challenging the Indian graded system of caste-based hierarchy which has denied equality, freedom and human dignity to woman in Hindu Society, therefore he has done evidence-based documentation work that is Indian constitution which brings the equality by the rule of law in this nation.

Moon Vasant (1991) has studied that Dr. Ambedkar has played meticulous roles such as Sociologist, Researcher, Professor, Advocate, Political leader, Administrator, Parliamentarian, Journalist, Negotiator and the Leader of oppressed people in India. M. Sampathkamar (2015) has discussed that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has studied and acquired the deep knowledge about human rights and social justice which was the foundation of his own ideology. He dericed that the social stability is depends on equity and without equality social justice is not there hence the social progress is incomplete.

S. Mohammad Azaal- 2013 has done literature survey reveals that traditionally women were not treated equally and based on gender the access in every sphere was denied. Therefore, there was more discrimination. The social discrimination was there and the social position was not equal with the men. The basic rights of women were denied. In those days the animals were treated properly but women and down trodden communities were not treated as the human being. Therefor Dr. Ambedkar has taken the initiatives for the fundamental rights and economic emancipation of women. Also Dr. Ambedkar insisted for dignified life and respect of women.

Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has started the renowned journals Mook Nayak in (1920) and Bahishkrit Bharat in 1927 for raising the voice against social order and social systems of Hindu society where the huge discrimination was the root cause.

The Satyajit Das (2015) has studied and revealed that there should be gender equality, provisions for education of women and equality and social justice for marginalized communities. During the Bombay Legislative Assembly Dr. Ambedkar has strongly advocated for family planning measures for women and equal opportunity and equal share with the women in Indian society.

Babasaheb Ambedkar's Contribution towards Women's Rights

The Bijay Barnaval (2014) studied that in Hindu society the society should be based on humanity there should not be tradition of caste system. Therefore, there is need of reconstruction of Hindu society along with modern democratic liberty, equality and fraternity. Also Dr. Ambedkar challenged to ideologies of graded system of caste hierarchy which has denied the freedom, equality and rights of women.

Mahindra Godbole highlighted that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's approach to women's empowerment was entirely different from other social reformers like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Rajaram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi who tried to reform the Hindu Society of certain outdated customs and practices without questioning the hierarchical social order.

The Sanjeev Kumar (2015) studied that Dr. Ambedkar has suggested in "The Annihilation of Caste System", the women should get the equal access, equality, right to education, right to property, political participation etc.

S. Mohammad (2013) has discussed that Dr. Ambedkar has started the movement in 1920 for the women education which will lead to social equality and women's liberation.

The Vijay More (2011) has described that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was significant role model for organization women and women were able to participating in the *satyagrahas* which has helped women for establishing the untouchable women association and make aware the society.

The Kavita kait (2013) has discussed that in 1927 after getting nominated as a member of Bombay Legislative Council in which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has insisted and done advocacy for women dignity and bill for maternity benefit for women workers. It was highlighted in bill that in the interest of nation the women should get the rest during the maternity period. And government should pay the some amount to women workers during the maternity leave period.

The Bharati (1992) has highlighted that in the March 1927 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has initiated the Mahad Satyaghaha in which lakhs of people were participate to secure their right to have a water from Chawdar lake of Mahad. The aim of this movement was to eradicate the untouchability and restore the human rights and live dignified life marginalized people in Indian society.

Singariya M. R. 2014) has studied that On the day 25th December 1927 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has made a bonfire of Manusmriti in presence of fifty women in the conference of depressed classes held at Mahad. In this conference the resolutions such as quality of life for women, freedom for wear the good dress, clean life, don't feed the spouses if they are drinking and significantly the right to education for women equally with the men.

In the year 1928 the women association was established at Ramabai was the president. In the year 1930 the depressed classes conference was held at Nagpur but subsequently the women association had their separate conference.

Singariya (2014) has discussed that at Nashik in 1930 the Kalaram Mandir entry satyagraha was held in which five hundred women were participated and many of them were arrested long with men and treated in the jail. The Radhabai

Vadale has addressed the press conference in 1931 in which she said that "It is been to die a hundred times than live a life full of humiliation. Women will sacrifice their life but we will fight for our rights. It was the encouragement for self-respect and women rights which came from the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Vaisali Dhanvijay (2012) has discussed that based on the Mahad Satyagraha Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar realized and believed in the strengths of women and their active participation the social reform movements. And in next meeting Dr. Ambedkar Stated that I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women had achieved. The credit for inculcation self-respect and firm determination in women goes to Dr. Babasaheb.

Vijay More (2011) highlighted some data about the rights of women. When Dr. Ambedkar became the Labor Minister of executive council of Governor General introduced a maternity benefit bill in which women rights and welfare was secured.

Sanjeev Kumar (2015) described that Dr. Ambedkar has spent his entire life for emancipation for women rights and dignified life. Also, he has worked for women who were engaged in bad practices like sati pratha and professions like prostitution. It was one of the significant benchmark that Kamathipura a David, mediator working in brothel left profession persuaded by the thoughts and teaching of Dr. Babasaheb and looked the entire prostitute to give up their profession and lead the life of honor.

In the parliament Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has introduced the Hindu Code Bill which talks about the welfare and civil rights of women along with the issues of property rights of women. Besides it the legal rights of Muslim women were discussed. All the women were in circle of social law laid by Manu but this Hindu Code Bill has protected the civil rights of women and given legal safeguards for women in India.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was great social reformer who had spent his life for women's rights, he was an advocate for social justice in India for equal rights for women along with the men. Dr. Ambedkar launched the social legislations for protection of women rights, reducing the working hours and improving the work conditions also equal pay for equal work.

Thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on. Rights of Women

Besides drafting the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was great Economist, Sociologist, Writer, Political Leader, Thinker, Editor and Buddha Philosopher. He has fought for socio-economic and cultural rights of women and marginalized communities. Dr. Ambedkar said, *"The stories of women entering into public discussions with men on most abstruse subjects of religion, philosophy and metaphysics are by no means few." (Ambedkar 107)*

Kumar (2013) discussed that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar pointed out that the discrimination of Women in Hindu Society abused on Social Laws like Manu which focus on shastra, caste and endogamy. Also, the Manu Smruti focuses on legalization of denial of liberty, dignity, right to education, property, divorce etc. during Vedic period the women were enjoying the rights as a human being.

Women's Rights from the Lenses of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

- **Equal participation:** In industries at workplace women should get equal participation along with the men.
- **Social Legislations:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar launched the social legislations for the welfare of women worker such as Maternity Benefit Act. Besides it he has drafted the legislation of equal pay for equal work for coal mine workers. Also, women should get full leaves during maternity leave.
- **Work conditions and Work Place:** Dr. Ambedkar advocated for good conditions at working place which will helpful for increasing the work efficiency.
- **Rights of Women for Reproductive Health:** Dr. Ambedkar strongly advocates for the reproductive health rights of women. There should be choice and freedom for women for conception.

Ambedkar's Contribution to Women's Rights

- **Hindu Code Bill:** Ambedkar's most important contribution to the cause of women's rights was the Hindu Code Bill, which revolutionized property and marriage practices and established laws of maintenance for women.
- **Four acts, resulting from the Bill, were passed:**

1. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, which gave women the right to divorce and maintenance;
2. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, which gave them the legal right to inherit property;
3. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, which allowed women to legally adopt a child; and
4. The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, which allowed women to be the natural guardian of their children.

- **Pro-women Acts:** The influence of these reforms led to other pro-women Acts such as the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 and the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, which brightened the dark roads of women's struggles.

Dr. Ambedkar's Vision for Women's Rights

- **Right to Education for Women:** In the Hindu Society during the time of Manu Smruti and Dharm Shastra the women were denied for the basic rights including right to education. Therefore Dr. Ambedkar advocated for the right to education for women.
- **Challenge to Social Hierarchy:** During this period in Hindu Society the Social discrimination is the foundation of social hierarchy. Hence Dr. Ambedkar condemned the social hierarchy.
- **Women Atrocities:** The atrocities against women are deeply rooted into caste system. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has highlighted this through his paper on Caste in India written in the year 1917.
- **For instance:** Dr. Ambedkar fought against the sati, child marriage, widow remarriage when women were controlled by the social systems but Dr. Ambedkar condemned all these evil systems.
- **Vision for Equality:** To bring the social justice Dr. Ambedkar looked the vision for equality besides the caste, gender, race and ethnicity differences.

Conclusion

Ambedkar's contribution towards women's rights is often overlooked, and he needs to be recognized as a champion of social justice, a visionary, and a philosopher. His work to empower all sections of marginalized communities needs to be acknowledged, and his vision of equality despite caste, gender, race, and ethnicity differences is a pioneering thought of social justice. Women's rights and their liberation are crucial for building a progressive society, and Ambedkar's values and vision continue to guide feminist principles in India.

In the contemporary period the thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar emancipation of women and their rights are not realized by the Indian society. The entire life has been spent by Dr. Ambedkar for the liberation of women and establishing the social justice. The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001, admitted that social and economic structure of the nation is largely responsible for gender inequality, which was envisaged by Ambedkar long ago.

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Social Justice: A Meta-Analysis of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Views

Dr. Kartiki Subakade
Assistant Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Abstract

Social justice is a contemporary idea with philosophical underpinnings. All facets of life, including politics, economics, sociology, philosophy, jurisprudence, and other related fields, are infused with the concept of social justice. Social justice is a reflection of societal standards and beliefs. The many changes and transformations that take place during different stages of life are absorbed by these values. It is crucial to comprehend the idea of social justice and its underlying principles, or the concept of justice. The conventional static notion of justice gave way to the more contemporary, adaptable, and expansive understanding of social justice. Due to recent socioeconomic advancements and life transformations (such as modernization, globalization, and digitization), the concept of social justice is relatively modern. The goal of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social justice philosophy was to create a society in which everyone has equal rights, opportunities, and dignity and is free from casteism, discrimination, and exploitation. Dr. Ambedkar felt that three values—liberty, equality, and fraternity—were fundamental to a decent society and ought to govern all interpersonal relationships. He was instrumental in the creation of the Indian Constitution, which established social justice ideals. He thought that legislation and constitutional clauses may be effective means of guaranteeing everyone's rights and bringing about social fairness. Secondary data will form the basis of the aforementioned paper. In order to perform the Meta analysis, 13 research studies will be selected from the Google Scholars website. The primary goal is to understand Dr. Ambedkar's views on social justice. The aforementioned research seeks to highlight the applicability of Dr. Ambedkar's social justice theory in the future. It is imperative to consider Dr. Ambedkar's Social Justice Theory in light of modern-day India.

Key Words: Social Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Constitution of India.

Introduction

Social justice is a contemporary idea with philosophical underpinnings. All facets of life, including politics, economics, sociology, philosophy, jurisprudence,

and other related fields, are infused with the concept of social justice. Social justice is a reflection of societal standards and beliefs. The many changes and transformations that take place during different stages of life are absorbed by these values.

It is crucial to comprehend the idea of social justice and its underlying principles, or the concept of justice. The conventional static notion of justice gave way to the more contemporary, adaptable, and expansive understanding of social justice. Due to recent socioeconomic advancements and life transformations (such as modernization, globalization, and digitization), the concept of social justice is relatively modern.

The goal of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social justice philosophy was to create a society in which everyone has equal rights, opportunities, and dignity and is free from casteism, discrimination, and exploitation.

Aims and Objectives

1.To understand Dr. Ambedkar's views on social justice.

2.To study the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's view of Social Justice in future India

This article draws on 10 research publications between 2014 and 2022. A literature search of the databases of research studies was conducted using the keywords "Social Justice" "Liberty" "Equality" "Fraternity" and, "Constitution of India" All articles with full text were reviewed to understand the details of the study. The studies conducted on secondary data were analyzed.

Results

Meta-analysis has identified four dimensions in studies, such as Social justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and constitution of India. Ten research papers have focused on Social Justice whereas nine research papers spoke about Liberty. Total five research papers examined equality and another five research papers have a focus on Fraternity. All papers have widely discussed on Constitution of India.

Intervention Strategies

Social Justice

The concept of Social Justice has been developed by the Freedom Struggle Movement as well as it has been build up through the thoughts and work contribution by Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who devoted his life to overthrowing the caste system and promoting the rights of the oppressed, is regarded as the father of social justice in India. Ambedkar saw social justice as a "tri-junction" of liberty, equality, and fraternity rather than just a legal notion. Ambedkar envisioned the core principle of Social Justice was to oppose "graded inequality" in which a person's position was based on their birth, and to establish a "just Society" in which every

person of independent India will have equality. According to him, the development of the individual is society's main goal; society exists to improve people, not the other way around. He insisted that in order to attain true social fairness, the caste system—which he viewed as a "social tyranny" that hindered both individual advancement and national unity—must be totally eliminated. He defined justice as another name as Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Liberty means Freedom of movement, profession, and thought whereas Equality treats all humans as of the same regardless of origin. Fraternity considers as brotherhood that sustains moral order.

Liberty

Liberty which is a main component of Dr. BR Ambedkar's vision on social justice related with women empowerment and its implementation under Indian constitution in the era of globalization. Deeply ingrained in his fight for social justice, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described liberty as non-oppression rather than only political freedom. Liberty which is a main component of Dr. BR Ambedkar's vision on social justice related with women empowerment and its implementation under Indian constitution in the era of globalization. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar liberated women and dalits by making provisions to safeguard their interests, given a respectful life, social status, dignity, and feeling of self-respect by accepting Buddhism. He became the real emancipator of the Dalits and Women through his life long struggle for their emancipation. Another aspect of the Indian social structure that has impeded its development is gender bias. Babasaheb Ambedkar believed that endogamy and the caste system were to blame for the predicament of Indian women. Women were denied equality under the Indian social order in all areas of life, including inheritance, property rights, and fundamental civil rights. Babasaheb Ambedkar made a strong case for women's empowerment. Babasaheb Ambedkar provided equal pay for equal work, equal and sufficient means of subsistence, just and humane working conditions at workplaces through Directive Principles of State Policy, special provisions for women's welfare, reservations in various government posts through Fundamental Rights, and equality provisions for women and men through constitutional safeguards.

Equality

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar liberated women and dalits by making provisions to safeguard their interests, given a respectful life, social status, dignity, and feeling of self-respect. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's idea of equality was a radical break from conventional wisdom, emphasizing "one man, one value" over simple legal formalities. Ambedkar described the Indian social system as "graded inequality" rather than a straightforward divide. According to him, caste is a vertical plane in

which groups are stacked, with each group accepting subordination to those above while viewing itself as superior to those below. He maintained that this system keeps the downtrodden from banding together since even those at the bottom feel superior to those at the top, maintaining the structure as a whole. As a "denial of human dignity," he opposed birth-based position and supported a society in which rank is based on personal accomplishment and merit.

Fraternity

Dr. Ambedkar became the real emancipator of the Dalits and Women through his life long struggle for their emancipation. Fraternity was the most important yet challenging aspect of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's social triad. According to him, it is a "sense of common brotherhood and sisterhood" that cuts over caste and creed and serves as the moral glue required for a democracy to endure. The caste system, according to Ambedkar, is the "anti-thesis of fraternity." In his farewell address to the Constituent Assembly, he famously declared that caste is "anti-national" since it fosters animosity and rivalry rather than unity. "Public spirit" is destroyed in a caste-ridden society because people are loyal exclusively to their caste and not to the country or to humanity. Ambedkar maintained that without a foundation in brotherhood, liberty and equality could not be natural. The key strategy for resolving social polarization is still Ambedkar's idea of brotherhood. His appeal for a "moral social order" based on empathy is more pertinent than ever for national unity as he warned that without fraternity, India will remain a "collection of castes" rather than a nation.

Constitution of India

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is revered as the "Chief Architect" or "Father of the Indian Constitution" due to his pivotal role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee. He is author, thinker and architecture of The Constitution of India. He was pioneer to implement it. After being appointed on August 29, 1947, Ambedkar guided the document through almost three years of intense discussion, carefully examining other international constitutions to modify best practices for India.

He was a fierce advocate for Part III of the Constitution, ensuring it guaranteed:

- **Article 14:** Equality before the law.
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or birth.
- **Article 17:** The revolutionary abolition of "untouchability".
- **Article 32:** The "Right to Constitutional Remedies," which he called the "**Heart and Soul of the Constitution**" because it allows citizens to approach the Supreme Court directly to enforce their rights.

Implications about Ambedkar's Dream of Social Justice and Today's India

India has made great progress in advancing social justice, and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been instrumental in closing the socioeconomic divide. In modern India, social justice is a complex idea that includes a range of programs and laws intended to advance equity, equality, and marginalized communities' access to resources. A peaceful society where each person has the chance to flourish and realize their full potential is built on social justice. Despite advancements, Ambedkar's vision of "social democracy" is still idealistic due to major obstacles. In both rural and urban regions, the caste system, which Ambedkar aimed to "annihilate," continues to determine social status and economic prospects. There are numerous documented atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Tribes each year, demonstrating the persistence of caste-based violence and discrimination. The actual experiences of oppressed people differ significantly from the formal rights protected by the Constitution. Disadvantaged populations are disproportionately affected by problems like the digital divide and limited access to high-quality healthcare and education. Political democracy, according to Ambedkar, is a "life of contradictions" in the absence of social and economic equality. Effective policy implementation and whether political representation actually translates into power and dignity for all marginalized communities are topics of ongoing debate. India essentially has a constitutional framework for social fairness, but the continuous effort and dedication needed to break down ingrained societal hierarchies shows that the dream is still an unfulfilled agenda.

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Studying Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts and Contributions on Prostitutes

Asha Appa Pakhare
Research Scholar, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai
Dr. Rohini Sudhakar
Guide, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai

Abstract

The Supreme Court of India ruled that prostitutes are entitled to respect and independence under the law. According to Article 21, prostitutes have the right to live with dignity. Therefore, they cannot be harassed as illegal, but still the society views those prostitutes as stigmatized. Women working in prostitution and the customers who come to them come from the society. Therefore, it is a part of the society. The social discrimination in prostitution reinforces marginalization, so it is difficult for these women to integrate into the mainstream society. This further increases their insecurity. Dr.Ambedkar had this idea. Women did not accept being prostitutes anddevadasis, voluntarily, but were forced on them due to customs and poverty. They should refuse to do this business. Therefore, to incite prostitutes and create anger against injustice in their minds, they used to say, "It is important to satisfy the hunger of the stomach, but it is more important to maintain character. Do not sacrifice your character to satisfy the hunger of the stomach. Face the crisis." In many ways, they used to create awareness by giving speeches and creating the mentality of prostitutes. Through this speech, many prostitutes renounced this tainted life, embraced Buddhism and started a life. Their Indian constitution is based on freedom, equality, social justice. The problems of prostitutes are social, economic, educational and health related, these problems can be solved from a humanitarian welfare perspective. These women are included in food, clothing, shelter, medical help and necessary social facilities. Constitutional protection has been given to fundamental rights in the Indian constitution. Through this, many laws, policies and schemes are being implemented for these prostitutes. And through this, many activities are being implemented for prostitution at the government and semi-government levels. Therefore, the Indian Constitution has been very valuable in helping these women to come out of prostitution and create a new identity for themselves, as these women have become self-reliant and empowered. And it can

help in achieving equality between men and women. And it can help in making the contribution made by Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar to bring these women out of prostitution worthwhile.

Keywords: Indian Constitution, Prostitutes, Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar, Prostitutes Act, Social Justice, Equality, Prostitutes Measures, Sex Workers

Introduction

According to Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar, women are an important factor in the overall development of India. Until every woman in India is economically, politically, educationally and socially empowered, the country cannot develop. For this, he has made many provisions for women in the Indian Constitution. According to him, the slavery of women is not economic but mental. The male-dominated culture and social customs of the caste system have deprived women of the right to equality and have trapped them in religious bondage.

In 1950, through the Constitution of India, Dr. Ambedkar gave women the right to education, voting and equal work in all fields. Traditional superstitions, customs and caste system have given rise to the Devadasi system and prostitution, for which girls are being trafficked, single and widowed women are being exploited, and the development of the country depends on the development of women. Since the economic empowerment of women is the yardstick for measuring economic development, the nation will not be empowered without the empowerment of women. Women should have equal status with men in the social sphere. Until there is equality between men and women, it will hinder the development of the country and women will continue to be exploited. Dr. Ambedkar brought the Hindu Code Bill in the Parliament on 26 September 1951, but it was postponed. Ambedkar felt very sorry and resigned from the post of Law Minister on 27 September 1951 as the Hindu Code Bill was dead.

No one can deny the fact that women working in the prostitution business and the customers who come to them come from the society. Although women sell their bodies for money in this business, this business is constantly growing. Poverty, superstition, hunger, virgin mothers, patriarchal practices, sexual perversion, ignorance, family breakdown, single women, prostitutes, widows. Women in conflict, trafficking of girls, Devdasi practice, etc. are many reasons for entering the business. These women earn money by selling their bodies, but it is difficult to say how much of that money the woman has. Also, the children born from them are treated with contempt by society without any fault, and society sees them as unworthy and stigmatized. These women and their children are constantly vulnerable. Such prostitutes have many social, economic, educational, and health problems. Women continue to be atrocities due to the division of class, caste, education, caste, and

religion. Since the human society in India is male-dominated, gender discrimination is practiced here between men and women. Different moral values are imposed here for women and different moral values for men. Women are treated secondarily in every field. Due to this, all kinds of injustice is done to women based on caste, religion, class, and gender.

The fundamental rights and entitlements in the Indian Constitution are the foundation for the development of women so that they can be empowered and the disadvantages among women can be eliminated. The perspective of looking at women is primarily as a beneficiary of the welfare initiatives of the government and society. Therefore, many rehabilitation programs for prostitutes are being implemented as per the Indian Constitution and strict action is being taken against the people and brokers who force them to do this business by providing protection to the victimized and exploited women through laws. Therefore, the constitution and thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb are becoming important in solving the problems of prostitutes.

Objectives of the Research

1. To study the efforts and contributions made by Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar to get prostitutes out of prostitution.
2. To study the empowerment of prostitutes through Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar's social justice and equality.
3. To study the measures taken for prostitutes due to the provisions of Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar's constitution.

Research Methodology

Secondary data has been used for this information. Published and unpublished research papers, theses, websites on the internet, government and private records, books, international, national, state level publications, research books, public magazines, newspapers, various periodicals, articles published in newspapers, various schemes, magazines, libraries.

Factors involved in prostitution:

1. Traditional prostitution (mother or sister who is a prostitute)
2. Poverty (to get rid of poverty)
3. Unemployment
4. Victims of male deception
5. Single women (married women, widows, virgin mothers, divorced women, orphan girls or women)

6. Due to separated environment and conflict
7. Women who fall prey to the lure/temptation of a broker
8. Beggar girls and women
9. Girls and women who are victims of rape or sexual violence
10. Devadasis dedicated to God
11. Women who are motivated by their husband's immoral relationship
12. Cruel treatment by step-parents, brothers-in-law
13. Women who are motivated by their husband to become prostitutes
14. Women and girls who are victims of human trafficking
15. Slavery, city brides,
16. To earn more money in a short time (without working)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Efforts and Contribution to get Prostitutes out of Prostitution

Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar gave a message to Devadasis and prostitutes in his speeches to quit their profession, get married, live with self-respect even in poverty, and make a living. He has given practical support to his thoughts by getting many Dalit youths married to prostitutes. . Women did not accept being prostitutes, devadasis, and prostitutes voluntarily, but it was imposed on them due to customs and traditions and poverty. Dr. Babasaheb had the idea that they should refuse to do this business. Therefore, to incite those prostitutes and create anger against injustice in their minds, he said, 'It is important to satisfy the hunger of the stomach, but it is more important to maintain character. Do not sacrifice your character to satisfy the hunger of the stomach. Face the crisis. He guided and helped them to live as human beings in society by appealing to preserve their morals and character. He used to create awareness and create the mentality of prostitutes by giving speeches in many ways. Through this speech, many prostitutes renounced this tainted life and embraced Buddhism and lived a life of peace. Inspired by Babasaheb's thoughts, David used to tell women in a brothel in Kamathipura, Mumbai, to leave the prostitution business altogether and live a life of dignity. (Sanjeev Kumar 2010)

Empowerment through Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Social Justice and Equality

There are approximately 20 million prostitutes living in India, out of which 16 million prostitutes are victims of sex trafficking. Zhonde, based on the December 2017 Thomson Reuters opinion, presented the fact that a woman is not a commodity, she is also a human being, therefore her respect is necessary. Her identity should be preserved.

Social justice means providing justice to every person in the society, while equality means providing equal treatment and resources to every person in the society. This includes women's issues, domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation at the workplace, female foeticide, dowry sacrifice, disability problems, elderly problems, human trafficking, child labor, problems in slums, and many other issues. He was aware that these issues can be solved through justice and equality, so he wrote the Constitution with a humanitarian, social justice, and equality in mind.

It is necessary to bring equality to eliminate poverty for sustainable development in the country. We must provide economic and social opportunities to prostitutes. The United Nations has decided to implement 17 sustainable goals for the development of the country by 2030. The problem of prostitutes is related to this sustainable development goal. Poverty eradication, hunger eradication, good health, quality education, gender equality, good jobs, clean water and health facilities are mandatory for prostitutes. Without this, the rehabilitation of prostitutes cannot take place. Unless the prostitutes become financially independent and stop prostitution, gender equality cannot be achieved in the society. Prostitution is a problem in the development of India.The economic and social empowerment of all women is essential for sustainable human development.

Dr. Babasaheb's ideology, human rights and the Indian Constitution

In the "Human Rights and Responsibilities" Declaration of 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly has given everyone the right to a standard of living adequate for the health of his family in Article 25. This includes food, clothing, shelter, medical care and necessary social amenities. Similarly, there is the right to security in the event of lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control such as unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, and shipwreck. Mothers and children have the right to special care. Whether they are virtuous or not, they should be given social security. The United Nations has made policies on the suppression of prostitution and the exploitation of prostitutes on 2 December 1949 to curb prostitution. And it was implemented on July 29, 1951. The victims of this should be provided with public, private educational,. At the same time, they should be rehabilitated through a plan to eradicate prostitution, and women in prostitution should be included in society. The countries that signed the agreement agreed to this. However, in some countries, it has been legally recognized. In some countries, prostitution is considered illegal. Society still looks at these women as untouchables and stigmatized. For this, some provisions were made in human rights.

Therefore, constitutional protection of fundamental rights was given according to Article 32 of the Constitution. Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar considered this the most

important article. Therefore, in India, the Human Rights Protection Act was passed in 1993. Accordingly, the Human Rights Commission was established. In 1993, the Human Rights Protection Act was defined. Human rights mean the life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual are guaranteed by the Constitution. Articles 14, 15, 16, 21, 23, 39(3), (51A) should not be used in a way that would insult these women. And in human rights, it is important to protect the rights of children, women, disabled, deprived groups, and the poor. Also, in the guiding principle, every state will make arrangements so that the citizens of India get the means to earn a living. Due to poverty and destitution, crime, corruption, divorce, begging, prostitution, juvenile delinquency, and suicide are increasing. Therefore, information about various facilities such as the Women's Commission, Child Commission, shelter homes, laws, schemes, and policies has been provided here.

Human rights are natural and fundamental and are equal to everyone at the global level. These rights are not influenced by national color, sex, religion or language. These include the right to life, freedom from torture, freedom from slavery, the right to a fair trial, freedom of speech, freedom of thought and religion, etc. These are based on (1) food, (2) education, (3) work, (4) health and (5) freedom.The economic and social empowerment of all women is essential for sustainable human development.

Indian Constitution and the Rights of Prostitutes

On 21st August 1947, Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar, the first Law Minister of independent India, was appointed as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. Babasaheb was aware of various problems in India. Therefore, Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar expected that people should look at each other as human beings and a homogeneous Indian society without caste should be built from the Indian Constitution. For this, Ambedkar made a detailed study of all modern democratic constitutions, world history and external conditions and created the Constitution.

Law is a tool for rebellion against injustice. Constitutional provisions were made to promote the human values of freedom, equality, fraternity and justice. He was aware that if the country is to be developed and unity is to be maintained in the country, it cannot be done without the participation of women. In order to maintain the self-respect, self-respect and morale of women, equal rights have been given to women and no discrimination can be made on the basis of religion, race, caste, gender or place of birth.

According to the Indian Constitution, prostitution is not illegal, but it is considered illegal in some places.

1. Providing prostitution services in a public place.
2. Broker

3. Being the owner of a brothel.
4. Patient
5. Hotel

The central government has made SITA 1956 and ITPA 1986 laws to prevent prostitution from being carried out within 200 feet of a public place. The state government has made many laws.

Fundamental rights granted by the Indian Constitutional Law

Article-14: No person shall be denied equality before the law or protection of the law within the territory of India.

Article-15: There shall be no discrimination between citizens in public places on the basis of religion, caste, sex, race or place of birth.

Article-16: In providing public jobs, everyone shall be given opportunity according to educational qualification.

Article-21: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty.

Article 22: Every person, being a member of society, has the right to social security, that is, the right to protection in case of arrest.

Article 23: Trafficking in persons, forced labor, slavery are prohibited. Violation of this shall be a punishable offence under law.

Article 39(a): The government shall, in particular, formulate policies to ensure to all citizens the right to adequate means of livelihood on an equal basis with men and women.

Article 39(f): Mothers and children shall be protected from exploitation and shall be provided with protection in respect of their moral and material needs.

Article 51(a): Everyone shall have the right to participate freely in cultural life.

Article 370 and 370(a): Sexual trafficking is punishable.

Article 372 and 373: Anyone who engages in child prostitution is punishable.

Based on this, the government has implemented some social laws and policies.

Social Laws

- Protection of Civil Rights Act-1955
- Prohibition of Immoral Trade Act-1956
- Maternity Benefit Act-1961
- Child Marriage Prohibition Act-1978

- Child Justice Act-1986
- Child Labour Prohibition and Control of Labour-1986

Laws enacted by many states to stop the Devadasi system:

- Madras Devadasi Prohibition Act-1947
- Karnataka Devadasi Prohibition Act-1982
- Andhra Pradesh Devadasi Prohibition Act-1988
- Maharashtra Devadasi Abolition Act-

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Provisions in the Constitution, Measures taken for Prostitutes

Prohibition of Immoral Trade Act-1956

Punishment for running a brothel or allowing the use of ministerial premises as a brothel. Punishment for earning a living from prostitution. Punishment for receiving or inducing a person to engage in prostitution. Any person who keeps a person trapped in a place where prostitution is carried on will be liable to punishment. Provisions for engaging in prostitution in public places, luring persons in custody, placement in correctional institutions, special police control, counseling institutions, releasing minor girls and handing them over to their parents or keeping them in safe houses, safe houses, rehabilitation centers, judicial protection etc. have been made in this act.

Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act-1986

Section-3: Prohibition of publishing indecent obscene advertisements.

Section-4: No one shall produce any indecent book, pamphlet, film, article, painting, photograph, or any other image of a woman. No one shall rent, sell, or send by post any such thing.

If any person violates Section 3 and 4, he shall be liable to imprisonment for 2 years and fine.

Maharashtra Devadasi Abolition Act-2005

According to this Act, the practice of offering women as ovadasi to Hindu deities, idols, and objects has been abolished. Any person who encourages this practice shall be liable to imprisonment and fine. According to custom and tradition, offering women as devadasi or jogteen shall be an offence under the law. Also, if a devadasi marries, her children shall be considered legitimate. If a devadasi woman does not marry, the marriage shall be considered legitimate and the children and she shall have legal rights.

Maharashtra State Women's Policy-1914 (Prostituted Women)

The Supreme Court of India ruled on May 19, 2022, that prostitutes are entitled to dignity and freedom under this law. According to Article 21, prostituted women have the right to live with dignity. Therefore, they cannot be called illegal or harassed, due to which the government has taken some rehabilitative measures for these women. Declaring places/locations of prostitutes as sensitive, for the safety of women in that area, the government will take preventive action against the broker gangs, criminal networks and their interest networks (liquor shops, pubs, social clubs, parlors) etc., implementing education, health and rehabilitation schemes for children in that area, and controlling the police system to ensure that women are not taken advantage of in the face of man-made and natural disasters and brought into the business. In order to bring women involved in prostitution into the mainstream, various government grants and concessions will be provided to them through self-help groups and women's child welfare schemes, and job and business opportunities will be provided to them for economic empowerment. Providing subsistence allowance to women above 40 years of age as social security. Starting clinics, counseling, services, grievance residual centers through health services, providing HIV services and counseling regularly, relaxing the documents required to get government concessions, information has been given about the role of the police in prostitution.

Many initiatives are being implemented for prostitution at the government and semi-government levels through the fundamental rights of the Indian Constitution. From May 1, 1990, many schemes were implemented to stop prostitution in India. Under the chairmanship of V. Mahajan, there was a scheme for the protection, care and rehabilitation of victim women and adolescent girls. Social activities were implemented for girls below the age of 18 by providing security to them. Also, self-employment training is being provided to prostituted women under the Women and Child Welfare Scheme and Mahatma Phule Scheme to free them from prostitution. It becomes difficult to support their families, so these women can start their own businesses after training to support themselves and their families. For this, self-help groups, grants and loans are being provided through NGOs.

Conclusion

Babasaheb has presented his thoughts on women's liberation through speeches, writings, the creation of Hindu Code Bill and the rights of women in the Constitution. Even today, in the 21st century, prostitution has become a serious problem. These women are still seen as consumer goods and are being bought and sold. It is a very shameful thing that these women have to sell their bodies to meet their financial needs. Internationally, human trafficking is happening on a large scale for

prostitution. In some countries, this business is illegal and in some countries it has been given legal recognition. However, in India, through the efforts of Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar, a safety net has been created by making laws, policies, and rehabilitation measures for prostituted women. When the implementation of this Constitution becomes strict, it is necessary for prostitutes to organize themselves and fight for their rights in the Constitution, which will be a tribute to Babasaheb.

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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 Maharastra Vidyapeeth, Pune
Dr. Geeta Joshi
Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Tilak Maharastra 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 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 highlight 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		
Entre-preneur	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-entre-preneur	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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Examining the Plight of Women's Education in Modern Times using Ambedkar's Lens of Social Democratic Liberalism

Smita Warghade
Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth

Abstract

Women's participation in formal education in India remains low. The NSS data indicate that the gender gap in the enrollment ratio for primary education is nearly the same for both boys and girls. However, The gender gap in education begins to widen at the secondary education level. Specifically, the gap increases by 3% for both secondary and higher secondary education, and by 4% for higher education. Notably, the increase in the gender gap at the secondary and higher secondary levels is much sharper for girls from Scheduled Castes (SC), with a rise of 7%, ST (17%), and the Muslim (20%) community, as compared to the average education enrolment in the boys. In the context of higher education, the participation rates for women are 9% for Scheduled Castes (SC), 13% for Scheduled Tribes (ST), and 12% for the Muslim community

These statistics highlight the challenges that women face in accessing formal education in India. To understand the underlying causes of the difficulties surrounding women's education today, it is essential to examine the issue through the lens of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's analysis of Indian society. The paper undertakes such an examination to explore the possible structural elements of the Indian society that hinder women's education. It proposes that Ambedkars theory of social democratic liberalism is the core framework to understand the challenges of women's education. Ambedkar was an ardent liberalist. However, considering the social hierarchy in Indian society, Ambedkar emphasized the importance of social rights, including the right to education, for women and other marginalized groups. His proposal to incorporate social rights within the broader framework of liberal democracy represents a fundamental structural reform aimed at the emancipation of women. However, such a reform has remained half-baked and adversely affected the participation of women in formal education. Racial segregation is prevalent even in modern times, not only in the form of spatial segregation but also in the form of cultural segregation. For example, endogamy is still practiced as

the core cultural norm among the orthodox upper caste families. The structure of multilayered discrimination based on gender, class, caste, and patriarchy leads to an overlapping and interdependent system of intersectionality that adversely affects educational opportunities for women. Women face several hurdles in gaining equal opportunities in life's social and economic spheres. The gender gap in education is an important indicator of a lack of equality. Such practices undermine Ambedkar's vision of social liberalism and contradict the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. The paper emphasizes the need to revisit Ambedkars core principles and earnestly apply them in everyday life to overcome the perils of the gender gap in the field of education.

Keywords: Educational gender gap, Ambedkar, social liberalism, democracy, intersectionality.

Introduction

Educational attainment was the core strategy proposed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for the emancipation of the downtrodden and underprivileged sections of society. He was vocal about the participation of women in the process of emancipation. However, even in modern India, women have severely lagged behind men in educational achievements. This calls for an examination of the educational gender gap through the lens of Ambedkars thoughts and analysis of the perils of Indian society undertake this examination. The paper first undertakes the analysis of the educational attainment based on enrolment data provided by the National Sample Survey 75th round (NSS, 2018). The findings from this data are analyzed through the lens of Ambedkars thoughts on social democratic liberalism. The paper further discusses the failure of this ideal of Ambedkar in modern times, which gives rise to the lack of educational attainment among women. Ambedkar thoughts related to Education and social democratic liberalism

Ambedkar's Thoughts on Education and Social Democratic Liberalism

Unjust ideals based on social hierarchy, such as caste, prompted Ambedkar to seek an alternative ideology. He believed in liberal values that provide individuals with freedom of opportunity. However, he also recognized the significance of social life and the necessity for state intervention to uphold equality and social rights, particularly for deprived and vulnerable groups in society. Equality is a fundamental principle of socialism, but socialism can also lead to the imposition of values on society through a dictatorial approach. Ambedkar advocated for democratic ideals that ensure political representation for all, with equal voting rights. Hence, Ambedkar proposed a blend of social ideals within democratic liberalism, termed Social Democratic Liberalism (Velaskar, 2012). One such social right is in the form of the

right to education, especially for women and the deprived classes. Ambedkar highlighted the importance of formal education for women as a crucial part of liberating lower castes and other marginalized groups in society. He believed that, under the philosophy of social democratic liberalism, women should have equal opportunities.. He proposed the Hindu Code Bill to ensure equal inheritance rights and to abolish endogamy (Singh, 2020). He also highlighted the importance of equal educational opportunities for women by advocating for their rights through democratic representation in government and ensuring the government provides equal access to education. It was anticipated that social ideals would lead society to challenge the patriarchal system and promote gender equality. Support for women's education would come not only from the government but also from families and the community as a whole. The Gender Gap in Educational Attainment

Gender Gap in Educational Attainment

Historically, women have lagged behind men in educational attainment due to limited access to education. This gender discrimination has been addressed through various government policies and programs aimed at promoting women's education (UGC, 2008). However, even today, significant gender gaps in education persist, as indicated by the latest National Sample Survey (75th round, 2017-18). Tables 1 and 2 present data on literacy levels and educational enrollment among women.

Table 1 : Literacy Among Women (NSS, 2018)

Social Groups of Women	Rural	Urban	All
1. ST Women	58.8%	79.6%	61.3%
2. SC Women	60.9%	75.3%	63.9%
3. OBC Women	64.2%	80.5%	68.9%
4. Other Women	74.5%	88.6%	80.6%
5. All Women	65%	82.8%	70.3%

Source: Analyzed by the Author based on data from NSS, 2018

Women from the ST and SC categories from rural areas are the most deprived of education and show lower levels of literacy. A similar trend is observed in educational enrollment. The enrollment rate for higher secondary education is below 50%, and for higher education, it is only 11% among Scheduled Tribe (ST) women. This low level of educational enrollment is also evident among Scheduled Caste (SC) women. Refer to Table 2 for the educational enrollment statistics among women (NSS, 2018)

Table 2 : Educational Enrolment Among Women (NSS, 2018)

Social Groups of Women	Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Education Levels	
	Higher Secondary	Above Higher Secondary
1. ST Women	46.5%	11%
2. SC Women	57.6%	16%
3. OBC Women	69.2%	20.4%
4. Other Women	76.4%	29%
5. All Women	65.9%	20.7%

Source: Analyzed by the Author based on data from NSS, 2018

The gender gap in literacy and educational enrollment was analyzed using data from the National Sample Survey (NSS). This analysis explores the differences in literacy rates and enrollment stages between men and women across various social groups. The findings are presented in Tables 3 and 4, which illustrate the gender gap in literacy based on NSS data from 2018.

Table 3 : Gender Gap in Literacy (NSS, 2018)

Social Groups of Women and Men	Reduction in Literacy Percentage of women compared to men (%)
1. ST women compared with ST men	20.9%
2. SC women compared with SC men	20.4%
3. OBC women compared with OBC men	18.4%
4. Other women compared with other men	11.2%
5. All women compared with all men	17.0%

Source: Analyzed by the Author based on data from NSS, 2018

ST and SC women have around a 20% gender gap in literacy as compared to a small gap of 11.2% among other categories. In case of educational enrolment, there is a severe gap of 37% for higher education enrolment among women and men in the ST group. The same is just 5.8% in the other category.

The NSS data shows that the gender gap based on the enrolment ratio for primary education is almost similar between boys and girls. However, the gender gaps start increasing from the secondary education level. The increase in the gender gap in education enrolment levels at secondary and higher secondary is much sharper for girls from SC (7%), ST (17%), and the Muslim (20%) community, as compared to the average education enrolment among all boys (Jotheeswaran, 2021). In case of higher education, it is 9%, 13%, and 12% among SC, ST, and the Muslim

Table 4 : Gender Gap in Educational Enrolment (NSS, 2018)

Social Groups of Women and Men	Reduction in Percentage in GER levels of women compared to men (%)	
	Higher Secondary	Above Higher Secondary
1. ST women compared with ST men	20.5%	37.1%
2. SC women compared with SC men	7.2%	17.9%
3. OBC women compared with OBC men	3.9%	19.4%
4. Other women compared with other men	2.2%	5.8%
5. All women compared with all men	6.3%	16.2%

Source: Analyzed by the Author based on data from NSS, 2018

community, respectively (Jotheeswaran, 2021). This shows the plight of women's participation in formal education in India.

Threat to Social Democratic Liberalism and Gender Gap in Education

The root cause of the severe educational gender gap can be traced to the failure to reach Ambedkars ideals of Social Democratic Liberalism. Liberty is compromised in society, which can be seen in the form of modern-day endogamy or the lack of participation of women in the labour force. Liberty is severely undermined due to the strong influence of patriarchy in Indian society. Patriarchy has closer links to caste, which produces lower educational attainment among SC and ST women, particularly (Arya, 2020). It also affects economic and financial freedom for women. The employment rate among women is 22% as compared to 71.2% for men (Jotheeswaran, 2021). Poverty is an important contributing factor to lower educational attainments, especially for higher education (UGC, 2008) The importance of social rights has been ignored, resulting in a delay in enforcing the right to education. Democratic participation for women has remained ineffective. Reservations exist for women in Panchayat Raj Institutions, but they have often been merely symbolic due to the influence of their husbands in political decision-making. There have been no reservations in Parliament. Recently, this has been accepted, but its implementation is still far from reality. In the recent 18th Lok Sabha, only 13.6% of the members are women. In the recent 18th Lok Sabha, only 13.6 % are women members. A mere 3.1% representation of SC/ST women shows that the social democratic ideals of Ambedkar are yet to be achieved in its fullest form.

An erosion of social, democratic, and liberal ideals envisioned by Ambedkar has negatively impacted women's development, particularly due to insufficient social support for educational attainment. It leads to multiple layers of discrimination

based on class, caste, and gender. Women face several hurdles in gaining equal opportunities in the social and economic spheres of life. This translates into the gender gap related to education, as found in the analysis of the NSS data presented in the previous section. It is the result of the overall system of inequity and discrimination faced by women.

Conclusion

Educational attainment of women suffers because the society and the State have largely ignored Ambedkar's philosophy of Social Democratic Liberalism. Women are not only lagging behind men in higher education, but they are also lagging in basic educational attainment, such as literacy. There is a need to revisit and revitalize Ambedkar's ideals of Social Democratic Liberalism for womens emancipation through educational opportunities. Women's participation in the democratic process will enhance the demand for closing the gap in gender education. Government initiatives with regard to ease of access for women's education in the form of women's hostels and women's scholarships are needed in large numbers. Social ills like early age marriage need to addressed to ensure continuation of education. More liberal labour market that promotes women participation along with pay parity will help incentivize families and society to promote women education. Advancing Ambedkar's vision of equality can dismantle patriarchy, allowing women to move beyond traditional housewife roles. This transformation requires increased representation of women in education and employment. The vision of social democratic liberalism is an approach to the empowerment and emancipation of women from different castes and classes.

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Contributions to Women's Rights and Empowerment

Sanjay Pundalik Kedar

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Vivekanand Arts, Sardar Dalipsing Commerce and Science College, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, (Aurangabad) 431 001.

Dr. Hares A. Qureshi

Guide, Asst. Professor, Vivekanand Arts, Sardar, Dalipsing Commerce and Science College, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar 431 001

Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive exploration of Dr. Babashaeb Ambedkar as a visionary thinker, reformer, and the 'Man of Millennium' whose ideas and actions transformed the socio-political landscape of India. Dr. Ambedkar's legacy as a crusader for women's rights and social justice continues to resonate across time.The paper examines Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's multidimensional contributions to women's rights and empowerment in India as a jurist, law minister, constitutional framer, social theorist, and movement leader. It synthesizes his interventions in constitutional design (fundamental rights and directive principles), personal law reform (the Hindu Code Bill), labor and social policy, and community mobilization. It argues that Ambedkar advanced a radical, intersectional agenda centered on dignity, equality, and social democracy, locating women's subordination at the nexus of caste, patriarchy, and economic exploitation. The paper demonstrates how Ambedkar's jurisprudential commitments—formal equality, substantive equality, and protective discrimination were encoded into India's constitutional text and subsequent legal-judicial practice. It also maps his political praxis that brought women into anti-caste struggles and public life. Finally, it evaluates Ambedkar's legacies and limitations in light of contemporary challenges: gender-based violence, labor-market exclusion, personal law pluralism, digital divides, and the specific vulnerabilities of Dalit, Adivasi, Bahujan, and minority women. The analysis concludes that Ambedkar's normative framework and institutional imagination remain vital resources for advancing gender justice in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Ambedkar; women's rights; gender justice; Hindu Code Bill; Constitution of India; substantive equality; caste; intersectionality; social democracy.

Introduction

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891–1956) well known as philosopher, jurist, economist, social reformer and statesman whose contributions to social transformation and justice have earned him recognition as the ‘ Man of the Millennium’ His ideas reshaped the moral and institutional foundations of modern India. While Dr. Ambedkar’s contribution to the annihilation of caste is widely acknowledged , his pioneering work for women’s rights and social justice remains equally profound. .Dr. Ambedkar is widely acclaimed as the chief architect of the Constitution of India and as one of the most influential public intellectuals of the twentieth century. Dr. B.R.Ambedkar a man of the millennium with his noble virtues, supreme merits. He has set multiple ideals, role models and source of inspiration in many ways for millions with his great personality. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s pioneering role in the anti-caste movement is well recognized, his contributions to women’s rights and empowerment are comparatively less foregrounded in mainstream discourse. Ambedkar’s thought and practice, however, placed women at the center of social transformation. From his early writings on the degeneration of women’s status in Brahmanical patriarchy to his legislative advocacy for personal law reform, labor protections, and maternal relief, Ambedkar articulated a comprehensive theory of gender justice and pursued concrete institutional change.

This paper offers a full-length study of Ambedkar’s contributions to women’s rights. It situates his ideas in intellectual history, analyzes his constitutional and legislative interventions, reconstructs his social and political praxis, and evaluates his contemporary relevance.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 outlines the historical and intellectual context; Section 2 explores Ambedkar’s feminist principles; Section 3 assesses constitutional design; Section 4 studies the Hindu Code Bill project; Section 5 reviews labor, social policy, and administrative action; Section 6 documents movement-building with women; 7. Impact of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Vision on Indian Society and Women’s Empowerment Section 8 presents an impact assessment and critical perspectives; Section 9 derives implications for current policy; and Section 10 concludes.

Historical and Intellectual Context

Ambedkar’s engagement with gender must be read against the background of colonially mediated reform debates, nationalist negotiations over social customs, and the entrenched power of caste. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reformers—Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai, and others—had already foregrounded issues of widow remarriage, child marriage, sati abolition, women’s education, and property rights. Ambedkar extended and radicalized this tradition by locating

women's oppression within the institutional logic of caste, particularly the Brahmanical insistence on endogamy, control over women's sexuality and labor, and ritual purity. In essays and speeches, he argued that caste reproduces itself by policing women's bodies; hence the annihilation of caste was inseparable from women's liberation.

Ambedkar's transnational education—exposure to liberal constitutionalism, political economy, pragmatism, and social-democratic thought informed his approach: rights must be real, enforceable, and supported by public institutions (schools, health, labor protections), not merely proclaimed. He combined formal equality with substantive measures to dismantle structural hierarchies.

Ambedkar's Feminist Principles

1. From Formal to Substantive Equality

Ambedkar insisted that legal equality must be complemented by social and economic democracy. Protective discrimination and enabling provisions for women and children were not 'concessions' but instruments to realize equal citizenship amid material inequalities.

2. Intersection of Caste and Gender

He theorized the co-constitution of caste and patriarchy: endogamy, purity-pollution, and graded inequality intensify women's control and exclusion. He therefore urged reform not only in family and community but in economic structures—land, labor, wages, and education.

3. Freedom in the Private Sphere

Ambedkar argued that liberty and equality must transform the 'private' domain of family and religion. Personal law reform—marriage, divorce, adoption, guardianship, and property—was central to his feminist jurisprudence.

4. Education, Work, and Public Voice

He consistently prioritized women's education, entry into remunerative labor, and participation in political organizations as the bedrock of self-respect and collective power.

Constitutional Design for Gender Justice

Ambedkar's imprint on the Constitution of India institute ionalized gender equality across multiple axes:

- **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** The equality scheme (Articles 14–16) guarantees equality before law, equal protection, non-discrimination on grounds including sex, and equality of opportunity in public employment.

- **Enabling Provision for Women and Children:** Article 15(3) explicitly authorizes special provisions for women and children—an affirmation of substantive equality and social protection.
- **Abolition of Untouchability and Forced Labor:** Articles 17 and 23 dismantle practices that disproportionately burden Dalit women through humiliation and economic coercion.
- **Directive Principles:** Article 39 mandates adequate means of livelihood for men and women and equal pay for equal work; Article 42 calls for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief; Article 45 (now 21A in effect) promotes education—critical for women's empowerment.
- **Fundamental Duties and Representation:** Later constitutional practice and statutory schemes expanded women's participation in local governance, echoing Ambedkar's emphasis on democratic representation.

Taken together, these provisions embed a theory of substantive equality: the state must act to remove historical disadvantages and enable women's full and equal citizenship.

Personal Law Reform: The Hindu Code Bill Project

As independent India's first Law Minister and as Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambedkar championed a comprehensive Hindu Code Bill to modernize and secularize personal law. The project proposed equal property rights for daughters, reforms to marriage and divorce, abolition of several patriarchal disabilities, and rationalization of adoption and guardianship rules. Ambedkar regarded the code as a test of India's commitment to democracy: without gender justice in the family, constitutional promises would ring hollow.

Despite intense opposition, parts of the reform agenda ultimately materialized between 1955–56 through separate enactments (Hindu Marriage, Adoption and Maintenance, Minority and Guardianship, and Succession Acts). Ambedkar famously resigned from the cabinet when the original comprehensive bill stalled, underscoring his principled stance that women's equality was non-negotiable.

Labor, Social Policy, and Administrative Action

Ambedkar linked gender justice to labor and welfare policy. As a policymaker he supported protections for women workers, regulation of hours and conditions of work, maternity benefits, and social insurance. He emphasized that women's economic independence—through fair wages, safe workplaces, and access to credit—was essential to dismantling patriarchal control. His broader welfare vision included public education, hostels and scholarships for girls, and health infrastructure, with special attention to marginalized communities.

Movement-Building and Women's Leadership

Ambedkar's anti-caste movement created spaces for women's political participation through local associations, conference platforms, and community organizations. He urged women to reject oppressive customs—purdah, enforced widowhood, child marriage—and to claim education and public voice. Women participated in satyagrahas, temple-entry and civic-rights movements, and later in the conversion to Buddhism. This collective mobilization nurtured Dalit feminist thought—centering dignity, bodily autonomy, and freedom from caste-sexual violence.

Impact of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Vision on Indian Society and Women's Empowerment

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's inclusion of gender justice and equality principles in the Indian Constitution transformed the socio-legal position of women in India. His vision established a new moral and constitutional framework that continues to influence laws, polices and attitudes toward women's empowerment.

1. Constitutional Empowerment and Legal Equality

Dr. Ambedkar ensured that equality and justice became fundamental principles of the Indian Constitution, Articles 14,15and 16 guarantee equality before law, non discrimination on grounds of sex, and equal opportunity in employment. Article 15(3) allows the state to make special provisions for women and children, reflecting Dr. Ambedkar's belief in substantive equality. Articles 39 and 42 under the Directive Principles provide for equal pay, humane working conditions, and maternity relief.

2. Social Transformation and Change in Attitudes

Dr. Ambedkar's constitutional principles inspired numerous laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act (1955), Hindu Succession Act (1956), Maternity benefit Act (1961), Domestic Violence Act (2005) and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013). Each of these legal reforms advanced women's right and safety.

3. Economic and Political Empowerment

Labor reforms initiated by Dr. Ambedkar laid the foundation for women's entry into the workforce. His influence extended to the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments (1992-93), which granted 33% reservation for women in Panchayatraj institutions, promoting grassroots political empowerment.

4. Cultural and Ideological Transformation

Dr. Ambedkar's rejection of Manusmriti and advocacy for equality challenged patriarchal norms and redefined womanhood. His ideas inspired Dalit feminist

movements that link caste and gender struggles under the banner of Ambedkarite feminism.

Impact Assessment and Critical Perspectives

1. Jurisprudential Afterlives

Courts and legislatures have drawn on the Constitution's equality scheme to expand women's rights in pay equity, workplace protection, inheritance, sexual harassment, and reproductive autonomy. Feminist advocacy has leveraged Article 15(3) to defend affirmative measures.

2. Incomplete Realizations

Implementation gaps persist: unequal care burdens, low labor-force participation, violence against women (including caste- and religion-based violence), and digital/financial exclusion. Personal law pluralism still yields uneven outcomes across communities; intersectional harms faced by Dalit, Adivasi, Bahujan, and minority women remain acute.

3. Debates and Limitations

Scholars debate the scope of state-led reform and the balance between community autonomy and individual rights. Critics also note that codification chiefly addressed Hindu personal law first, leaving broader family law reform for later, uneven progress. Nevertheless, Ambedkar's insistence that democracy must enter the home remains a critical benchmark.

4. Lasting Societal Outcomes

Women's legal status, education levels, and participation in political and economic spheres have improved dramatically. The transformation of Indian women– from subjugation to empowerment- stands as living evidence of Dr. Ambedkar's legacy. His vision of liberty, equality and fraternity continues to guide India's path toward a just and inclusive society.

Contemporary Policy Implications

Building on Ambedkar's framework, contemporary policy should: (1) reinforce social protection and care infrastructure (maternity benefits, childcare, health insurance); (2) guarantee safe, formal, and well-paid work for women, with strong enforcement mechanisms; (3) invest in girls' and women's education, especially STEM and digital skills; (4) expand credit and asset-ownership pathways for women; (5) harmonize personal laws toward gender equality while respecting fundamental rights; (6) address caste- and community-specific vulnerabilities through targeted programs; and (7) strengthen access to justice, including legal aid, fast-track processes for gender-based violence, and survivor support systems.

Conclusion

Ambedkar fused radical critique with institution-building. He linked the annihilation of caste to the liberation of women and inscribed this vision into constitutional architecture, legislative reform, and mass politics. While the promise of equality remains partially fulfilled, his insistence on substantive equality and social democracy continues to offer a powerful roadmap. Advancing women's freedom today requires renewed attention to Ambedkar's central insight: equality is not a passive state but an active, collective project sustained by just laws, democratic institutions, and vigilant social movements.

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Enduring Legacy: Championing Women's Education as a Catalyst for Social Justice

Ms Swanandi Indrajeet Pawar
PhD scholar, Karve Institute of Social Sciences, Pune
Dr. Manisha Shukla
Professor, MVP's College of Social Work, Nashik

Abstract

Dr.Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a notable figure in India's socio-political landscape, is honored for his persistent fight against caste discrimination and his contribution to the Indian Constitution. However, his insightful commitment to women's education is often neglected. This document aims to light up Dr. Ambedkar's noteworthy contributions to the empowerment of women through education. By studying his legislative initiatives, educational institutions, and scholarly arguments, this paper claims that Ambedkar perceived women's education as a critical instrument for achieving social justice, economic autonomy, and political equality. His visualization for women's education went beyond mere literacy; he envisioned a transformative education that fostered critical thinking, nurtured self-reliance, and empowered women to challenge unjust social norms and structures. This paper eventually concludes that Dr. Ambedkar's legacy in women's education remains significant and inspirational in the ongoing struggle for gender equality in India and outside.

Keywords: Education, Hindu code bill, Women rights.

Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, lovingly known as Babasaheb, was a visionary social activist who dedicated his life to eliminating social inequalities, particularly those encountered by the marginalized communities in India. While his battles against caste discrimination are widely acknowledged, his firm dedication to women's rights and empowerment, specifically through education, deserves bigger attention. Ambedkar believed that education was the foundation of social upliftment and a crucial tool for women to get freedom from the restraints of patriarchal dominance,

caste repression, and economic exploitation. He established that an educated woman was not only empowered individually but also able of transforming her family, community, and society.

Ambedkar's Vision of Women's Education

Ambedkar's approach to women's education had emerged out of his understanding of the injustices faced by Indian society women. He distinguished that woman, particularly those from marginalized communities, were doubly deprived due to their gender and caste. He stated that education was the key to cracking their potential and supporting them to participate fully in all parts of life.

Ambedkar's view was far more than just literacy- He advocated for a holistic education that would:

- **Build analytical perspective:** He claimed that education should prepare women with the competence to analyze critically the social norms and set ups that perpetuate their oppression
- **Foster Self-Reliance:** Education was seen as a means to obtain economic independence, smashing the cycle of dependence and vulnerability.
- **Promote Self-Respect and Dignity:** Education would capacitate women to claim their rights, strive respect, and live with dignity.
- **Encourage Social Reform:** He stated that educated women would be drivers of social change, actively working to demolish oppressive practices and uphold equality.

Legislative Initiatives and Constitutional Provisions

As a key author of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar played a fundamental role in protecting conditions that safeguarded women's rights as well as supported their education. Some of his noteworthy contributions include:

- **Fundamental Rights:** The Constitution of India says that every citizen is equal before the law and every citizen is assured with equal protection of the laws, comprising of women (Article 14). It also forbids discrimination based on sex (Article 15).
- **Directive Principles of State Policy:** These principles assign the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 (Article 45), thereby advocating access to education for girls.
- **Hindu Code Bills:** Although greatly contested, Ambedkar campaigned the Hindu Code Bills, it targeted to bring reforms in Hindu personal laws relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption. These bills, although partially passed, sought to give women greater rights and protections within the family structure. He steps down from his position as

Law Minister when faced with overwhelming opposition to the comprehensive enactment of the Hindu Code Bills, demonstrating his firm commitment to gender equality.

Educational Institutions and Community Mobilization

Ambedkar actively encouraged the establishment of educational institutions for Dalit communities, which also helped women from those communities. He agreed that mainstream educational institutions were often inaccessible or discriminatory towards marginalized groups. He played a pivotal role in establishing:

- **People's Education Society:** Established in 1945, the organisation aimed to offer educational openings for all, despite caste or creed, with a special focus on marginalized communities.
- **Milind College, Aurangabad:** This college, established by the People's Education Society, offered access to higher education for many Dalit students, involving women, who would otherwise have been declined such opportunities.

Additionally, Ambedkar utilized his effective speeches and writings to raise awareness about the importance of women's education. He promoted parents to educate their daughters and insisted women to actively pursue their education. He trusted that education was not merely a personal pursuit but a social responsibility, essential for the progress of the entire community.

Ambedkar's Philosophical Arguments for Women's Education

Ambedkar's advocacy for women's education was underpinned by a deep philosophical understanding of the interconnectedness between education, freedom, and social justice. He argued that:

- **Education is a Prerequisite for Liberation:** He trusted that true liberation required is not limited to political and economic freedom but also intellectual freedom, which could only be obtained through education.
- **Education Challenges unfair hierarchy of cast:** He saw education as a robust tool for confronting the rigid social hierarchy of the caste system, allowing individuals to rise above their assigned status based on merit and ability.
- **Women's Education Benefits Society as a Whole:** He stated that an educated female population contributes to a more just, equitable, and prosperous society.

Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contribution to women's education is an integral part of his wider vision for social justice and equality. He recognized that education was

not merely a means of obtaining knowledge but a transformative power that could empower women to challenge oppressive social norms, achieve financial independence, and participate entirely in the political and social life of the nation. His legislative leads, educational institutions, and philosophical advice laid a strong foundation for the progression of women's education in India.

While substantial progress has been made in women's education since Ambedkar's time, challenges remain. Gender inequalities in access to education, specifically in rural areas and among marginalized communities, is still a challenge. Furthermore, one needs to be cognizant about education quality and its significant role in catering to needs of women.

Dr. Ambedkar's legacy in women's education continues as motivation to strive for a society which is just and equitable, where every woman could have the opportunity to realize their full potential through education. His vision of transformative education, which fosters critical thinking, nurtures self-reliance, and encourages individuals to challenge oppressive structures, remains a powerful guide for continuing efforts to promote gender equality in India and universally. His work helps as a reminder that investment in women's education is not just a moral constraint, but also a crucial strategy for achieving sustainable development and constructing a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.

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Exploring the Relationship between Academic Pressure, Social Support, and Mental Health among Women MPSC Aspirants in Pune City

Ms. Pooja D. Bhalerao
M.Phil in PSW, Ph.D Scholar, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune
Dr. Prakash S. Yadav
Co-Author, Reaserch Guide and Head, Department of Social Work, Tilak Maharastra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Abstract

Preparing for the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) examination is highly stressful, particularly for women aspirants in Pune City, who are often required to balance intense academic pressure with deep-rooted societal expectations and gendered roles. This study explores the relationship between academic stress, social support, and mental health among women MPSC aspirants within the broader framework of women's rights and social justice. Existing research indicates that nearly 50% of women preparing for competitive examinations experience significant stress, with around 30% reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression (Garg et al., 2020). Furthermore, approximately 60% of women face societal pressure to simultaneously manage family responsibilities alongside their academic aspirations, thereby intensifying psychological distress (Shukla et al., 2018).

Using a survey-based research design, the study examines levels of academic pressure, availability of social support from family, peers, and mentors, and their impact on mental well-being. Preliminary findings reveal that nearly 40% of women aspirants report inadequate social support, which is strongly associated with increased levels of stress and anxiety.

The findings of this study resonate with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of women's empowerment, which emphasized education, equality, and social justice as fundamental rights rather than privileges. The continued psychological burden experienced by women aspirants reflects persistent structural and social barriers that hinder equal opportunities, underscoring the relevance of Ambedkar's thoughts in today's socio-political context. The study highlights the necessity of creating

supportive academic, familial, and institutional environments to promote mental well-being, dignity, and resilience among women aspirants, thereby contributing to holistic empowerment and social justice.

Keywords: MPSC Aspirants, Academic Pressure, Social Support, Mental Health, Stress Management.

Introduction

The pursuit of competitive government jobs in India has increasingly become a source of academic and psychological stress, particularly among women aspirants. One such examination, the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC), is highly competitive and demands intense preparation over extended periods. Women preparing for this exam in urban centers like Pune City often juggle multiple responsibilities, including academic rigor, societal expectations, and family obligations. These overlapping roles and pressures can significantly affect their mental health, often leading to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and emotional burnout.

The broader context of competitive exam preparation in India is fraught with challenges. According to national surveys, a significant percentage of aspirants report feelings of burnout, low self-esteem, and isolation during their preparation period. However, for women, these stressors are compounded by gendered expectations, such as caretaking roles within families, limited financial autonomy, and social scrutiny regarding their career choices and personal lives. In a cultural setting where women are often expected to prioritize familial responsibilities over personal aspirations, the experience of preparing for a demanding examination like the MPSC becomes doubly challenging.

Mental health among students and competitive exam aspirants has gained increasing academic and policy attention over the past decade. Studies have revealed that persistent academic pressure, when not managed effectively, can lead to psychological disorders, including anxiety and depression (Misra & Castillo, 2004; Garg et al., 2020). Moreover, the lack of adequate social support systems—be it emotional, financial, or motivational—has been linked to deteriorating mental well-being among aspirants (Shukla et al., 2018). In this context, the availability and quality of social support play a crucial buffering role. In Pune City, a hub for MPSC coaching centers and aspirants, the issue is particularly visible. Female aspirants face a unique intersection of academic ambition and cultural norms. Despite their strong educational backgrounds and aspirations for public service, many struggle silently with emotional distress. This research was designed to investigate how academic pressure, combined with varying degrees of social support, impacts the mental health of these women.

The study aims to fill a gap in localized, gender-specific research by focusing on the lived experiences of 60 female MPSC aspirants in Pune. Through a mixed-method approach, it examines the levels of academic stress, the availability and quality of social support, and the psychological toll of balancing preparation with other life demands. Ultimately, the goal is to offer insights that could inform mental health interventions, support programs, and policy recommendations tailored to women in similar academic environments.

Literature Review

Academic pressure, social support, and mental health have been widely studied, but less attention has been given to the unique challenges faced by women preparing for competitive exams like the MPSC in India. The MPSC exam demands long-term dedication, and women aspirants often juggle intense study schedules with traditional family roles, leading to heightened stress.

Studies show academic stress is closely linked to poor mental health. Misra and Castillo (2004) found that prolonged academic pressure contributes to anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion. Garg et al. (2020) reported that 50% of women preparing for competitive exams experience high stress, and 30% show signs of mental health issues.

Social support plays a key role in managing this stress. According to Cohen and Wills (1985), emotional and practical support can buffer stress effects. Yet, many women lack adequate support or face conflicting expectations at home. Shukla et al. (2018) revealed that 60% of female civil service aspirants in urban India are also expected to handle domestic duties, compounding their stress.

Cultural and gender norms further intensify this pressure. Kumar and Gupta (2017) describe the "double burden syndrome"—the expectation that women must excel academically while fulfilling traditional roles. This often results in emotional fatigue and decreased academic focus.

Few studies have specifically examined women MPSC aspirants, particularly in cities like Pune where access to resources coexists with societal constraints. Lack of mentorship also contributes to feelings of isolation, especially among women from conservative or low-income backgrounds (Rani & Thomas, 2019).

In sum, academic stress, limited social support, and rigid gender norms create a challenging environment for women aspirants. This study aims to address the gap by focusing on the lived experiences of women MPSC aspirants in Pune, providing gender-sensitive insights into their mental health needs.

Aim: To explore the relationship between academic pressure, social support, and mental health among women preparing for the MPSC examination in Pune

City, with the goal of identifying key factors that influence their psychological well-being and offering strategies for support.

Objectives

1. To assess the academic pressure experienced by women MPSC aspirants in Pune City.
2. To analyze the role of social support from family, friends, and mentors in influencing their mental health.
3. To examine the relationship between academic pressure, social support, and the mental well-being of women aspirants.

Research Methodology

Research Design: This research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative open-ended responses. The rationale for this design is to not only measure levels of stress, support, and mental health statistically but also understand the personal experiences and narratives behind these numbers.

Participants: A total of 60 female MPSC aspirants in Pune participated in the study. Participants were aged between 21 and 32 years, with most of them either enrolled in coaching centers or preparing independently. Inclusion criteria were that participants must be actively preparing for the MPSC exam and residing in Pune for at least 6 months

Data Collection Procedure: Surveys were distributed both online and in person at coaching centers and libraries in Pune between March and April 2025. Ethical clearance was obtained, and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was taken prior to data collection.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, frequency). Qualitative responses were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns and unique insights related to stress and support systems.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of data gathered from 60 female MPSC aspirants in Pune reveals a complex interplay between academic pressure, levels of social support, and their overall mental health. A substantial portion of participants reported experiencing high academic stress during their preparation period. Many indicated that they dedicated more than eight hours daily to studying, yet still felt inadequately prepared. This sense of academic insufficiency was further exacerbated by the high expectations placed on them, both personally and socially, to succeed in what is considered a prestigious and competitive examination. The fear of failure was a

recurrent theme in the survey responses, suggesting that the pressure was not merely self-imposed, but also deeply rooted in external perceptions of success and family honor.

Academic stress translated into visible symptoms of mental health strain among many participants. Over half of the respondents showed indications of moderate to severe anxiety, while approximately one-third reported symptoms consistent with clinical depression. Several women shared that the pressure to perform was relentless and accompanied by physical signs of exhaustion, such as sleep disturbances and frequent headaches. This confirms previous findings that link academic pressure to psychological distress, particularly in high-stakes educational environments. For many women, studying was not simply a means to career advancement, but a test of their worthiness within the family and societal framework.

Social support emerged as a critical factor influencing the mental well-being of these aspirants. While a minority of participants described their families as highly supportive—providing emotional encouragement, allowing flexible routines, or offering financial support—many others expressed dissatisfaction with the help they received. About 40 percent of the participants felt that they lacked adequate emotional or practical support, which intensified their stress and feelings of isolation. For instance, several women shared that although their families supported their decision to study for the MPSC, they still expected them to fulfill household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, or taking care of younger siblings. This dual expectation placed a disproportionate burden on female aspirants and limited their ability to fully dedicate themselves to exam preparation.

The qualitative responses provided additional depth to the survey data. Participants frequently expressed frustration at the unspoken cultural expectations that framed their academic goals as secondary to traditional gender roles. Some women recounted instances where family members or neighbors questioned the need for them to pursue a government job, asking why they did not instead focus on marriage or domestic duties. Others shared how guilt and internal conflict arose from the tension between pursuing their ambitions and fulfilling their familial duties. This emotional strain, though difficult to quantify, appeared repeatedly in personal narratives and underscores the emotional labor required to sustain motivation under such conditions.

Interestingly, women who were living independently—away from families—often reported slightly lower levels of stress, even though they faced logistical and financial challenges. Many of them felt that being physically removed from the daily pressures of traditional households allowed them to focus more effectively on their studies. In contrast, those living at home felt emotionally constrained, constantly

navigating between study commitments and household obligations. These findings reflect broader patterns observed in gender studies literature, which often highlight how proximity to traditional family structures can reinforce gendered expectations and emotional dependence.

Another recurring insight was the role of mentorship and peer connection. Participants repeatedly expressed a desire for guidance from women who had previously cleared the MPSC exam or were working in civil service roles. The absence of visible female role models created a gap in both motivation and practical advice, contributing to feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt. Aspirants also shared that peer networks could be either helpful or competitive, depending on the environment. In spaces where collaboration and emotional sharing were encouraged, stress levels appeared lower. However, in highly competitive settings, some women reported feeling even more inadequate and demotivated.

The results of this study align with broader research emphasizing the importance of a strong support system in educational success and emotional stability. Social support, especially when it is empathetic and consistent, acts as a buffer against the psychological toll of academic stress. However, when such support is absent or conditional, it may do more harm than good. Women who felt judged by their families for spending time away from household duties, or who were made to feel that their aspirations were selfish or unrealistic, reported significantly higher stress levels. This finding highlights the need to shift family and community perceptions of women's education from tolerance to genuine encouragement.

These insights also draw attention to the urgent need for institutional interventions. Coaching centers, educational policymakers, and mental health professionals must recognize the gendered dimensions of academic stress and create support systems that are sensitive to these realities. Counseling services, structured mentorship programs, and safe study environments for women can help mitigate the negative impact of these stressors. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns targeting families could be instrumental in changing mindsets and fostering environments where women's ambitions are respected and supported.

In sum, the results indicate that while academic pressure is a significant source of stress for female MPSC aspirants, it is the lack—or inconsistency—of social support that often tips the scale toward mental health deterioration. The emotional and psychological challenges faced by these women are not only rooted in the difficulty of the exam itself but are also deeply influenced by the cultural and familial ecosystems in which they live and study. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond academic coaching to include emotional, social, and cultural support mechanisms.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the multifaceted relationship between academic pressure, social support, and mental health among women MPSC aspirants in Pune City, offering insights grounded in both quantitative data and qualitative narratives. The findings reveal that while academic stress remains a constant in the lives of these women, the presence or absence of meaningful social support largely determines the extent to which this stress affects their mental well-being. A significant proportion of participants reported high levels of anxiety, self-doubt, and emotional fatigue conditions often intensified by entrenched gender norms, family expectations, and socially prescribed roles. Many women experienced a persistent internal conflict, feeling compelled to choose between personal ambition and traditional responsibilities, leading to guilt, emotional exhaustion, and psychological strain.

The study further indicates that aspirants who received consistent emotional and practical support from family members and peer networks demonstrated greater resilience and coping capacity. In contrast, women who encountered limited, conditional, or discouraging support reported feelings of isolation, reduced concentration, and emotional instability. Qualitative narratives highlighted a strong demand for mentorship, safe and inclusive study spaces, and recognition of women's academic efforts within families and communities. These findings emphasize that academic stress among women aspirants cannot be examined in isolation; it must be understood within a broader socio-cultural, structural, and gendered framework.

These observations strongly resonate with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of women's empowerment, which emphasized education, equality, dignity, and social justice as fundamental to democratic progress. Ambedkar consistently argued that societal advancement is impossible without the liberation and educational upliftment of women. The challenges faced by women MPSC aspirants today reflect the continued relevance of his thoughts, particularly in addressing structural inequalities, social conditioning, and subtle forms of political and social interference that restrict women's full participation in public life.

To effectively address these challenges, a multi-pronged and rights-based approach is essential. Mental health counselling services should be integrated into coaching centres and study hubs, with trained professionals capable of addressing stress specific to competitive examination environments. Families must be sensitized to the importance of emotional, moral, and logistical support not only to enhance academic performance but also to safeguard mental well-being. Establishing peer support groups and mentorship programs led by women in public service can provide aspirants with guidance, motivation, and a sense of collective strength. Additionally, public discourse must actively challenge and transform traditional narratives by

normalizing women's pursuit of high-stakes careers as both socially valuable and necessary.

In conclusion, the study underscores the urgent need to create supportive academic, familial, and institutional environments that uphold the aspirations, dignity, and mental health of women MPSC aspirants. By recognizing the interconnection between academic pressure, social support, and social justice, stakeholders can move closer to realizing Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's vision of an equitable society one that enables women to pursue public service careers free from psychological, social, and structural barriers.

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डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांना अपेक्षित असलेल्या महिला सक्षमीकरण योजनांची वर्तमानकालीन स्थिती : एक अभ्यास

दिपाली विनोद ननावरे

संशोधक, आदर्श बहुव्यापी शिक्षण व संशोधन महाविद्यालय, एरंडवना, पुणे-4

डॉ. पद्मजा भालचंद्र कस्तुरे

मार्गदर्शक, आदर्श बहुव्यापी शिक्षण व संशोधन महाविद्यालय, एरंडवना, पुणे-4

सारांश

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी महिलांचे सक्षमीकरण व्हावे आणि सामाजिक समता प्रस्थापित व्हावी, यासाठी अनेक महत्त्वपूर्ण योजना आणि कायदे सुचवले. यावर आधारित अनेक सरकारी योजना आजही अस्तित्वात आहेत. शासन, सामाजिक घटक या सर्वां मिळून महिला सक्षमीकरणासाठी प्रयत्न होत असल्याचे दिसून येत आहे परंतु हे प्रयत्न अपुरे असल्याचे जाणवतात. महिलांना त्यांचे अधिकार व हक्क मिळवण्यासाठी अजूनही सर्वांनी मिळून प्रयत्न करण्याची गरज आहे. डॉ. आंबेडकर हे सामाजिक न्यायाचे प्रणेते होते असं म्हणतात. त्यांना अभिप्रेत असणारे महिला सक्षमीकरण सध्या वर्तमान स्थितीत कोणते रूप घेत आहे हे पाहणं हे गरजेचं वाटतं डॉक्टर आंबेडकरांच्या विचारावर आधारित अनेक शासकीय योजना आजही अस्तित्वात असल्या तरी सुद्धा या योजनेची अंमलबजावणी कशी होते त्याचा खरोखर लाभ महिलांना मिळतो का? याचा अभ्यास करणे ही महत्त्वाचे आहे. . आंबेडकर यांनी महिलांचे, श्रमिकांचे, आणि दलितांचे जीवनमान उंचावण्यासाठी काही महत्त्वाच्या योजना सुचवल्या होत्या. त्यापैकी काही महत्त्वाच्या योजना आणि त्यांच्या वर्तमानकालीन स्थितीचा आढावा या संशोधन पेपर मध्ये घेतला जाईल.

मुख्य शब्द : शासकीय योजना, महिला सक्षमीकरण, सामाजिक समता।

प्रस्तावना

''बोले तैसा चाले, त्याची वंदावी पाऊले'' या तुकोबारायांच्या ओवी नुसार डॉ. आंबेडकर

यांचे जीवन होते असे म्हटले तर ते वावगे ठरणार नाही. त्यांच्या विचारातून कार्यातून याचा व्यवस्थित उलगडा होऊ शकतो. म्हणजेच डॉ. आंबेडकर यांच्या विचार आणि कृती यामध्ये असणारा समन्वय त्यांचे कार्य अभ्यासून जाणता येतो.

''डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी आयुष्यभर विषमते विरुद्ध संघर्ष केलेला आहे. हा संघर्ष त्यांनी वैचारिक आणि कृतीयुक्त अशा दोन्ही पातळ्यांवर केलेला आहे. त्यांच्या कृतीयुक्त संघर्ष मागील भूमिकेतून व प्रत्यक्ष कृती करण्याच्या पद्धतीतून त्यांची वैचारिक भूमिका व कृती म्हणजेच आचार व विचार यात किती एकरुपता आहे हे स्पष्ट होते'(भैलूमे, 2023 तृतीय आवृत्ती)

भारतीय संविधानाचे शिल्पकार सामाजिक न्यायाचे प्रणेते यासह वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोन बाळगणारे दृष्टे व्यक्तिमत्व, स्वातंर्त्य, समता, बंधुता यांचा पुरस्कर्ता असणारे हे व्यक्तिमत्व माणसाला माणूस म्हणून जगण्याचा अधिकार आहे, असे ठासून सांगणारे व्यक्तिमत्व. त्यांनी वंचित घटकात येणारा घटक - महिला, दलित यांचे सक्षमीकरण करून सामाजिक समता आणण्यासाठी अनेक महत्त्वपूर्ण योजना आणि कायदे सुचवले. त्यांनी सुचवलेल्या, त्यांच्या समतेच्या विचारावर आधारित शासकीय योजना आणि कायदे आजही अस्तित्वात आहेत. परंतु या योजनांची अंमलबजावणी कशी होते? त्यांचा खरोखर लाभ मिळतो का? याचा अभ्यास करणे महत्त्वाचे आहे. प्रस्तुत संशोधन पेपर मध्ये

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांचे योगदान आणि त्यांच्याशी संबंधित योजना आणि त्यांची वर्तमान स्थिती यावर प्रकाश टाकन्यात आलेला आहे.

उद्दिष्ट्ये

1. डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या योजनांचा अभ्यास करणे.
2. डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या योजनांचा वर्तमानकालीन स्थितीचा अभ्यास करणे.
3. डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या योजनांच्या
   कार्यवाहीत येणाऱ्या अडचणींचा शोध घेणे
4. डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या योजनांच्या
   कार्यवाहीत येणाऱ्या अडचणींवर उपाययोजना सुचवणे.

संशोधन पद्धती : वर्णनात्मक पद्धती

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या निवडक योजना पुढील प्रमाणे :

1. हिंदू कोड बिल आणि महिलांचे हक्क
2. मातृत्व लाभ कायदा, 1946
3. कामगार आणि श्रमिक हक्क
4. समान वेतनाचा हक्क
5. शैक्षणिक आणि सामाजिक सुधारणा

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी महिला, श्रमजीवी, आणि दलित यांचे जीवनमान उंचावण्यासाठी काही महत्त्वाच्या योजना सुचवल्या होत्या. त्यापैकी काही महत्त्वाच्या योजना आणि त्यांच्या वर्तमानकालीन स्थितीचा आढावा घेऊया.

1. हिंदू कोड बिल आणि महिलांचे हक्क

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी महिलांना संपत्तीचे हक्क, विवाह आणि घटस्फोटाचे अधिकार, तसेच पुनर्विवाहाचा मार्ग मोकळा करण्यासाठी हिंदू कोड बिल प्रस्तावित केले. त्यावेळी या विधेयकाला मोठा विरोध झाला, परंतु पुढे त्याच्या वेगवेगळ्या भागांना कायद्यात समाविष्ट करण्यात आले.

वर्तमान स्थिती

हिंदू उत्तराधिकार कायदा, 1956 नुसार मुलींसाठी वडिलांच्या संपत्तीमध्ये समान हक्क दिले गेले.

2005 मध्ये या कायद्यात सुधारणा करण्यात आली आणि विवाहित महिलांनाही वडिलांच्या संपत्तीचा वारस हक्क दिला गेला.

आज महिला संपत्तीच्या बाबतीत जास्त सशक्त झाल्या असल्या तरी ग्रामीण भागात अजूनही स्त्रियांना त्यांच्या हक्कांपासून वंचित ठेवले जाते. मुलींच्या विवाहात केलेला खर्च, दिलेला हंडा अशी कारणे सांगून वडिलांच्या संपत्तीत तिचा हक्क नाकारला जात आहे.

2. मातृत्व लाभ कायदा, 1946

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी कामगार महिलांसाठी मातृत्व लाभ कायदा लागू केला. हा कायदा नंतर 1961 मध्ये सुधारला गेला.

वर्तमान स्थिती

2017 मध्ये या कायद्यात मोठ्या सुधारणा करण्यात आल्या. आता महिलांना 26 आठवड्यांची सशुल्क प्रसूती रजा मिळते.

विविध खाजगी कंपन्याही या कायद्याचे पालन करताना दिसतात.

मात्र, असंघटित क्षेत्रात काम करणाऱ्या महिलांना जसे की शेत मजूर, वेठबिगार, गवंडी कामगार महिला यांना अजूनही हा लाभ मिळत नाही.

3. कामगार आणि श्रमिक हक्क

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी कामगारांसाठी 8 तासांची कामाची वेळ, किमान वेतन, आणि सामाजिक सुरक्षेसाठी विशेष धोरणे सुचवली होती.

वर्तमान स्थिती

2020 मध्ये केंद्र सरकारने मजुरी संहिता (Wage Code, 2020) लागू केली, ज्यामुळे किमान वेतन प्रणाली अधिक प्रभावी झाली.

संघटित क्षेत्रातील महिला कामगारांना वेतन आणि सामाजिक सुरक्षा लाभ मिळतात, परंतु असंघटित क्षेत्रातील कामगार अजूनही अनेक हक्कांपासून वंचित आहेत. तरी आजही कोणत्याही क्षेत्रात महिला सुरक्षेवर असणारे प्रश्नचिन्ह कायम आहे.

4. समान वेतनाचा हक्क

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी स्त्रियांना पुरुषांइतकेच वेतन मिळावे, यासाठी जोर दिला होता.

वर्तमान स्थिती

समान वेतन कायदा, 1976 नुसार महिलांना समान वेतनाचा अधिकार दिला गेला आहे.

परंतु आजही अनेक क्षेत्रांत महिलांना पुरुषांपेक्षा कमी वेतन दिले जाते, विशेषत: खाजगी क्षेत्रात आणि असंघटित उद्योगांमध्ये याचे प्रमाण अधिक आहे. जसे की शेत मजूर महिला.

5. शैक्षणिक आणि सामाजिक सुधारणा

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी दलित, आदिवासी आणि मागासवर्गीय विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी शैक्षणिक सुविधा उपलब्ध करून द्याव्यात, असे सुचवले होते.

वर्तमान स्थिती

सरकारतर्फे SC/ST विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी शिष्यवृत्ती योजना, आवास योजना, आणि शैक्षणिक कर्ज सवलत योजना लागू करण्यात आल्या आहेत.

तरीही ग्रामीण भागात अजूनही उच्च शिक्षण घेणाऱ्या मागासवर्गीय विद्यार्थ्यां निंचे प्रमाण कमी आहे.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांच्या योजनांच्या अंमलबजावणीतील अडचणी

1. अन्यायकारक अंमलबजावणी

अनेक योजना कागदावर प्रभावी दिसतात, परंतु त्यांची योग्य अंमलबजावणी होत नाही. ज्यांना योजना मिळतात त्यांचे प्रमाण खूप कमी आहे.

भ्रष्टाचार आणि नोकरशाहीमुळे अनेक लोकांना त्यांच्या हक्काचा लाभ मिळत नाही.

2. ग्रामीण आणि शहरी असमानता

शहरी भागात या योजनांचा लाभ अधिक चांगल्या प्रकारे मिळतो, तर ग्रामीण भागात लोक अजूनही अनेक योजनांबद्दल अनभिज्ञ आहेत.

शहरी आणि ग्रामीण भागांतील सरकारी योजनांच्या लाभांमध्ये मोठी तफावत आहे. शहरी भागातील लोकांना योजनांची माहिती अधिक मिळते, तसेच त्या अंमलात आणण्यासाठी यंत्रणा अधिक सक्रिय असते. मात्र, ग्रामीण भागात माहितीचा अभाव, जागरूकतेचा अभाव आणि कधीकधी प्रशासकीय ढिलाईमुळे योजनांचा लाभ मर्यादित राहतो.

उदाहरणे :

1. प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (PMAY)

शहरी भागात : अनेक लोकांना PMAY अंतर्गत घरे मिळाली आहेत, कारण अर्ज करण्यासाठी ऑनलाइन सुविधा आणि माहिती सहज उपलब्ध आहे.

ग्रामीण भागात : अनेकांना या योजनेबद्दल माहितीच नसते किंवा अर्ज करण्याची प्रक्रिया समजत नाही, त्यामुळे ते लाभापासून वंचित राहतात.

2. प्रधानमंत्री मुद्रा योजना

शहरी भागात : लघु उद्योजकांना सहज कर्ज मिळते, कारण बँकांमध्ये मार्गदर्शन उपलब्ध असते.

ग्रामीण भागात : लोकांना कर्ज मिळवण्याची प्रक्रिया समजत नाही किंवा बँकांच्या कडक अटींमुळे त्यांना कर्ज मिळत नाही.

3. आयुष्मान भारत योजना

शहरी भागात : मोठ्या रुग्णालयांमध्ये ही योजना लागू आहे, त्यामुळे लोकांना मोफत उपचार मिळतात.

ग्रामीण भागात : अनेकांना या योजनेची माहिती नाही, आणि काही ठिकाणी सुविधा उपलब्ध नसल्यामुळे त्याचा लाभ मिळत नाही.

4. जागरूकतेचा अभाव

अनेक लोकांना सरकारी योजनांबद्दल माहितीच नसते, त्यामुळे त्यांचा पुरेसा फायदा घेतला जात नाही.

योजनांची प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी करण्यासाठी उपाय

1. शासनाने प्रभावी देखरेख ठेवली पाहिजे

योजनांची प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी होत आहे का, हे पाहण्यासाठी स्वायत्त संस्था किंवा समित्या तयार करणे आवश्यक आहे. योजनांचे मूल्यांकन, मूल्यमापन ठराविक कालावधीच्या अंतराने केले पाहिजे.

2. संपूर्ण डिजिटल प्रणाली लागू करणे

डिजिटल शिक्षण आणि इंटरनेट सुविधा वाढवणे. योजनांशी संबंधित अर्ज आणि प्रक्रिया ऑनलाईन केल्यास भ्रष्टाचार कमी होईल आणि लाभार्थ्यांना थेट लाभ मिळेल.

3. ग्राम सचिवालय पातळीवर जागरूकता कार्यक्रम राबवणे

ग्रामीण भागातील लोकांमध्ये जागरूकता वाढवण्यासाठी विशेष अभियान चालवले पाहिजे.

स्थानिक पातळीवर मदत केंद्र सुरू करणे

ऑनलाईन फॉर्म भरण्यासाठी कॅम्प आयोजन करणे.

कागदपत्र मिळवण्यासाठी कॅम्प आयोजन करणे.

तरुण वर्गास प्रशिक्षण देऊन योजना जनमानसात पोहोचवण्यासाठी मोहीम उघडणे गावोगावी माहिती अभियान राबवणे

जाहिराती, बॅनर, स्थानिक केबल नेटवर्क वरून योजनांची माहिती देणे.

निष्कर्ष

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी सुचवलेल्या योजनांची आजही मोठी गरज आहे. त्यांच्या विचारांवर आधारित कायदे आणि योजना लागू केल्या असल्या तरी अंमलबजावणीच्या प्रक्रियेत अनेक अडचणी आहेत. महिलांचे हक्क, कामगारांचे संरक्षण, आणि दलित उत्थान यासाठी अधिक प्रभावी धोरणे आवश्यक आहेत. शासनाने आणि समाजाने एकत्रित प्रयत्न केल्यासच बाबासाहेबांचे स्वप्न साकार होऊ शकते.

डॉ. आंबेडकर यांनी पाहिलेल्या समतावादी समाजाच्या स्वप्नाच्या दिशेने आपण कितपत पुढे गेलो आहोत, याचे मूल्यमापन करण्याची वेळ आली आहे. आजही त्यांचे विचार आणि योजना आपल्या दैनंदिन जीवनाला प्रभावित करत आहेत. त्यामुळे त्यांच्या कार्याचा सखोल अभ्यास करून, त्या योजनांची अधिक प्रभावी अंमलबजावणी करणे हीच त्यांना खरी आदरांजली ठरेल.

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डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांचे स्त्री विषयक योगदान

श्री संजय नाना बागल

सहा. प्राध्या., आटर्स, कॉमर्स ऑण्ड सायन्स कॉलेज, नागठाणे, ता. जि. सातारा

सारांश (Abstract)

भारतीय समाजातील स्त्रीच्या अधोगतीस कारणीभूत असलेल्या सामाजिक, धार्मिक आणि पितृसत्ताक व्यवस्थेविरुद्ध डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांनी ठाम आणि प्रगल्भ भूमिका घेतली. त्यांनी महिलांच्या शिक्षण, स्वातंर्त्य, समान हक्क आणि सन्मानासाठी सातत्याने लढा दिला. महात्मा फुले यांच्या स्त्रीशिक्षणाच्या चळवळीला पुढे नेत त्यांनी महिलांच्या सक्षमीकरणाला सामाजिक न्याय आणि संविधानिक अधिकार यांच्याशी जोडले. आंबेडकरांनी हिंदू कोड बिलाच्या माध्यमातून स्त्रियांना वारसाहक्क, घटस्फोटाचा अधिकार, विवाहातील समानता आणि संपत्तीवरील हक्क प्रदान करण्याचा प्रयत्न केला. त्यांच्या विचारांत स्त्री ही समाजाच्या प्रगतीचे मापन करणारी केंद्रबिंदू मानली गेली आहे. त्यांनी महिलांना केवळ कुटुंबापुरते मर्यादित न ठेवता राष्ट्रनिर्मितीतील सक्रिय घटक म्हणून पाहिले. डॉ. आंबेडकरांचे स्त्री विषयक योगदान हे केवळ कायदे व सुधारणा इतकेच मर्यादित नसून, ते भारतीय समाजाच्या मूलभूत समतेच्या मूल्यावर आधारित परिवर्तनाचे द्योतक आहे. त्यांच्या कार्यामुळे भारतीय महिलांना आत्मसन्मान, अधिकार आणि स्वातंर्त्याचा मार्ग खुला झाला.

प्रस्तावना (Introduction)

"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."
—**डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर**

भारतीय समाजाच्या नवसंरचनेत डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांचे योगदान अमूल्य आहे. त्यांनी आपल्या आयुष्यभर समाजातील अन्याय, विषमता आणि शोषणाविरुद्ध संघर्ष केला. समता, स्वातंर्त्य आणि बंधुता ही त्रिसूत्री त्यांनी भारतीय लोकशाहीच्या केंद्रस्थानी ठेवली. या मूल्यांवर आधारित समाजव्यवस्था उभी करणे हेच त्यांच्या सामाजिक आणि राजकीय चळवळीचे मुख्य उद्दिष्ट होते. भारतीय समाजात महिलांची स्थिती अनेक शतकांपासून दुय्यम राहिली होती. शिक्षण, संपत्ती, वारसा, विवाह आणि सामाजिक निर्णय प्रक्रियेत त्यांना समानता नव्हती. स्त्रीला धर्मशास्त्रांनी आणि परंपरांनी ''गुलामगिरी'' त ठेवले होते. या अन्यायकारक स्थितीवर पहिला गंभीर प्रश्न उपस्थित करणाऱ्या विचारवंतांपैकी डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर अग्रगण्य ठरले. त्यांनी महिलांच्या प्रश्नाला केवळ सामाजिक दृष्टिकोनातून नव्हे, तर मानवी हक्कांच्या दृष्टीकोनातून पाहिले.

बाबासाहेबांनी महिलांना केवळ संरक्षण नव्हे, तर सक्षमीकरणाचे शस्त्र दिले. त्यांच्या मते समाजातील खरी प्रगती तेव्हाच होऊ शकते जेव्हा स्त्रिया शिक्षित, जागृत आणि स्वावलंबी बनतील. यासाठी त्यांनी

संविधानात महिलांना समता, स्वातंत्र्य आणि सन्मानाचे कायदेशीर अधिकार दिले. 'हिंदू कोड बिल' हा त्यांच्या महिलांच्या मुक्तीचा महान प्रयत्न होता, ज्यामुळे स्त्रियांना वारसा, घटस्फोट, पुनर्विवाह आणि संपत्तीवरील हक्क कायदेशीररित्या मिळाले. डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी स्त्रियांना चळवळीचा अविभाज्य भाग बनवले. महाड सत्याग्रह, काळाराम मंदिर सत्याग्रह अशा आंदोलनांमध्ये महिलांचा सक्रीय सहभाग त्यांनी प्रोत्साहन दिला. त्यामुळे स्त्रियांना सार्वजनिक जीवनात स्थान मिळाले आणि सामाजिक परिवर्तनात त्यांचा वाटा दृढ झाला. त्यांच्या विचारांचा गाभा असा होता की—''स्त्रीचा सन्मान हीच समाजाच्या प्रगतीची पहिली पायरी आहे.'' आजही त्यांच्या या विचारांचा आदर्श महिलांच्या सक्षमीकरणाच्या मार्गदर्शक दीपस्तंभासारखा वाटतो.

उद्दिष्टे (Objectives)

1. डॉ. आंबेडकरांच्या सामाजिक विचाराचा अभ्यास करणे.
2. डॉ. आबेडकरांनी मांडलेल्या हिंदू कोड बिलाची वैशिष्ट्ये अभ्यासणे.
3. डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांच्या स्त्री कार्याचा आढावा घेणे.

गृहीतक (Hypothesis)

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकराचे सामाजिक विचार सलोखा व समानता प्रस्थापित करण्यात सहाय्यक ठरतात.

सशोधन पद्धती (Research Method)

प्रस्तुत संशोधनासाठी प्रामुख्याने आंबेडकरांच्या स्त्री विषयक कार्याचा विचार केला असल्याने संशोधनासाठी प्रामुख्याने विश्लेषणाची पद्धती वापरली जाणार आहे. प्रस्तुत सशोधनासाठी प्राथमिक व दुय्यम स्तोत्राचा वापर करण्यात येणार आहे.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांचे स्त्री विषयक विचार
(Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on Women)

भारतात चातुर्वण्य जातीव्यवस्थेत प्रणित व्यवस्थेने समाजाचे विभाजन झाले आहे. जात, धर्म, वर्ण व लिंगावर आधारित विषमता प्रचंड मोठ्या प्रमाणात आहे. जातीमुळे जन्मताच विशेष अधिकार मिळणाऱ्या जाती आपल्या कुटुंबातील स्त्रियांसाठी समाजातील मागास, दुर्बल अस्पृश्य जातीचे हजारो वर्षापासून शोषण करीत आल्या आहेत, त्याचबरोबर भारतात हिंदू धर्म, मनुस्मृति व मनुस्मृतीच्या प्रभावामुळे निर्माण झालेली वैदिक परंपरा, महानुभव पंथ, वारकरी पंथ, भक्ती पंथ या सर्व व्यवस्थानी स्त्रियांना कमी अधिकार व दुय्यमतेची वागणूक दिली आहे. भारतामध्ये मनुपूर्व काळात स्त्रियाचा दर्जा हा उच्च होता, मात्र मनुस्मृतीने स्त्रियांना हिनतेची वागणूक दिली आहे. स्त्रियांना संपत्ती स्थान व सर्व प्रकारचे स्वातंत्र्य नाकारले गेले. हिंदू स्त्रियांच्या अधोगतीस हिंदू धर्म व मनुष्य हेच कारणीभूत आहेत. हे डॉ आंबेडकरानी आपले 'हंदू स्त्रियाची उन्नती व अवनती' या निबंधातून स्पष्ट केले आहे. ख्रिस्ती व इस्लाम धर्मानही स्त्रियांना समानतेची वागणूक दिली नाही. डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरानी त्याच्या निबंधात मनुनी स्त्रिया संबंधी केलेल्या कायद्याची माहिती देऊन पुढे असे म्हटले आहे की, मनु हा भारतातील स्त्रियांचा अंध:पात

घडवून आणण्यास सर्वस्वी जबाबदार आहे, म्हणून हे कायदे केले. त्यामध्ये स्वत:च्या बुद्धिमतेच्या अगर मौलिकतेचे प्रदर्शन केलेले दिसून येत नाही तर ब्राह्मणी धर्माचा उदय भारतात झाल्यानंतर ब्राह्मणांची स्त्रियासंबंधी जी विचारसरणी होती तीच मनु आपल्या कायद्यात गोवली आहे. त्याचबरोबर शूद्र आणि स्त्रिया यांचा बौद्ध धर्म स्वीकारण्याकडे जास्त प्रमाणात प्रवाह निर्माण झाला होता, ते थांबवण्यासाठी मनुने आपला कायदा तयार केला आणि स्त्रिया चे जीवन कायमचे खुरटून टाकले, म्हणून डॉ. आबेडकरांनी स्त्रियाच्या उन्नतीसाठी कार्य केले आहे.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकराच्या पूर्वी महात्मा फुले, सावित्रीबाई फुले, आगरकर इत्यादी विचारवंतांनी स्त्रियांच्या उद्धाराकरिता स्त्री-पुरुष समानतेच्या दृष्टीने काय केले आहे. फुले यानी स्त्रिया दलित, कष्टकरी आणि शेतकरी यांच्या अन्यायविरोध केवळ बंड केले नसून त्यांना कल्याणकारी सुधारणांच्या मागनि आदर्शवादी सार्वजनिक सत्यधर्माची स्थापना केली. 1848 साली मुलींची पहिली शाळा पुण्यात सुरू झाली. त्यापूर्वी बसवेश्वरांनी ही स्त्रियांच्या समानतेसाठी कार्य केले होते. आपले गुरु महात्मा फुले यांचे कार्य पुढे नेण्याचे काम डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी केले आहे.

डॉ. आंबेडकर स्त्रियांचे जीवन उध्वस्त करून टाकणाऱ्या अन्यायी मनुस्मृतीचे दहन महाड येथे 1920 साली केले. कारण मनुस्मृतीने केवळ स्त्रियांचे जीवन नष्ट केले नाही तर अस्पृश्याचे जीवन ही उध्वस्त केले आहे. जातीव्यवस्थेचे समर्थन करणारा हा मनु स्मृतीचा कायदा होता त्यामुळे तो जाळला, डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी स्त्रियांचे प्रबोधन केले आहे. स्त्रियांच्या स्वातंर्त्याविषयी प्रश्न सोडवण्यासाठी त्यांच्या सभा आयोजित करणे, त्या सभेचे प्रतिनिधित्व करण्याचे कार्य स्त्रियांनी करावे असे ते सांगत होते. स्त्रियांसाठी त्यांनी वेगवेगळ्या ठिकाणी परिषदा घेतल्या. त्या पुढील प्रमाणे 20 मार्च 1926 रोजी चवदार तळे सत्याग्रह (महाड), 8 व 9 ऑगस्ट 1920 साली अखिल भारतीय दलित काँग्रेस नागपूर, 28 मार्च 1934 रोजी अस्पृश्य महिला परिषद, मलकापूर (जिल्हा बुलडाणा), 30 व 31 मे 1934 इलाखा महार परिषद मुंबई, 3 एप्रिल 1934 अस्पृश्य परिषद बोरगाव, जिल्हा वर्धा 16 जून 1939 देवदासी मुख्य जोगतीनी अराधिनी पोतराज परिषद (परळ), 1944 साली महिला परिषद कानपूर, 1945 महिला परिषद, मुंबई अशा परिषदा आयोजित करून महिलांच्या स्वातंर्त्याच्या हक्कासाठी त्यांच्यावरील अन्याय दूर करण्यासाठी डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी प्रयत्न केल्याचे दिसून येते. मलकापूर येथे अस्पृश्य महिला परिषदेत अस्पृश्य मुला-मुलीना शिक्षणाची सोयी सरकारने करून द्याव्यात तसेच त्यांना जादा सवलती द्याव्या असा ठराविक मंजूर करण्यात आला. एकूण स्त्रियांच्या मनातील गुलामगिरीतून मुक्त करण्यासाठी स्वत: ची जाणीव करून देण्याचे कार्य डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी केले आहे.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर महिलांच्या स्वातंर्त्यासाठी जी काही सभा, परिषदा घेतल्या होत्या आणि त्यावेळी जो स्त्रियांशी संवाद साधला आहे. त्यातून त्यांनी स्त्रियाची कार्यशक्ती ओळखली, शिवाय त्या कोणतीही जबाबदारी पेलण्यास समर्थ आहेत अशी भूमिका मांडली आहे. त्यामुळे स्त्रियाच्या स्वातंर्त्याविषयी डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी मांडलेले विचार काही मुद्याच्या आधारे स्पष्ट होत आहे. पहिला मुद्दा स्त्री शिक्षणास प्रोत्साहन व महत्त्व जणले, स्त्री शिक्षणाची सुरुवात महात्मा फुले यानी केली आहे. त्यात शिक्षित स्त्रियांच्या हाती कायद्याच ज्ञान द्यायला पाहिजे असे डॉ. आबेडकरांना वाटत होते म्हणून हिंदू कोड बिलाद्वारे त्यांनी स्त्री उन्नतीची बीजे रोवली. त्याचबरीचर समाजामध्ये स्त्री-पुरुष समानता प्रस्थापित करण्यासाठी स्त्री शिक्षणाचा मार्ग सागितला आहे. स्त्रीयांना समाजात व कुटुंबात उत्तम वागणूक व समान

दर्जा मिळाला पाहिजे. दुसरा मुद्दा मुद्दा डॉ. आंबेडकरानी स्त्रियांचा विकासाचा स्त्री शक्तीचा विचार करताना कुटुंब नियोजनासदर्भात ही विचार केलेला आहे. कुटुबाचे घटक असणाऱ्या स्त्री-पुरुषाचे दोघांचीही कुटुंब नियोजनाची जबाबदारी आहे. कारण अमर्याद बाळतपणे स्त्रियावर लादली जातात. त्यामुळे तिचे आरोग्य ढासळते, मृत्यू होतो. जास्त संख्या वाढली तर सगळ्यांची आभाळ होते, त्यामुळे लोकसंख्या वाढवर ही नियंत्रण ठेवण्याच्या दृष्टीने कुटुंब नियोजन हे महत्वाचे आहे. कारण लोकसंख्या हे गरिबीचे प्रमुख कारण आहे. तिसरा मुद्दा स्त्रीयाना दिलेला उपदेश डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी स्त्रियांनी काय असावे, कसे दिसावे या संदर्भात विचार केला आहे. त्यांच्या मते, स्त्रियांनी उत्तम कपडे दागिने यासाठी दृढ न राहता स्वच्छता, टापटीप राहावे, गुणवतेवर व चारित्र्यावर भर द्यावा मुला-मुलीवर चांगले संस्कार करावेत असा नी भारतीय स्त्रियांना उद्देश दिला आहे. स्त्रियांनी भारार्भदागिन्या ऐवजी एखादा चांगला दागिना घालावा, त्याचबरोबर स्त्री एक व्यक्ती आहे आणि व्यक्तीस्वातंर्त्य तिला असायला हवे, लग्ना नंतर पत्नी ही पुरुषाची समान अधिकारी असलेली गृहिणी असते. चौथ्या मुद्दा स्त्री कामगारासाठी सवलती डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी मजूर मंत्री म्हणून कार्य असताना सूतगिरण्या, कारखाने, विविध उद्योग समूह या ठिकाणी विविध स्त्रिया काम करीत होत्या या स्त्रियांना पुरुषाच्या बरोबरीने वेतन मिळावे, स्त्रियाना बळातपणाची रजा मिळावी, महिलांच्या मुलासाठी कामाच्या ठिकाणी पाळणाघरे असावीत, वयात आलेल्या सर्वच स्त्रियांना पुरुषाबरोबर मताचा अधिकार असवा इ. स्त्री कामगारांना सवलती मिळत म्हणून सरकारला निवेदन दिले व सरकारकडून ते मान्य करून घेतले.

डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी स्त्री गुलामीच्या अंताचा विचार करून हिंदू कोड बिल संसदेमध्ये मांडताना असे महटले की, तुम्हाला हिंदू - आचार, हिंदू - संस्कृती आणि हिंदू समाज कायमचा टिकवायचा असेल तर जेथे दुरुस्ती अथवा सुधारणा करणे अगत्याचे असेल तेथे तशी दुरुस्ती अगर सुधारणा करण्यास विरोध करू नका. हिंदू आचार धर्माचे जे भाग अगदी पडायला झालेत. त्याची दुरुस्ती करण्यापलीकडे या बिलात दुसरे काहीही नाही तरी हिंदू कोड बिल मंजूर झाले नाही. हिंदू कोड बिल साठी स्वातंर्त्या नंतर 4 वर्षे 1 महिना 26 दिवस लावले. हे बिल 1947 पासून फेब्रुवारी 1949 रोजी संसदेत माडले. हा मसुदा सात वेगवेगळ्या घटकाशी निगडित कायद्याचे कलमात रूपांतर करू पाहत होता. 24 फेब्रुवारी 1949 ला त्यानी हे महिला हक्काचे बील संसदेत मांडले. यातील चारच कलम पास झाली, 26 सप्टेंबर 1951 ला नेहरूने घोषणा केली हे वापस घेतले. हा मोठा आघात सहन करून अखेर 27 सप्टेंबर 1951 ला डॉ. बाबासाहेबांनी कायदेमंत्री पद सोडलं. पुढे पंतप्रधान नेहरू यांनी 1955 ते 56 या काळात हिंदू कोड बिलातील हिंदू विवाह कायदा, हिंदू वारसा हक्क कायदा, हिंदू अज्ञान व पालकत्व, हिंदु दत्त पोटगी कायदा मंजूर केला आहे. हे कायदे त्याकाळी सहमत होणे हे क्रांतिकारी पाऊल होते.

डॉ. आंबेडकरांनी केवळ स्वातंर्त्यपूर्व व स्वातंर्त्यप्राप्तीनंतर ही महिला उन्नतीसाठी कार्य केलं. हिंदू सोबत मुस्लिम महिलांच्याही हक्काबाबत आपले विचार मांडले. मुस्लिम महिला वरिल अन्याय आणि अनिष्ट रूढी यासंदर्भात त्यांनी भाष्य केले आहे. पडदा पद्धती वर जोरदार टीका केली. त्याच्यासोबत त्यांनी समान नागरी कायद्यासाठी प्रयत्न केले. मुलं दत्तक घेण्यासाठी परवानगी, डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरानी हिंदू धर्मातील विषमता आधारित कुप्रथाना विरोध करून हिंदू धर्माची समानतेवर आधारित पुनर्रवाधणी करण्याचा प्रयत्न केला यासाठी बराच विरोध पत्करावा लागला. स्त्रियांना तिच्या विवाहाचा जोडीदार निवडण्याचा, घटस्फोटाचा व पोटगीचा अधिकार असावा. त्यासोबतच वडिलोपार्जित संपत्तीत महिलांना

समान वाटा याबाबत प्रयत्न केले. मजूर मंत्री असताना त्यानी महिलांना पुरुषाप्रमाणे वेतन मिळवून देण्याचा प्रयत्न केला. तसंच काम करणाऱ्या व नोकरदार महिलांना प्रस्तुतीनंतर विश्रांती व बालसंगोपनासाठी रजा मंजूर करून महिला विकासाबाबत आपली कटिबद्धता दर्शवली. महिलाच्या आरोग्यासाठी एकूणच डॉ. आबेडकरांचे स्त्रियाच्या उन्नतीसाठी मोठे योगदान आहे

निष्कर्ष (Conclusion)

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांचे स्त्री विषयक योगदान हे भारतीय समाजाच्या सामाजिक न्याय, समानता आणि मानवतेच्या मूल्यांवर आधारलेले आहे. त्यांनी स्त्रीच्या मुक्तीला केवळ सामाजिक सुधारणा म्हणून नव्हे, तर राष्ट्रनिर्मितीचा आवश्यक घटक म्हणून पाहिले. त्यांच्या मते, समाजाची प्रगती स्त्रीच्या प्रगतीवर अवलंबून असते.

आंबेडकरांनी स्त्रियांच्या शिक्षणावर भर देत त्यांना आत्मनिर्भर आणि स्वाभिमानी बनविण्याचे कार्य केले. त्यांनी धर्म, जाती आणि पितृसत्ताकतेच्या बंधनात अडकलेल्या महिलांना मुक्त करण्यासाठी कायदे, आंदोलन आणि विचारांच्या माध्यमातून व्यापक कार्य केले. हिंदू कोड बिलाद्वारे त्यांनी स्त्रियांना विवाह, घटस्फोट, वारसाहक्क आणि संपत्तीवरील समान अधिकार मिळवून देण्यासाठी प्रचंड संघर्ष केला. त्यांच्या विचारांमधून स्त्री ही केवळ गृहिणी नसून सामाजिक परिवर्तनाची वाहक आहे, हे अधोरेखित होते. त्यामुळे डॉ. आंबेडकरांचे योगदान भारतीय स्त्रीच्या सक्षमीकरणाच्या आणि सामाजिक समानतेच्या इतिहासातील एक क्रांतिकारी टप्पा ठरते. आजही त्यांच्या विचारांची सुसंगतता आणि प्रेरणा भारतीय महिलांच्या न्याय, सन्मान आणि स्वातंत्र्याच्या लढ्याला दिशा देते.

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