



### THE AGRARIAN THOUGHTS OF DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

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#### Abstract:

*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was an important leader of social reform in India. The impact of his work is felt in every sector of society, especially in the agricultural sector, where he expressed extremely important thoughts. His views on agriculture were centred on land reforms, collective farming, and the upliftment of small landholding farmers. He believed that small, fragmented landholdings and caste-based land ownership systems were the major problems in the Indian agricultural sector. Dr. Ambedkar made constitutional provisions to solve these issues. The government should take possession of land, distribute it fairly, and promote modern farming techniques so that productivity increases and the standard of living of farmers improves. This research paper studies the thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar regarding India's agricultural sector. Secondary sources have been used for the research.*

**Keywords:** *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Agricultural views, land reforms, collective farming, constitutional provisions, modern farming techniques)*

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#### Introduction:

Dr. Bhimrao Ramaji Ambedkar was a renowned jurist, analytical scholar, a great economist, a revolutionary, a social reformer and the architect of the Indian Constitution. His life is written in golden letters in the history of India. During medieval India, the caste system, which emerged from the labour-based Chaturvarnya system, led to untouchability in society. To completely eradicate this discrimination, he made several successful efforts.

He firmly believed that every human being should be valued as a person and should not be defined as superior or inferior based on their caste. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar strongly criticized the widespread social system. He provided access to education for the poor, downtrodden, and

marginalized people and made them aware of their rights. Babasaheb fought for the rights of people who were excluded from all aspects of society-social, economic, educational, political, and religious. He believed that every individual should be granted their due rights in all these spheres. Economic equality is essential in any society. Ambedkar supported this viewpoint, arguing that economic disparity must be eradicated. He clearly stated that without economic power, true freedom cannot be attained. Since India was primarily an agricultural country, society at the time was heavily dependent on agriculture for livelihood. Therefore, if the agricultural sector of India developed, it would help improve the economic conditions of the labourers.



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar conducted an in-depth study of the Indian agricultural system. His views on agriculture focused on land reforms, collective farming, and the upliftment of marginalized farmers. He believed that small, fragmented farms and the caste-based land ownership system were major problems in the Indian agricultural sector. He suggested that the government should take control of the land, distribute it fairly, and promote modern farming techniques so that productivity would increase and farmers' lives would improve. This study focuses on Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on the agriculture sector of India.

He believed that by ensuring justice and equality in the agricultural sector and improving the living standards of farmers, the farmers' and consequently the country's agricultural sector would develop. Studying his thoughts on the agricultural sector helps us understand the condition of Indian agriculture during that time and the solutions he suggested.

### Review of literature:

Arya rajendra kumar, (2014) Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar analysed various social and political problems; his thoughts were based on the economic dimension. He published three books: "The Problem of the Rupee," "Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India," and "East India Company Administration and Economic Policy." Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar studied economic issues like land reforms, small land holdings and their solutions, the problem of Indian currency, provincial finance, and economic planning.

Kanchan D, (2021) The small and marginal farmer is facing the common problem of low productivity, the use of primitive tools, lack of technical knowledge, lack of market for the produced, inefficient bargaining power, lack of post-harvest services, inadequate credit facilities and insufficient capital to produce a quality product with the small size of landholdings. Due to

this, the problem of unemployment and illiteracy is more acute in India. The subdivision and fragmentation of landholdings are the main cause of agricultural backwardness in India, as explained by Dr. Ambedkar.

Ishita R. (2011) In Dr. Ambedkar's paper titled "Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies" published in the Journal of the Indian Economic Society, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar opined that while consolidation might address the problems of scattered holdings, it does not solve the issues related to small holdings—unless the consolidated holding is of an economic size.

He criticized the traditional definition of an economic holding, which described it as "a holding which allows a man a chance of producing sufficient to keep himself and his family in reasonable comfort after paying his necessary expenses."

### Objectives:

1. To examine Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on Indian agriculture.
2. To analyse agriculture related constitutional provisions by dr B.R. Ambedkar.
3. To evaluate how the agrarian thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar s are relevant in the present era.

### Assumptions:

1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made remarkable contributions to the development of the agricultural sector.
2. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar made significant provisions regarding the agricultural sector in the Indian Constitution.

### Research Methodology:

Research methodology refers to the systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods applied in a specific field of study. The quality of any research is largely determined by the methodology employed. In this study, a secondary source of data has used, drawing from sources such as journals, theses, books,



websites, and other relevant materials. This is a qualitative research approach. For better presentation and organization, Microsoft Office software is used.

### **Thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar on Indian agriculture sector:**

India is mainly an agricultural country, and farming is the main source of livelihood for a large part of the population. However, the agricultural sector faces many problems like low productivity, small landholdings, outdated farming methods, dependence on rainfall, and old systems like moneylenders, landlords, zamindari, and Khot systems. These problems made Indian agriculture underdeveloped in the past—and many of these issues still exist today.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar understood these challenges and made important constitutional provisions to improve agriculture. He supported the nationalization of agriculture, promoted collective farming, and worked for the rights of agricultural workers. His ideas give us a strong foundation to understand and solve the problems in farming—both before and after India's independence. Even today, Ambedkar's thoughts are relevant for dealing with issues like land distribution, modern farming practices, and government support for farmers.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The productivity of the Indian agricultural sector can only increase when the fragmentation of landholdings stops and a culture of collective farming emerges. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar encouraged cooperative farming instead of individual ownership of farmland. The land would be owned by the government and would be given to farmers on a rental basis. This would eliminate inequality in the form of landlords, tenants, and landless labourers, and farming would be carried out on the principle of cooperative farming. These thoughts were presented by him in his essays 'Small Holdings in Indian Agriculture and Their Remedies' (1917) and 'States and Minorities' (1947).

Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on agriculture were wide-ranging. He believed that for India to truly progress, agricultural reforms were necessary. His agricultural reform ideas were based on the principles of land ownership, economic equality, and social justice. Some important aspects of his agricultural reform vision are as follows:

### **Abolition of the Zamindari System:**

One of the most significant parts of Dr. Ambedkar's vision for agricultural reform was the abolition of the Zamindari system. Dr. Ambedkar strongly criticized the zamindars, whom he considered exploiters of the farmers. According to Ambedkar, zamindars were not the producers of land; they were merely revenue collectors, and their wealth was accumulated through the exploitation of farmers. The deeply entrenched Zamindari system in Indian agriculture was seen by Ambedkar as a major obstacle to the social and economic progress of the agrarian classes.

In advocating for the abolition of the Zamindari system, Ambedkar aimed to empower the farmers by ensuring that they had direct control over the land they worked. He believed that eliminating intermediaries would ensure that the wealth generated from the land remained with the farmers, rather than being siphoned off by landowners.

### **Land Redistribution:**

Dr. Ambedkar also supported land redistribution, where land would be allocated based on need and the ability to cultivate, rather than based on caste or social class. He believed that landless farmers, especially Dalits and other marginalized communities, should be given land to cultivate. Ambedkar understood that land was not just a means of livelihood but also a symbol of power and dignity. According to him, land access would empower marginalized communities, helping them break free from the social constraints imposed by the caste system.



Ambedkar's concept of land redistribution aimed at ensuring equality in land ownership. He believed no individual or community should hold excessive control over land while others remained landless. This would not only address the issue of landlessness but also help in the economic empowerment of Dalits and other backward communities, providing them with the means to achieve economic independence and social dignity.

### Land Ceiling Laws:

Dr. Ambedkar strongly advocated for land ceiling laws, which would set a maximum limit on how much land an individual could own. He believed that when land was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or families, it led to the exploitation of the landless and small farmers. Land ceiling laws would prevent the monopolization of land by wealthy landlords and ensure that surplus land could be redistributed to the landless and the poor.

This reform was necessary to reduce rural poverty and ensure that land was used to its fullest productive potential. By limiting the amount of land an individual could own, Ambedkar believed that a more balanced distribution of agricultural resources could be achieved.

### Nationalizing and collective farming:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was of the opinion that all agricultural land should be nationalized by the government and a system of collective farming should be established, so that fragmentation of farmland could be prevented. If the land is distributed fairly, agricultural production can increase and the standard of living of farmers can improve. According to him, agriculture is not merely a matter of private property, but a matter of social interest, and social reform.

### Modernization of Agriculture:

Ambedkar also believed in the modernization of agriculture. He understood that traditional agricultural methods were often inefficient and could not sustain

the growing population. He suggested that agriculture should be treated as an industry, and farmers should be provided with modern technology, better irrigation facilities, and improved farming practices. He believed that industrializing agriculture would increase productivity, create new employment opportunities, and lead to overall economic growth.

Ambedkar was ahead of his time in recognizing the importance of integrating agriculture with the rest of the economy. He believed that agricultural development could transform the rural economy and improve farmers' standards of living. His ideas on agricultural modernization were focused on increasing productivity and making the agricultural sector more efficient.

### Constitutional provisions by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar related to agriculture:

Dr. Ambedkar not only studied the problems in the agricultural sector such as Zamindari, Ryotwari, and Khot systems, but also made constitutional provisions to address them.

#### Abolition of the Zamindari System (Article 31A):

As per Article 31A, the Zamindari system was abolished, and protection was given to land reform laws. This provision ensured that exploitative land systems were dismantled and that land could be redistributed more justly.

#### Land Distribution and Social Justice (Articles 39(b) and 39(c)):

Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on land distribution aimed to resolve the deep-rooted social and economic inequality present in rural India. Since land ownership was seen as a symbol of power and prestige, it led to caste-based discrimination.

Ambedkar's thoughts are clearly reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), especially in Articles 39(b) and 39(c), which instruct the State to distribute wealth and resources in such a way that they do not become concentrated in the hands of a few.



- Article 39(b) ensures the distribution of resources for the benefit of the common people.
- Article 39(c) prevents the concentration of wealth, which could lead to exploitation.

These provisions reflect Ambedkar's vision of economic equality in agriculture.

### **Rights of Agricultural Labourers (Article 17):**

Dr. Ambedkar worked to end the exploitation of farmers, especially agricultural labourers from marginalized communities. Article 17, which provides for the abolition of untouchability, was a significant contribution. It allowed Dalit agricultural labourers to receive fair wages for their labour and claim rights over land. Historically, Dalit labourers were exploited by upper-caste landlords. Ambedkar's efforts toward the abolition of untouchability gave these labourers the opportunity to demand just wages and ownership rights. Additionally, Article 43 makes a provision for living wages for labourers, which became important for agricultural workers because it ensured they received fair remuneration for their work. Ambedkar believed that not just land, but improvement in the standard of living of farmers was necessary, which included adequate wages and better working conditions.

### **Promotion of Welfare and Economic Empowerment (Article 46):**

Another important part of Dr. Ambedkar's commitment to social and economic justice is Article 46, which includes provisions for the protection of the economic interests of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This article directs the State to provide special provisions for these marginalized communities, the majority of whom depend on agriculture. Due to this provision, the benefits of land reforms and agricultural policies reached these groups.

### **Relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's Agricultural Thoughts in the Modern Era:**

#### **Land Inequality:**

Dr. Ambedkar's insistence on land reforms and equitable distribution is still useful today to eliminate inequality in land ownership, especially when the issue of unequal landholding arises.

#### **Modernization and Technology:**

Dr. Ambedkar's perspective of looking at agriculture as an industry and his emphasis on its modernization is equally important today. There is a need to increase agricultural productivity and efficiency through the adoption of new technology and modern methods.

#### **State Support:**

Dr. Ambedkar's belief that the state should play a cooperative and supportive role in the agricultural sector remains applicable even today. We can see the reflection of this thought in government policies and agricultural development initiatives.

#### **Cooperative Farming:**

The idea of cooperative farming, where farmers pool their resources and do collective farming, is still relevant today. It especially serves as a solution to the problems faced by small and marginal farmers.

#### **Industrialization and the Rural Economy:**

Dr. Ambedkar had emphasized the integration of agriculture with other industries and the modernization of the rural economy. These thoughts are still important to overcome the problems of rural poverty and unemployment.

#### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on agriculture were mainly based on the principles of social justice and equality. He proposed revolutionary measures such as the abolition of the Zamindari system, land redistribution, land ceiling laws, and modernization of agriculture to end the exploitation of farmers. In Ambedkar's view, agricultural reform was not only





important from an economic perspective but was also a crucial step toward achieving social justice.

The Constitution's provisions for social justice, including reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, reflect Ambedkar's concerns about the plight of marginalized communities, many of whom are involved in agriculture. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a jurist. He accurately identified the flaws in the Indian agricultural system and suggested various remedies to eradicate them from the root.

The Indian Constitution doesn't explicitly codify a specific agricultural model, its provisions on state intervention, land reforms, and social justice resonate with Ambedkar's vision of a state-led, socially just agricultural system that benefits all, especially the marginalized.

Although agriculture was not the central focus of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work, his contribution in making agriculture a source of income not just for a few, but for all, was extremely valuable. even in today's times, Babasaheb's thoughts on agriculture serve as a guiding light.

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