



A STUDY ON DR. AMBEDKAR AS MODERN ECONOMIC THINKER

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Abstract:

"Ambedkar is my father in Economics His contribution in the field of economics is marvellous and will be remembered forever . . . " "Dr. Amartya Sen...."

This research studies how Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, was a modern economists who not only analysed economic problems during British India and post-independence but also had an interdisciplinary approach. He was jurist and social reformer who addressed various issues in the administration of East India Company, socio-political issues of Indian society and so on. In this paper his major contributions to the Indian economy with respect to society.

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Introduction:

B.R. Ambedkar, a towering figure in Indian history, is celebrated not only as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and a reformer of social justice but also as a profound economic thinker. His contributions to economic thought, though frequently overshadowed by his political and social reforms, are deeply significant and continue to reverberate in modern discussions on economic policy and social equity. One of Ambedkar's core economic philosophies was the belief that economic reforms must go hand in hand with social reforms. He argued that addressing caste-based inequalities was essential for achieving true economic progress. His advocacy for land reforms, industrialization, and equitable resource distribution was embedded in his vision of creating a society where economic opportunities were accessible to all, regardless of caste or class. The economic study of Dr.

B.R. Ambedkar represents a unique blend of academic rigor and a deep commitment to social justice. As one of India's first trained economists, Ambedkar's work addressed critical issues similar as economic inequality, land reforms, and the part of the state in fostering inclusive growth.

Conceptual Framework

• Historical Context:

Analyse the socio-economic conditions of India during Ambedkar's time.

Understand the influence of colonial policies on India's economy and Ambedkar's critique of these policies.

• Core Economic Ideas:

Examine Ambedkar's views on public finance, monetary policy, and land reforms.

Explore his advocacy for industrialization and its role in reducing dependence on agriculture.



• **Interconnection of Social and Economic Reforms:**

Investigate how Ambedkar linked economic progress with social justice, particularly in addressing caste-based inequalities.

Study his proposals for equitable resource distribution and their implications for marginalized communities.

• **Policy Contributions:**

Assess Ambedkar's role in shaping India's federal finance system and economic provisions in the Constitution.

Evaluate his recommendations for labour rights and the nationalization of industries.

Objectives:

- To study Dr. Ambedkar's interdisciplinary approach for Indian Economy.
- To understand what reforms he brought in Indian Economy and Society.

Literature Review :

Dr. N. Ganesh Naik - "Revisiting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Economic Ideologies and Contemporary Relevance": This study explores Ambedkar's economic philosophy, focusing on his contributions to public finance, currency stability, and agrarian reforms. It highlights his role in integrating economic provisions into the Indian Constitution and examines the relevance of his ideas in addressing contemporary socio-economic challenges.

B. Sailakshmi - "The Economic Thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – A Review": This paper delves into Ambedkar's economic beliefs, particularly his advocacy for land reforms, industrialization, and labour rights. It emphasizes his critique of the caste system's economic implications and his vision for democratic collectivism to achieve economic efficiency and social justice.

Rajput Kundansingh Vijaysingh - "Relevance of Dr. Ambedkar's Thoughts and Current Economic Challenges": This research discusses the applicability of Ambedkar's ideas to modern economic issues, such as agrarian distress, unemployment, and inequality. It highlights his emphasis on land consolidation, industrialization, and labour welfare as solutions to India's economic challenges.

Sanjay Tupe - "Selective Economic Thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Their Relevance Today": This study focuses on Ambedkar's contribution to monetary economics and agricultural development. It highlights his pioneering ideas on currency stability and rural economic transformation, which remain relevant for developing countries.

Research Methodology:

The study aims to explore Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as a modern economic thinker, with a focus on secondary data collection. Here's how the methodology can be structured:

Research Design:

Type of Research: The study is historical and analytical in nature.

Approach: Qualitative, utilizing secondary data sources to analyse and interpret Ambedkar's economic philosophy and its implications.

Secondary Sources:

The research will rely solely on secondary data sources, which include:

Primary Writings by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar:

Analytical review of Ambedkar's seminal works like **The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution**, **The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India**, and other economic writings.

Academic Papers and Journals:

Studies such as **Revisiting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Economic Ideologies and Contemporary Relevance** and **The Economic Thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** to examine his critiques and proposals.



Research on his ideas around labour rights, land reforms, industrialization, and currency stability.

Books and Biographies:

Scholarly books focusing on Ambedkar's socio-economic contributions.

Biographies detailing his life experiences and their influence on his economic thought.

Reports and Historical Documents:

Government reports and historical records from colonial and post-independence India that contextualize Ambedkar's work and its impact.

Previous Literature Reviews:

Compilation of insights from previous literature reviews on Ambedkar's contributions, as highlighted above.

Dependent Variables:

Economic Inclusivity: Access to economic opportunities for marginalized communities.

Industrial Growth: Development of industries and reduction in agricultural dependency.

Social Equity: Reduction in caste-based economic disparities.

Policy Impact: Effectiveness of Ambedkar's ideas in shaping India's socio-economic policies.

Independent Variables:

Economic Policies: Land reforms, industrialization, and public finance advocated by Ambedkar.

Social Reforms: Measures addressing caste-based inequalities and promoting social justice.

Historical Context: Socio-economic conditions during Ambedkar's time.

Findings:

Dr. Ambedkar's key contribution:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's economic policy brief reflects his vision for creating a just and equitable society through transformative economic reforms. Here are some key aspects of his economic policies:

Land Reforms:

Nationalization of Land: Ambedkar advocated for

the nationalization of agricultural land to eliminate exploitation by landlords and ensure equitable distribution among farmers. He believed that land should be owned collectively and managed by the state to promote fairness and productivity

Abolition of the Zamindari System: He strongly opposed the zamindari system, which concentrated land ownership in the hands of a few and perpetuated economic inequalities. Ambedkar called for its abolition to empower the rural poor and marginalized communities.

Land Redistribution: Ambedkar emphasized the need for redistributing land to landless farmers and labourers. He argued that equitable access to land was essential for reducing poverty and fostering economic self-reliance.

Agrarian Reforms: His agrarian reform ideas extended beyond land redistribution. Ambedkar advocated for modernizing agriculture, improving irrigation facilities, and providing financial support to farmers to enhance productivity and living standards.

Social Justice in Land Ownership: Ambedkar's land reform proposals were aimed at addressing caste-based discrimination in land ownership. He believed that equitable land distribution would help dismantle the hierarchical social structure and promote inclusivity.

Industrialization:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's land reform proposals were deeply rooted in his vision for social and economic justice. Here are some key details:

Industrialization as a Solution to Agrarian Problems:

Ambedkar believed that India's over-reliance on agriculture was a major cause of poverty and unemployment. He advocated for industrialization as a means to absorb surplus labour from the agricultural sector and provide alternative employment opportunities.



State-Led Industrialization: He emphasized the role of the state in spearheading industrial development. Ambedkar proposed the establishment of state-owned enterprises to ensure equitable distribution of resources and prevent exploitation by private monopolies.

Labour Rights and Welfare: Ambedkar was a strong advocate for the rights of workers. He supported the implementation of labour laws to ensure fair wages, reasonable working hours, and safe working conditions. His efforts laid the foundation for labour welfare policies in India.

Infrastructure Development: He highlighted the importance of developing infrastructure, such as transportation and energy, to support industrial growth. Ambedkar's contributions to water resource management, including his role in the construction of dams and irrigation projects, were instrumental in supporting both agriculture and industry.

Economic Self-Reliance: Ambedkar envisioned industrialization as a pathway to economic self-reliance for India. He believed that a strong industrial base would reduce dependence on imports and strengthen the nation's economy.

Social Justice through Industrialization: For Ambedkar, industrialization was not just an economic necessity but also a tool for social transformation. He saw it as a means to break the caste-based occupational hierarchy and provide equal opportunities for all.

Public Finance:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made significant contributions to the field of public finance, key details:

Federal Financial System: Ambedkar played a pivotal role in shaping India's federal financial system. He emphasized the importance of balanced resource allocation between the central and state governments to ensure economic stability and welfare.

Analysis of Public Debt and Taxation: He conducted a detailed analysis of India's public debt and

taxation system during the colonial period. Ambedkar highlighted the inefficiencies and inequities in the system and proposed reforms to make it more equitable.

Fiscal Responsibility: Ambedkar advocated for fiscal responsibility and efficient management of public finances. He believed that sound financial policies were essential for economic growth and social welfare.

Monetary Policy: His work on monetary policy, particularly in "The Problem of the Rupee", addressed issues related to currency stability and the management of public finances. His ideas contributed to the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India.

Economic Welfare: Ambedkar's vision for public finance was deeply rooted in his commitment to social justice. He proposed policies that aimed to reduce economic disparities and promote the welfare of marginalized communities.

Currency Stability:

Critique of the Gold-Exchange Standard: In his seminal work, "The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution", Ambedkar critiqued the gold-exchange standard used during British India. He argued that this system was unsuitable for a developing country like India as it prioritized exchange stability over internal price stability, leading to inflation and economic instability.

Foundation for the Reserve Bank of India: His recommendations on monetary policy and currency management laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India. Ambedkar's ideas influenced the design of India's central banking system to ensure financial stability and economic development.

Advocacy for a Managed Currency System: Ambedkar proposed a managed currency system that would ensure price stability and economic growth. He emphasized the importance of controlling the supply

of money to prevent inflation and deflation, which could harm the economy.

Social Democracy:

Principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity: Ambedkar emphasized that social democracy is based on these three principles, which are essential for a cohesive and inclusive society.

Interconnection with Political Democracy: He argued that political democracy cannot survive without social democracy, as social inequalities undermine democratic values.

Annihilation of Caste: Ambedkar believed that the caste system was a major obstacle to social democracy and advocated for its complete eradication.

Dignity and Respect for All: Social democracy, according to Ambedkar, requires recognizing the inherent dignity of every individual and fostering mutual respect.

Social Reforms Precede Political Reforms: He stressed that social reforms must come before political reforms to ensure the success of democracy.

Moral Conscience of Society: Ambedkar highlighted the importance of cultivating a strong moral conscience in society to protect rights and promote equality.

National Solidarity: He believed that social democracy was essential for national unity and solidarity, especially in a society divided by caste and class.

Labour Rights:

Ambedkar's contributions to labour rights were transformative, laying the foundation for modern labour laws in India. Key details:

Eight-Hour Workday: Ambedkar was instrumental in introducing the eight-hour workday in India, replacing the earlier practice of longer working hours. This was a landmark achievement in improving workers' quality of life.

Labour Welfare: As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Ambedkar worked on labour welfare policies, including maternity benefits, health insurance, and workplace safety regulations.

Right to Organize: He supported the right of workers to form unions and engage in collective bargaining, empowering them to negotiate fair wages and better working conditions.

Social Security: Ambedkar advocated for social security measures to protect workers from economic uncertainties, such as unemployment and illness.

Directive Principles of State Policy: His influence is evident in the Indian Constitution, where labour rights are enshrined in the Directive Principles of State Policy, emphasizing fair wages, humane working conditions, and the prohibition of child labour.

Focus on Equality: Ambedkar's labour policies were rooted in his commitment to social justice, aiming to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all workers.

Recommendations:

Promote Awareness of Ambedkar's Economic Contributions: Highlight his economic ideas in academic curricula, particularly in economics and social sciences, to ensure his contributions are widely recognized beyond his role as a social reformer.

Interdisciplinary Research: Encourage studies that integrate Ambedkar's economic philosophy with modern disciplines like sustainable development, environmental economics, and digital economy.

Focus on Inclusive Growth: Develop policies inspired by Ambedkar's vision of social and economic democracy to promote equitable resource distribution and reduce caste-based economic disparities.

Conclusion:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a visionary economist whose ideas revolve around achieving social justice through economic reforms. He advocated for land redistribution, industrialization, labour rights, and a



stable currency system to address inequalities and empower marginalized communities. His emphasis on linking social democracy with economic democracy aimed to create a just and inclusive society. Ambedkar's economic thought remains relevant in tackling modern challenges like inequality and sustainable development.

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Cite This Article:

Maghade S.V. (2025) A Study on Dr. Ambedkar as Modern Economic Thinker. In **Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal: Vol. XIV** (Number II, pp. 197–202).

Doi- <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15564258>