



### ROLE OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN INDIA

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#### Abstract:

*“If you ask me, my ideal would be the society based on liberty, equality and fraternity. An ideal society should be mobile and full of channels of conveying a change taking place in one part to other parts.”*

- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, was a pioneering social reformer whose ideas and policies have significantly contributed to the principles of sustainable development and inclusive growth in India. His advocacy for social justice, economic empowerment, and institutional reforms laid the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable society. This paper explores Dr. Ambedkar's contributions towards sustainable development and inclusive growth, analyzing his economic, social, and political interventions that continue to shape India's development trajectory. The paper is based on the secondary data collected from various books, journals, Newspapers, Dr. Ambedkar's speeches, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The study concluded Dr. Ambedkar's vision continues to inspire contemporary policies in India's pursuit of sustainable development and inclusive growth. His emphasis on social justice, economic planning, and environmental conservation aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr. Ambedkar's life and work serve as a powerful inspiration for finding possibilities amidst challenges and promoting nation-building through inclusive growth and social reform.*

**Keywords:** *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sustainable Development, Inclusive Growth, Social Justice, Economic Empowerment, Constitutional Reforms.*

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#### Introduction:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a visionary leader whose thoughts and policies encompassed economic planning, social equity, and environmental sustainability. His contributions laid the groundwork for the sustainable and inclusive growth of marginalized communities in India. His approach integrated economic justice with social inclusion,

emphasizing human rights, labor welfare, and the redistribution of resources. This paper examines his role in shaping policies that align with the principles of sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a pioneering economic theorist who made significant contributions to the field of economics, particularly in the context of India. At a remarkably young age, he demonstrated a deep

understanding of contemporary research and wrote extensively on various aspects of economics. His work was widely recognized by economists globally. Dr. Ambedkar was a trailblazer in examining the relationship between socio-political variables and the economy in India. He also explored the role of development projects in transforming the country. Notably, he was the first Indian economist to comprehensively study public finances, taxation, and monetary standards in British India. Dr. Ambedkar's economic theories focused on promoting social justice and equality. He advocated for state socialism, nationalization of key industries, and land reforms to address economic disparities. His vision for India's economic development emphasized the importance of industrialization, education, and entrepreneurship in uplifting marginalized communities. Dr. Ambedkar's work had a lasting impact on Indian society and continues to influence policymakers and economists today. His contributions to the Indian Constitution, which enshrines principles of social justice and equality, reflect his commitment to creating a more just and equitable society. As a champion of social justice and economic empowerment, Dr. Ambedkar's legacy remains a powerful inspiration for generations to come (Ingle, 2006 & Cavanan Edwin, 2017)

#### Objectives of the study:

1. To study Dr. Ambedkar's contributions towards sustainable development in India.
2. To study Dr. Ambedkar's contributions towards inclusive growth in India.

#### Research Methodology:

The paper is based on the secondary data collected from various books, journals, Newspapers, Dr. Ambedkar's speeches, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

#### Theoretical Background:

Quality of life, environmental health and sustainable development and inclusive growth are interconnected

and has impact society. The world is surrounded by conflicting social standards -massive poverty, inequalities and poor standard of living co-exist with rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and technological advancements (Subramanian & el, 2006). SDGs are a collection of 17 interconnected global goals designed to improve quality of living and achieve a more sustainable future for all. The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by 2030. The 17 SDGs are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reduced Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals. The SDGs are set up with a 15 year action plan encompassing holistic human development and improved quality of living in sectors including education, health, sanitation, employment and equality (Pedersen, 2018).

Global adoption and progression of the SDGs: The UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the annual space for global monitoring of the SDGs, under the auspices of the United Nations economic and Social Council. The online publication SDG- Tracker was launched in June 2018 and presents data across all available indicators [5, 6]. The SDG-Tracker has a global coverage and tracks whether the world is making progress towards the SDGs. It aims to make the data on the 17 goals available to a wide audience in an understandable manner. According to these tracker reports, more than 165 countries have adopted and are striving to achieve the SDGs. Across all 17 goals, Sweden tops the list of



countries surveyed. It is, on average, 84.5% of the way to achieving the targets envisaged for 2030. Following closely were Scandinavian neighbours, Denmark, Norway and Finland. Western European countries took the remainder of the top 10 slots. (unsdglearn.org)

### Results and Discussion:

#### Role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Sustainable Development:

##### SDG 1 - No poverty

The UN SDG 1, one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations in 2015, calls for the end of poverty in all forms. Achieving this goal includes finding solutions to new threats caused by socio- economic divides. SDG 1 focuses not just on people living in poverty, but also on the services people rely on and social policy that either promotes or prevents poverty. Dr. Ambedkar played an important role in land reform and the state economic development. He diagnosed that poverty of the depressed backward classes in India is due to the unjustified unequal distribution of natural resources and their denial to the poor. It is different for the rich high classes (Vipparthi & Ramesh ,2016). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) aims to eradicate poverty in all its forms, recognizing the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and poverty. This goal goes beyond addressing poverty among individuals, also focusing on the services they rely on and social policies that can either alleviate or exacerbate poverty.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a key figure in India's economic development, played a significant role in shaping land reform and state economic policies. He identified the root cause of poverty among marginalized communities in India as the unjust distribution of natural resources, which denied the poor access to these resources. This, he argued, was in stark contrast to the experience of the wealthy and privileged classes.

Dr. Ambedkar's work highlighted the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to address poverty. His ideas continue to influence discussions on poverty reduction and sustainable development. Dr. Ambedkar's insights on poverty and inequality remain relevant today, particularly in the context of SDG 1. His work emphasizes the importance of addressing the root causes of poverty, including unequal access to resources and opportunities ( James ,2022).

By understanding the complex relationships between socio-economic factors and poverty, policymakers can develop more effective strategies to achieve SDG 1 and create a more equitable society. Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to this discussion continue to inspire efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

##### SDG 2 - No hunger

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a pioneering economist and social reformer, emphasized the importance of investing in agriculture to achieve food security and sufficiency. His vision for a self-sufficient India was rooted in a three-pronged approach to socialism <sup>1</sup>:

Ambedkar believed that state ownership of land would help redistribute resources more equitably, ensuring that marginalized communities have access to this vital resource. He advocated for the state to maintain resources for production, providing farmers with the necessary support to increase productivity and efficiency. Ambedkar's approach emphasized the need for a fair distribution of resources, ensuring that everyone has access to the means of production and economic opportunities.

His economic theories also highlighted the importance of:

- **Industrialization:** Ambedkar saw industrialization as a key driver of economic growth and job creation, which would help absorb surplus labor from the agricultural sector.



- Education and Entrepreneurship: He believed that education and entrepreneurship were essential for empowering marginalized communities and promoting economic mobility.

Ambedkar's vision for India's economic development was groundbreaking, and his ideas continue to influence policymakers and economists today. By prioritizing agriculture, social justice, and economic empowerment, he aimed to create a more equitable society where everyone has access to resources and opportunities <sup>2</sup>. (The Times of India, 2015)

### SDG 4 - Quality education

**“Knowledge is the foundation of a man’s life.”**

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes the importance of quality education, recognizing it as a fundamental foundation for human development. This goal aims to ensure that all individuals have access to inclusive and equitable education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a champion of social justice and education, worked tirelessly to make quality education accessible to all, regardless of caste or creed. He believed that education was essential for the empowerment of marginalized communities and advocated for policies that would provide them with equal opportunities.

### Ambedkar's Vision for Education

Ambedkar's vision for education was centered around providing good education to all sections of society, without any discrimination. He fought for educational reservations for marginalized classes, recognizing the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality.

### Relevance to SDG 4

Ambedkar's work on education is closely aligned with the objectives of SDG 4, which seeks to provide children and young people with quality and accessible education. His efforts to promote inclusive and

equitable education continue to inspire initiatives aimed at achieving this goal.

By emphasizing the importance of education, Ambedkar's work highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to learning, one that addresses the diverse needs of individuals and promotes lifelong learning opportunities. His legacy serves as a reminder of the transformative power of education in shaping a more just and equitable society.

### SDG 5 - Gender equality

**“I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.”**

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls worldwide. Key challenges include :

- Violence Against Women: 1 in 5 women under 50 experience physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.
- -Unpaid Care Work: Women do 2.6 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men, leading to lower earnings and limited time for other activities.
- Economic Inequality: Women lack equal access to economic resources, hindering development and perpetuating inequality.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a champion of social justice, emphasized the importance of women's progress in measuring a community's advancement. His work on the Hindu Code Bill promoted gender equality in laws of inheritance and marriage, giving women more rights and empowering them in society <sup>2</sup>.

### SDG 10 - Reduced inequality

**“Equality is not just a legal right; it is a social responsibility.”**

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10) aims to reduce income inequality within and among countries. This goal is rooted in the ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R.



Ambedkar, who pioneered efforts to reduce social and economic inequalities in India.

Dr. Ambedkar's work highlighted the deep-seated issues of inequality in India, particularly the caste system's role in perpetuating graded inequality. He argued that this system:- Restricts individual growth: By imposing social status based on birth, the caste system limits opportunities for personal development.- Ignores individual preferences: The system prioritizes hereditary occupations over individual sentiments and preferences.- Perpetuates inequality: Graded inequality is a fundamental principle of the caste system, making it challenging to achieve social and economic equality.

### Relevance to SDG 10

Dr. Ambedkar's ideas on inequality and social justice align with the objectives of SDG 10. His vision for a more equitable society emphasizes <sup>1</sup>:

- Inclusive economic growth: Reducing inequality and promoting economic opportunities for all.
- Social justice: Addressing the root causes of inequality, such as the caste system, to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities.
- Human rights: Protecting the rights of marginalized communities, like the Dalits, to promote dignity and equality.

### Role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Inclusive Growth in India:

#### Inclusive Education

Baba Saheb has also said that 'Education is the milk of a lioness whoever drinks it will roar'. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for education emphasizes its role in connecting marginalized communities to the mainstream and empowering them to claim their civil rights. Key aspects of his educational philosophy include :

- Equal Access to Education: Ensuring quality education for all, regardless of caste or social background, to bring positive change in society.

- Decentralization and Contemporary Curriculum: Promoting decentralized education with a modern curriculum to foster inclusivity and relevance.
- Mother Tongue Education: Advocating for education in one's mother tongue to increase accessibility and understanding.
- Universal and Approachable Education: Making education universally available and accessible to all, with a focus on innovative and technical learning.
- Social Justice and Empowerment: Integrating social justice principles into education to empower individuals and promote a more equitable society.

Dr. Ambedkar's ideas have influenced India's National Education Policy 2020, which aims to create a more inclusive and equitable education system. His legacy as a champion of education for marginalized communities continues to inspire efforts towards achieving social stability, holistic development, and capacity building through quality education ( Gupta,2022).

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for social equality is deeply rooted in Indian values, focusing on inclusive economic growth and democratic decentralization. Key aspects of his philosophy include <sup>1</sup>:

- Empowering marginalized communities: Through education and economic opportunities, aiming to break the chains of social inequality.
- Challenging discriminatory practices: Rejecting caste-based prejudices and promoting social justice and equality.
- Promoting economic democracy: Encouraging self-reliance and inclusive growth, particularly in rural areas, to bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups.
- Structural reforms: Advocating for changes in socio-economic and political structures to achieve true equality and inclusive development.





His ideas are reflected in initiatives like the Self-Reliant India campaign, which aims to promote inclusive growth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. By re-absorbing Dr. Ambedkar's ideas on economic policies, India can work towards a more equitable society. His vision for socio-cultural progress emphasizes the importance of:

- Abolishing untouchability: A crucial step towards achieving equality and inclusive development.
- Rational and scientific thinking: Encouraging a shift away from unscientific social beliefs and towards a more progressive society (Gupta,2022).

Dr. Ambedkar's life and work serve as a powerful inspiration for finding possibilities amidst challenges and promoting nation-building through inclusive growth and social reform .As India celebrates the 134th birth anniversary of this national icon, Babasaheb remains an inspiration for millions of Indians and proponents of equality and social justice across the globe. Fittingly, although it's a matter of coincidence, one can see the trace of Babasaheb's radiant vision in the "Sustainable Development Goals" that are set to be formally adopted by the UN General Assembly to eliminate poverty, hunger and socio-economic inequality by 2030( Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India,2023).

### Conclusion:

Dr. Ambedkar's thought tried to establish equality and equality-based society and polity by eliminating such inequality based socio-cultural perceived succession. The India of the 21st century is on the path of progress based on equality and equity. Dr. Ambedkar's vision continues to inspire contemporary policies in India's pursuit of sustainable development and inclusive growth. His emphasis on social justice, economic planning, and environmental conservation aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Government initiatives such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and

affirmative action policies reflect his enduring influence. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to sustainable development and inclusive growth remain foundational to India's progress. His advocacy for equitable resource distribution, economic planning, social justice, and environmental sustainability continues to shape policies aimed at building a more inclusive and sustainable society. By revisiting his ideas, India can further strengthen its commitment to sustainable and inclusive growth, ensuring the empowerment of marginalized communities and long-term national development.

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