



DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO INDIA'S WATER POLICY AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY

Dr. Mahadeo Yadav

Associate Professor

Head, Department of Business Economics

B. K. Birla College, Kalyan

Introduction:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, made a significant contributions in various fields such as law, conomics, social justice, and politics. However, his contributions in the field of water policy are often overlooked. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on water management were visionary.

He proposed numerous concepts and introduced various strategies for the management of water resources. Ambedkar was a pioneer in the field of developing multi-purpose projects in India.. He used to say that local communities should be involved in water management. He would often state that Water cannot be separated into various sections and it should be used in a multipurpose manner. In this research paper, I examined how Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's ideas on water management are beneficial in addressing water

issues in India today. Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar played a crucial role in the conceptualization of several significant projects as a Member (Labour) in the executive council of the Viceroy. Babasaheb played a vital role in formulating and implementing water policies in India, and his contributions have been invaluable in developing the water infrastructure of our country

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was instrumental in creating the Multi-Purpose River Valley Projects and Large Dam Technologies in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the creator of the Damodar Valley project, the Bhakra-Nangal Dam project, the Sone River Valley project, and the Hirakud Dam project. In 1945, under the chairmanship of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, it was decided to invest in the potential benefits of controlling the Mahanadi for multi-purpose use.

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Objectives of the Study

1. To study the ideas of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on water management
2. To study today's relevance of Ambedkar's water management

Key Aspects of Ambedkar's Water Policy:

Damodar Valley project

It was the first multipurpose river valley project in

India in 1944 on the lines of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Due to its frequent flooding issues, the Damodar Valley is referred to as the "Sorrow of Bengal." To address the issue, Babasaheb had the Central Power Board set up the necessary apparatus, direct the planners and engineers, and carry out the plan that was created under his supervision. Babasaheb was in charge of the Damodar Valley



project till 1946. After then, Damodar Development Corporation was granted complete control of the dam's construction

Bhakra-Nangal dam

It is India's biggest multipurpose river valley project, the Highest gravity dam in India. When Babasaheb was the member in charge of irrigation and power from 1942 to 1946, he made a significant effort to ensure that the Bhakra Dam project was given top attention. As Babasaheb served as the Viceroy's Council Member for Irrigation in 1945–1946, this job was completed.

Hirakud Multipurpose Project

Ambedkar also supported the construction of Hirakud Dam on the Mahanadi River, another example of his vision for multipurpose river valley projects. The Hirakud Dam is built across the Mahanadi River, about 15 kilometers from Sambalpur, in the state of Odisha in India. It is the highest gravity dam in India.

Establishment of Central Water Commission

The Central Water Commission is a premier Technical institution in India that functions under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. It was instituted as The Central Water, Irrigation, and Navigation Commission in 1945 at the recommendation of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, who was then a member (Labour) of Viceroy's Executive Council. Dr. Ambedkar asserted that there was a need for a technical body at the center to efficiently utilize the water resources of the country.

Sone and Kosi River Project:

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized the importance of India's water resources and presented important ideas regarding water management. In this he emphasized large- scale projects for dams, reservoirs and canals About the Sone and Kosi dams in particular, he discussed how the water of these rivers could be used for agriculture, hydropower generation and flood control through planned management of these rivers. Sone Dam (Sone River Project): The

project based on water management of the river Sone was very important from Babasaheb's point of view. He emphasized supplying water to agriculture by facilitating irrigation through this dam. Also, he thought that it would be used for generating hydroelectric power. Kosi Dam: The River Kosi is known to be one of the most flood-prone rivers in Bihar. Babasaheb Ambedkar conceived the idea of building a dam on the Kosi River, so that the dam could be used for flood control, irrigation and hydroelectricity. He had explained that the Kosi Dam would control the flood situation in Bihar and improve agriculture in that area.

Relevance

Dr. Ambedkar's vision and advocacy for irrigation development in India were based on his belief that access to water was a fundamental right that should be available to all citizens, and that irrigation was essential for achieving economic and social equality in the country. Thus, in conclusion we can say that Dr Ambedkar was far more than a legal and social reformer. He was also a visionary economist and architect of sustainable development.

Ambedkar's water policy were: Water as a Common Resource: Dr. Ambedkar believed that water was a common resource that belonged to all citizens of India, and it was the state's responsibility to ensure that water was distributed equitably among all sections of society.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was certainly aware that agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and therefore, without the development of the agricultural sector, there would be no development of the country. That is why water was an equally essential requirement for the growth of agricultural production along with different factors and, accordingly, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, while thinking about the agricultural sector, had prepared a framework for water management and agricultural development as a



complement to how to plan water and irrigation.

At the time of India's independence, only 20 percent of the agricultural water supply facilities were available, so after independence, India invested heavily in dams, canals, river connection projects, wells, and lakes to achieve self-sufficiency in terms of food grains. Therefore, by the year 2024, 56% of agriculture in India will have water supply facilities. But even today, 44% of agriculture is dry land. Even today, agriculture in many states depends on the monsoon. India receives very heavy rains during monsoons, but due to a lack of proper water planning, people do not even get drinking water in summer. It is a fact that in summer many villages have to supply water by tankers for drinking water. Also, compared to other countries in the world, water management is very important in India because of the immense use of water in agriculture, industry, and domestic use. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized that there is no alternative to developing India except agriculture, so he emphasized dams and inter-linking projects, but even today, most of the agriculture in India is seen as dry land. On one side, there are large floods in some places, while on the other there is drought. That's why, in this research paper, I chose Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on water management and water management in India in present times for study.

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