



THE ROLE OF DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR FOR THE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH OF MODERN INDIA

Prof. Dr. Dewrao Sukhadeorao Manwar

Prof. Head, Dept. of Economics

Kirti College, Dadar, (W), Mumbai-28.

Abstract:

This paper critically examines the transformative role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in laying the foundational pillars for sustainable and inclusive growth in modern India. Through his multifaceted contributions—as a jurist, economist, social reformer, and principal architect of the Indian Constitution—Ambedkar envisioned an egalitarian society that addressed the systemic injustices embedded within Indian society. By analyzing his work in constitutional drafting, economic thought, education, and social justice reforms, the paper explores how Ambedkar’s legacy continues to shape contemporary discourses on sustainability and inclusion. The research incorporates historical evidence, comparative policy analysis, and theoretical frameworks from political science and development studies to highlight Ambedkar’s enduring relevance in modern India’s development trajectory.

Keywords: *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Development, Social Justice, Indian Constitution, SDGs*

Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

Introduction:

India’s development journey has been marked by a complex interplay of historical, political, and socio-economic forces. Among the towering figures who influenced this trajectory, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar stands out for his revolutionary vision of an equitable and inclusive India. Born into an oppressed Dalit community, Ambedkar rose to become a jurist, economist, social reformer, and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar’s vision transcended legal reforms; he sought to create a just society where equality, dignity, and liberty were not merely constitutional promises but lived realities. At a time when notions of “sustainability” and “inclusive growth” were yet to gain global prominence, Ambedkar’s policies and philosophies aligned

organically with these principles. This paper evaluates his enduring contributions in light of contemporary development frameworks and argues for the integration of his ideology into India’s future developmental discourse.

Objective of Study: The present study aims to:

- Analyze Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s contributions to social and economic justice.
- Explore how his ideas align with sustainable and inclusive development principles.
- Assess the relevance of Ambedkar’s legacy in the formulation and implementation of contemporary policy in India.
- Examine the impact of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s social reform movements on contemporary Indian



society.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of policies and initiatives inspired by Ambedkar's vision in achieving social justice and equality.

Research Methodology: This qualitative research draws on secondary data, including academic books, scholarly articles, government reports, and primary texts authored by Dr. Ambedkar. Thematic analysis is used to explore the intersection of Ambedkar's philosophy with modern frameworks like the SDGs. The methodology emphasizes a comparative analysis to trace the continuity and evolution of Ambedkar's vision within India's current socio-economic context.

Dr. Ambedkar's Vision of Inclusive Growth:

Dr. Ambedkar's vision of inclusive growth was not limited to economic upliftment but extended to political empowerment, social equality, and educational access. His inclusive vision was rooted in the annihilation of caste—a deeply entrenched system of social exclusion in India. He believed that true progress could only be achieved when all members of society had equal opportunities to participate and thrive. Dr. Ambedkar envisioned a society where individuals were judged based on their merit and not their birth, a society where everyone had the chance to reach their full potential. He recognized the interconnectedness of social, economic, and political factors and emphasized the need for a holistic approach to achieving true inclusion. Dr. Ambedkar's vision remains relevant today, as we strive to build a more just and equitable society.

1. Annihilation of Caste and Social Justice

Ambedkar recognized caste as not merely a social hierarchy but as an oppressive institution that curbed human potential. In his seminal work **Annihilation of Caste** (1936), he argued that social democracy is essential for the functioning of political democracy. His call for dismantling caste privilege was an early assertion of inclusive

citizenship. By advocating for the rights of Dalits, women, and minorities, Ambedkar laid the foundation for policies that now constitute India's affirmative action framework, including reservations in education, employment, and legislatures. These measures are intrinsic to inclusive development, ensuring marginalized communities have access to resources and representation.

2. Political Democracy and Participatory Governance:

Ambedkar believed that political democracy must translate into social and economic democracy. He emphasized the importance of participatory institutions, constitutional morality, and a vigilant civil society. This inclusive political architecture, built into the Indian Constitution, allows for decentralized governance and empowerment of local bodies through the Panchayati Raj system—a critical instrument for grassroots sustainable development. He saw the Panchayati Raj as a mechanism for empowering marginalized communities and fostering local self-governance. Ambedkar's vision for a robust participatory democracy was not merely about voting rights but about creating a system where all citizens could actively participate in shaping their own destinies. He understood that true democracy required not just formal institutions but also a culture of active citizenship, where individuals are empowered to hold their leaders accountable and advocate for their rights. By advocating for a constitutionally enshrined framework for participatory governance, Ambedkar laid the foundation for a system that would empower the people and ensure that the benefits of democracy would reach every corner of society.

3. Constitutional Contributions and Institutional Foundations:

Dr. Ambedkar's role as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian



Constitution was pivotal in embedding principles of inclusion, justice, and sustainability into the nation's legal and institutional framework. His deep understanding of social inequalities and his commitment to building a just and equitable society shaped the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Ambedkar recognized the need for a strong and independent judiciary to safeguard these rights and ensure that the Constitution's principles were upheld. He believed that a robust legal framework was essential for protecting the vulnerable and ensuring that all citizens had equal access to justice. He also emphasized the importance of fundamental rights, including the right to equality, freedom of speech and expression, and the right to life and liberty. Ambedkar's vision of a constitution that guaranteed fundamental rights and enshrined principles of social justice laid the foundation for a modern, democratic India. His contributions to the Indian Constitution continue to shape the nation's legal and political landscape, serving as a beacon of hope for a more inclusive and equitable future.

1. Fundamental Rights and Directive

Principles: The Indian Constitution, shaped by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, balances individual rights with the state's responsibility for collective well-being. Fundamental Rights, like equality and abolition of untouchability, ensure inclusive growth. Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), though not legally enforceable, guide the state towards equitable distribution of wealth, education, and environmental protection, aligning with sustainable development goals. The interplay between these principles is crucial for a just and prosperous India.

2. Affirmative Action and Social Safeguards

Ambedkar institutionalized social safeguards that protect historically oppressed communities. Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) were provided constitutional protection and reservations, ensuring their participation in the national mainstream. Today, these safeguards form the basis for inclusive development strategies across sectors—from rural development schemes to education policies and employment programs. Affirmative action measures, such as reservations, have been crucial in addressing historical inequalities and promoting social mobility. However, the effectiveness of these safeguards has been debated, with some arguing that they have contributed to the empowerment of marginalized groups, while others contend that they have created a system of dependency and hindered meritocracy. Despite these criticisms, the principles of affirmative action and social safeguards remain central to India's commitment to social justice and inclusive development. The ongoing debate about the effectiveness of these measures underscores the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation to ensure that they remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of historically disadvantaged communities. The challenge lies in striking a balance between ensuring equal opportunities for all while addressing the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups, and this is an ongoing dialogue within Indian society.

4. Economic Thought: Ambedkar as a Development Economist

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, beyond his legal and social reform contributions, was a trained economist. His economic thought was deeply intertwined with his



social justice agenda. He believed in inclusive and equitable economic development, advocating for policies that promoted employment, improved living standards, and provided access to education and healthcare for all. His work on public finance emphasized progressive taxation and social spending to reduce income disparities and create a more just society. Ambedkar's economic ideas continue to be relevant in contemporary discussions about inclusive development and sustainable growth.

1. Industrialization and Labor Welfare

Ambedkar viewed industrialization as essential for India's economic transformation. He believed that agriculture-based economies led to poverty and social stagnation. He advocated for the development of infrastructure, state-led industrialization, and protection of workers' rights. As Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942–1946), he introduced key labor reforms such as fixed working hours, maternity leave, and employee insurance—contributing significantly to human development indices and sustainable labor practices. He recognized that industrialization, while necessary for economic progress, could also lead to exploitation of workers if proper safeguards were not in place. Ambedkar's focus on labor welfare stemmed from his deep understanding of the plight of the working class, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable groups. He believed that workers' rights were fundamental to creating a just and equitable society, and he fought tirelessly to ensure that their interests were protected. His legacy continues to inspire policymakers and activists working towards the goal of sustainable development, where economic growth is

balanced with social justice and the well-being of all workers.

2. Water Management and Resource Sustainability:

Ambedkar's contributions to sustainable resource management are less recognized but equally impactful. As the first Minister of Law and Justice and head of the Central Water Commission, he played a crucial role in conceptualizing multi-purpose river valley projects like the Damodar Valley and Hirakud projects. He emphasized integrated water management, which today is a critical component of climate resilience and agricultural sustainability in India. He understood the importance of water conservation and equitable distribution, especially in a country like India where water scarcity is a major challenge. Ambedkar's vision for water management went beyond simply building dams and irrigation canals; he saw the need for a holistic approach that considered the needs of all stakeholders, including farmers, industries, and urban populations. His work laid the foundation for India's water management policies, which have evolved over time to address the growing challenges of climate change and population growth. Ambedkar's legacy in water management is a testament to his forward-thinking approach and his commitment to sustainable development. His work continues to guide India's efforts to manage its water resources responsibly and ensure water security for future generations.

5. Education: The Cornerstone of Empowerment

Ambedkar viewed education as the key to liberation and societal transformation. His famous quote, "Educate, Agitate, Organize," encapsulates his belief in education as a tool for empowerment



and inclusive growth. He understood that education was not merely about acquiring knowledge, but about fostering critical thinking, challenging social norms, and building a sense of agency. He advocated for universal access to quality education, particularly for marginalized communities, believing that education could break down barriers of caste, class, and gender. He actively worked to establish educational institutions and scholarship programs to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, had the opportunity to learn and thrive. Ambedkar's vision for education was rooted in his belief in the inherent dignity and potential of every individual. He saw education as a powerful force for social change, capable of transforming not only individuals but also the entire society. His legacy continues to inspire educators and activists working to create a more equitable and just world through the transformative power of education.

1. Promoting Universal Education

He advocated for compulsory and free education, particularly for marginalized communities. His influence is evident in constitutional provisions like Article 45 (Directive Principle) and later, the Right to Education Act, which guarantee free and compulsory education to all children. He recognized that education was the foundation for social mobility and economic empowerment. His vision for education went beyond mere literacy; he believed in providing quality education that would equip individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life. He understood that education was not just a personal benefit, but a societal investment that would lead to a more just and prosperous nation. Ambedkar's legacy in education continues to shape India's

commitment to providing quality education for all, and his vision remains a powerful inspiration for creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

2. Institutional Legacy

Ambedkar established institutions such as the People's Education Society and Milind College, and was instrumental in promoting higher education among Dalits and women. His legacy continues through Ambedkar Chairs in universities, research foundations, and educational scholarships targeting disadvantaged groups. He believed that education was a key to unlocking the potential of marginalized communities and empowering them to contribute to society. He understood that providing access to education alone was not enough; he also advocated for creating institutions that would support and nurture the intellectual growth of these communities. His vision for education was not just about creating opportunities, but also about building a culture of learning and scholarship that would empower individuals to challenge social injustices and strive for a better future. Ambedkar's institutional legacy continues to play a vital role in promoting education and social change, ensuring that his vision of a just and equitable society remains a guiding principle for generations to come.

6. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Ambedkar was a staunch advocate for gender justice. His draft of the Hindu Code Bill proposed equal rights for women in inheritance, divorce, and property—a revolutionary proposal in 1950s India. Although the bill faced opposition and was not passed in his lifetime, its core ideas later influenced legislative reforms and feminist discourses in India. Ambedkar's views on women's



empowerment are integral to inclusive development goals, especially in achieving gender parity in education, employment, and political representation. He recognized that true equality could not be achieved without empowering women, and he believed that their full participation in society was essential for progress. He challenged traditional patriarchal structures that limited women's opportunities and advocated for a society where women could exercise their rights and contribute to their full potential. Ambedkar's vision for gender equality remains a powerful inspiration for feminist movements and advocates today, as they continue to fight for a society where women are treated with dignity and respect and have equal opportunities to succeed.

7. Relevance in Contemporary India: Ambedkar's legacy remains more relevant than ever in light of India's pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focusing on no poverty (Goal 1), quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), clean water and sanitation (Goal 6), and reduced inequalities (Goal 10). His vision of a just and equitable society, where everyone has equal opportunities, resonates deeply with the aspirations of the SDGs. His emphasis on social justice, education, and economic empowerment continues to guide efforts to address the challenges of poverty, inequality, and discrimination in India. Ambedkar's legacy serves as a reminder that true progress requires a commitment to social justice and inclusivity, and that achieving the SDGs requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of inequality and empowers marginalized communities.

1. Digital and Financial Inclusion

Contemporary efforts in digital literacy, financial inclusion (e.g., Jan Dhan Yojana), and

social security (e.g., PM Awas Yojana, PM-KISAN) align with Ambedkar's inclusive development vision. These policies aim to reduce inequality and promote access to essential services. Ambedkar's belief in the transformative power of education and economic empowerment is reflected in these initiatives, which seek to bridge the digital divide and provide financial security for vulnerable populations. By promoting financial inclusion and access to digital technologies, these programs empower individuals and communities, enabling them to participate fully in the economic and social development of India. Ambedkar's vision for a just and equitable society is being realized through these policies, which are working to create a more inclusive and prosperous India for all.

2. Environmental Justice and Resource Equity

Ambedkar's emphasis on equitable resource management can inform current debates on environmental justice. His approach to sustainable water use and urban planning offers insights into climate-adaptive policies that are both ecologically and socially sustainable. His concern for the well-being of marginalized communities, particularly those who rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, resonates strongly with the principles of environmental justice. Ambedkar's legacy encourages us to consider the intersection of social and environmental issues, ensuring that environmental policies address the needs of all communities and promote a more just and sustainable future.

8. Challenges and the Road Ahead: Despite constitutional safeguards and development programs, India still faces high levels of social and economic inequality. Caste-based discrimination,



educational disparity, gender-based violence, and environmental degradation remain pressing issues. Ambedkar's philosophy demands not just policy reforms but a transformation of societal attitudes and power structures. The challenge lies in translating his radical vision into practical frameworks that address contemporary complexities. His call for social justice and equality requires sustained efforts to dismantle entrenched systems of oppression and create a truly inclusive society. Moving forward, India must continue to learn from Ambedkar's legacy, embracing his principles of social justice and equality as a guide for achieving a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Conclusion: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's multifaceted contributions provide a robust framework for sustainable and inclusive development in modern India. His insights into social justice, economic planning, education, and institutional design are not merely historical artifacts but living tools for policy and governance. As India navigates the challenges of the 21st century—climate change, economic disparity, and social fragmentation—Ambedkar's ideas remain indispensable in crafting a just, equitable, and sustainable future. His vision for a society where every individual has equal opportunity and access to resources remains as relevant today as it was during his time. Ambedkar's unwavering commitment to social justice, his emphasis on education as a tool for empowerment, and his advocacy for a robust and inclusive democracy continue to inspire generations of Indians. His legacy serves as a constant reminder of the importance of fighting for equality, justice, and the rights of all citizens. By embracing Ambedkar's vision and implementing his principles, India can

strive to build a society that is truly inclusive, prosperous, and just for all. The path ahead may be challenging, but by drawing inspiration from Ambedkar's unwavering belief in the power of collective action and social transformation, India can create a future that honors his legacy and realizes his vision for a truly just and equitable society.

References:

1. Ambedkar, B. R. (1936). *Annihilation of Caste. The Indian Printing Works.*
2. Ambedkar, B. R. (1945). *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables. Thacker & Co.*
3. Zelliot, Eleanor. (2005). *Ambedkar's World: The Making of Babasaheb and the Dalit Movement. Navayana.*
4. Rodrigues, Valerian. (2002). *The Essential Writings of B. R. Ambedkar. Oxford University Press.*
5. Kumar, A. (2015). *Relevance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in Contemporary India. Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies, 3(1), 12–29.*
6. Jaffrelot, Christophe. (2005). *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste. Permanent Black.*
7. Chalam, K. S. (2007). *Economic Reforms and Social Exclusion: Impact of Liberalization on Marginalized Communities in India. SAGE Publications.*
8. Government of India. (1950). *The Constitution of India.*
9. Thorat, S. (2009). *Dalits in India: Search for a Common Destiny. SAGE Publications.*
10. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. (2023). *Annual Report.*

Cite This Article:

Prof. Dr. Manwar D.S. (2025) *The Role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar for the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth of Modern India. In Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal: Vol. XIV (Number II, pp. 119–125).*