



DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'S LOVE FOR BOOKS AND LIBRARIES: A BEACON FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTELLECTUAL EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract:

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was a staunch advocate of education and believed that knowledge was the key to social transformation. His unwavering love for books and libraries played a crucial role in shaping his ideology and intellectual legacy. This article explores Ambedkar's deep engagement with books and libraries, the significance of his personal library, and the core values embedded in the major works he authored. It also offers insights into the role libraries can play in furthering inclusive and transformative education.

Key words: Books and Libraries, Social Justice, Intellectual empowerment

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Introduction:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) was one of India's most influential thinkers, jurists, economists, and social reformers. Born into a marginalised Dalit community, he battled systemic caste discrimination throughout his life. For Ambedkar, education was not just a personal tool for upliftment but a collective weapon against social inequality. He believed that libraries were temples of knowledge and equality, and that books could provide the mental liberation that centuries of social oppression had denied.

Ambedkar's Love for Books and Libraries:

Ambedkar's thirst for knowledge knew no bounds. From his early education in Elphinstone College to his time at Columbia University and the London School of Economics, he developed a profound relationship with books and libraries.

1. Formation of “Rajgriha” – His Personal Library

Ambedkar's residence “Rajgriha” in Mumbai was more than a home; it was a sanctuary of knowledge that housed over 50,000 books, making it one of the largest private libraries in India.

He once said, “I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality, and fraternity,”—values he imbibed through extensive readings in history, law, religion, philosophy, and politics.

2. Use of International Libraries

While studying at Columbia University, Ambedkar spent countless hours in the university's Butler Library.

At the British Museum Library in London, he pored over ancient scriptures, legal texts, and historical records, refining his views on law, justice, and society.



Major Works Written by Dr. Ambedkar and Their Core Values

S/N	Title	Year of publication	Core Values
1.	Annihilation of Caste	1936	Rejection of the caste system, advocacy for social equality, critique of Hindu orthodoxy
2.	The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution	1923	Monetary economics, financial stability, currency management
3.	Who Were the Shudras?	1946	Historical roots of caste hierarchy, reinterpretation of Hindu texts
4.	The Buddha and His Dhamma	1957 (posthumous)	Buddhism as a philosophy of equality, non-violence, rationality
5.	Thoughts on Linguistic States	1955	Federalism, linguistic diversity, state reorganization in India
6.	Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India	Unpublished	Power dynamics in religion, emergence of Brahmanism as a political tool
7.	Riddles in Hinduism	1957 (posthumous)	Rational critique of myths, gods, scriptures, and religious contradictions
8.	States and Minorities	1947	Constitutional safeguards for minorities, economic justice, state socialism
9.	What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables	1945	Critical analysis of Gandhi's politics, Congress's role in Dalit exclusion

Libraries as Empowerment Tools: Ambedkar's Legacy:

Ambedkar envisioned libraries not just as book repositories but as tools for democratic and social empowerment. He advocated for:

- Public libraries in rural and urban areas
- College libraries to support the education of marginalized students
- Reading as a habit for self-respect and self-defense

Modern Relevance: Today, several initiatives such as Ambedkar Study Circles, Dalit Libraries, and

Community Book Cafés continue to uphold his vision of accessible knowledge for all.

Conclusion:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy reminds us that true empowerment begins with the freedom to learn. His love for books and libraries laid the intellectual foundation for India's struggle toward justice, equality, and fraternity. In a time of digital information and disinformation, Ambedkar's reverence for reading, inquiry, and rational critique offers a timeless guide for educators, students, and social reformers.



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