



## Legacy of BR Ambedkar

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This article is based on **“The Ambedkar we don’t know”** which was published in The Indian Express on 14/04/2021. It talks about the role played by BR Ambedkar in nation-building.

Recently, the nation celebrated the 130<sup>th</sup> **birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar**. His role as a social reformer, chairman of the draft committee of the Indian Constitution, and first law minister of the country is well-known.

However, there are many lesser-known attributes about **B R Ambedkar** that helped in nation-building and continues to have a prominent impact on present Indian socio-economic-political setup.

As India is about to celebrate the **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** to commemorate 75 years of Independence, it is imperative to recognise the role played by BR Ambedkar.

### Role Played by BR Ambedkar

- **Father of Indian Constitution:** BR Ambedkar's legal expertise and knowledge of the Constitution of different countries was very helpful in the framing of the constitution.

He became chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and played an important role in framing the Indian Constitution.

- **Building a Just Society:** As chairman of the Constitution's drafting committee, he took meticulous measures to build a just society through liberty, equality, and fraternity.
  - According to him, for India, where society is divided on the basis of caste, religion, language, and other factors, a common moral compass is needed, and the Constitution can play the role of that compass.
  - In addition, the Poona Pact assured a fair representation of the depressed classes in the public services while earmarking a portion of the educational grant for their uplift.
  - His advocacy for universal adult franchise ensured that women had the right to vote immediately after Independence.
- **Distinguished Economist:** The Reserve Bank of India was conceptualized from the Hilton Young Commission's recommendation, which considered Ambedkar's guidelines laid out in **The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution.**
- **Role In Integrated Water Resources Management:** His farsightedness helped in establishing the Central Water Commission and integrated water resources management through the establishment of the river valley projects like the Damodar River Valley Project, the Sone River Valley Project, the Mahanadi (Hirakud Project), etc.

The Inter-State Water Dispute Act, 1956, and the River Board Act, 1956 emanate from his vision.

- **Labour Leader:** Ambedkar was the voice of the Depressed Classes on every platform. As their representative at the Round Table Conference, he championed the cause of labor and improving the condition of peasants.
  - Also, as a member of the Bombay Assembly, Ambedkar opposed the introduction of the Industrial Disputes Bill, 1937, as it removed workers' right to strike.
  - As a labour member, he advocated for "fair condition of life of labour" instead of securing "fair condition of work" and laid out the basic structure of the government's labour policy.
- **Vision for India's Agricultural Problem:** His essay titled 'Small Holdings in India and their Remedies' (1918) proposed industrialization as the answer to India's agricultural problem and is still relevant to contemporary debates.
 

He was the first legislator in the country to introduce a Bill for abolishing the serfdom of agricultural tenants.
- **Role in Ensuring Gender Parity:** He contributed to the reduction of working hours to 48 hours per week, lifting the ban on the employment of women for underground work in coal mines, introducing the provisions of overtime, paid leave, and minimum wage.
  - He also helped to establish the principle of "equal pay for equal work" irrespective of sex and maternity benefits.
  - His advocacy of the Hindu Code Bill was a revolutionary measure towards ameliorating women's plight by conferring on them the right to adopt and inherit.

## Relevance of Ambedkar in Present Times

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- **Persisting Caste-Based Inequalities:** Caste-based inequality in India still persists. While Dalits have acquired a political identity through Affirmative action like reservation and forming their own political parties, they lack behind in social dimensions (health and education) and economic dimension.
- **Persisting Communal Problem:** There has been a rise of communal polarization and communalization of politics. It is necessary that Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality must supersede religious morality to avoid permanent damage to the Indian Constitution.
  - In Babasaheb Ambedkar's perspective, Constitutional morality would mean effective coordination between conflicting interests of different people and administrative cooperation.
  - It will help to resolve the conflict amicably without any confrontation amongst the various groups working for the realization of their ends at any cost.
- **Pro-People Policies:** Ambedkar's thinking and legacy are reflected in the pro-people, pro-poor welfare policies and programmes of the Government of India.

For example, the **Mudra Scheme** for availing loans, **Stand-up India** for promoting entrepreneurship in the SC and ST community, the **Ayushman Bharat scheme**, **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojna**, the **simplification of labour laws** are among the several measures that display the government's unwavering commitment to fulfil the dreams of B R Ambedkar.

## Conclusion

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The development of Panchteerth — Janam Bhumi (Mhow), Shiksha Bhumi (London), Chaitya Bhumi (Mumbai), Diksha Bhumi (Nagpur), Mahaparinirvan Bhumi (Delhi) — are steps towards ensuring an appropriate legacy for Ambedkar, the nationalist reformer.

However, today India is facing many socio-economic challenges such as casteism, communalism, separatism, gender inequality, etc. We need to find the Ambedkar's spirit within us, so that we can pull ourselves from these challenges.

### ***Drishti Mains Question***

The role played by B R Ambedkar has helped in nation building and continues to have a prominent impact on present Indian socio-economic-political setup. Discuss.

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