

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Champion of Social Justice and Secular Equality: Prompt Science Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a visionary leader, social reformer, and architect of modern India, known for his relentless advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities, especially Dalits. His extensive foreign education in economics and law from Columbia University, the London School of Economics, and Gray's Inn equipped him with a deep understanding of democracy, social justice, and economic policies. Ambedkar's travels to the U.S., U.K., Germany, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Nepal greatly influenced his intellectual development and social ideology, contributing to his lifelong fight against caste discrimination.

As the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar cherished fundamental rights, equality, and social justice for all citizens. His contributions to economic thought, particularly in monetary policy and labour rights, as well as his advocacy for affirmative action, reshaped India's socio-political landscape. His embrace of Buddhism in 1956 marked a significant spiritual and social movement aimed at rejecting caste oppression. Ambedkar's legacy endures as a symbol of empowerment, human rights, and the pursuit of equality.

KEYWORDS: *foreign travels, democracy, social justice, economic policies, Buddhism, Artificial intelligence*

I. Introduction to B.R Ambedkar foreign travels

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's foreign travels were an integral part of his intellectual and personal development. His time abroad not only helped shape his worldview but also significantly influenced his academic pursuits, political ideologies, and fight for social justice. Ambedkar's foreign travels, particularly to the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe, exposed him to new ideas and inspired much of his later work in India.

Key Foreign Travels of B.R. Ambedkar

1. United States (1913–1916)

Columbia University, New York

In 1913, Ambedkar traveled to the United States to study at Columbia University, thanks to a Baroda State scholarship provided by the Maharaja of Baroda, Sayajirao Gaikwad III. This was a pivotal phase in his life as it exposed him to liberal democratic thought and Western intellectual traditions.

At Columbia, Ambedkar studied economics, sociology, history, philosophy, and politics under prominent scholars such as John Dewey (a leading thinker in education and democracy) and Edwin R.A. Seligman (a prominent economist).

He completed his M.A. in economics in 1915, with a thesis on "Ancient Indian Commerce," and later earned a Ph.D. in economics in 1917 with his dissertation titled "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India."

Ambedkar's exposure to the progressive ideas of democracy, equality, and social justice in the U.S. played a crucial role in shaping his views on social reform and political activism.

2. United Kingdom (1916–1923)

London School of Economics and Gray's Inn

After his time in the U.S., Ambedkar traveled to London in 1916. He enrolled in the London School of Economics (LSE) to pursue a D.Sc. in Economics,

How to cite this paper: Manish Verma "Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Champion of Social Justice and Secular Equality: Prompt Science Analysis" Published in International

Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-8 | Issue-5, October 2024, pp.113-119,

URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd69334.pdf



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and simultaneously joined Gray's Inn to study law and become a barrister.

However, due to a lack of financial support, Ambedkar had to return to India in 1917 before completing his studies. Despite this interruption, he resumed his studies in London in 1920 after securing funding and finally earned his D.Sc. in Economics in 1923, submitting his thesis on "The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution."

During his time in London, Ambedkar delved deeply into issues related to monetary economics, public finance, and the role of the state in economic development, which would later influence his policy suggestions in India.

He completed his barrister-at-law qualification, which enabled him to practice law in India.

3. Germany (1922)

While studying in London, Ambedkar briefly traveled to Germany to study at the University of Bonn. His time in Germany was relatively short, but he used this opportunity to further his studies in economics and finance.

Germany at that time was a leading center of intellectual thought, particularly in economics, and Ambedkar was keen to study under prominent scholars in Europe.

4. Return to India (1923)

After completing his studies in both economics and law, Ambedkar returned to India in 1923, armed with an array of academic qualifications. His foreign education had given him a global perspective.

5. Travel to Burma (Myanmar) (1950s)

➤ **Purpose:** Ambedkar visited Burma (now Myanmar) to attend conferences on **Buddhism** and to promote his vision of **Buddhist revival** in India.

➤ **Significance:** Ambedkar's growing interest in Buddhism culminated in his decision to convert to Buddhism in 1956. His travels to Burma and engagement with Buddhist leaders were pivotal in shaping his spiritual and social ideology.

6. Travel to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) (1950s)

➤ **Purpose:** Ambedkar traveled to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) several times, mainly to attend Buddhist conferences and to study Buddhist practices in the region.

➤ **Significance:** His travels to Sri Lanka were crucial in his deepening engagement with Buddhism, which he ultimately adopted in 1956. These visits also allowed him to interact with Buddhist scholars and refine his understanding of

Buddhist philosophy as a means to fight caste discrimination.

7. Final Years and Conversion to Buddhism (1956)

➤ In 1956, Ambedkar traveled to **Nepal** to attend the **Fourth World Buddhist Conference**. This journey was symbolic of his growing commitment to Buddhism as a way to achieve social equality and reject the caste system.

➤ Shortly after this conference, Ambedkar, along with half a million followers, converted to Buddhism in a historic mass ceremony in **Nagpur, India**.

II. B. R. Ambedkar career and personal achievement's

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's life was marked by extraordinary achievements across various domains, including academia, law, politics, and social reform. Despite facing severe discrimination as a Dalit in a caste-ridden society, Ambedkar rose to become one of India's most prominent leaders, contributing significantly to the nation's intellectual, legal, and social framework.

Career Achievements

1. Scholar and Economist

➤ **Educational Background:** Ambedkar was one of the most highly educated leaders of his time, having earned multiple advanced degrees. He received scholarships from the Maharaja of Baroda, which allowed him to pursue higher education in the U.S. and the U.K.

- **B.A.** from **Elphinstone College, Bombay**.
- **M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics** from **Columbia University** (1915, 1927).
- **D.Sc. in Economics** from the **London School of Economics** (1923).
- **Barrister-at-Law** from **Gray's Inn, London** (1923).

➤ His academic work focused on **monetary economics, public finance, and economic development**, providing insights into India's colonial economy and its future prospects.

2. Father of the Indian Constitution

➤ Ambedkar's most well-known achievement is his role as the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee** for the **Indian Constitution**. As the principal architect, he ensured that the Constitution protected the **fundamental rights** of all citizens, especially focusing on **equality, liberty, and social justice**.

- He played a critical role in incorporating provisions to **abolish untouchability** and introduce **affirmative action** (or reservation) for historically marginalized groups like Dalits and tribal communities.

3. First Law Minister of Independent India

- Ambedkar served as India's **first Minister of Law and Justice** from 1947 to 1951 in Prime Minister Nehru's cabinet. During his tenure, he worked tirelessly to enact legislation that promoted **social justice** and **legal reform**, particularly through his advocacy for the **Hindu Code Bill**, which sought to reform personal laws related to marriage, inheritance, and family rights.

4. Social Reformer and Dalit Leader

- Throughout his life, Ambedkar worked for the **upliftment of Dalits** and other marginalized communities. His key social movements include:

- **Mahad Satyagraha (1927)**: Ambedkar led a protest demanding the right for Dalits to access public water tanks.
- **Kalaram Temple Entry Movement (1930)**: He led a non-violent movement for Dalits' right to enter Hindu temples, challenging caste-based restrictions.

- He founded several organizations to promote Dalit rights, including the **Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha** (1924) and the **Scheduled Castes Federation** (1942).

5. Political Career

- Ambedkar founded political parties to represent the interests of marginalized communities, notably:

- **Independent Labour Party (ILP)** in 1936, which later contested elections in the Bombay Presidency.
- **Scheduled Castes Federation** in 1942 to advocate for Dalit rights in the post-colonial political landscape.

- He was a member of the **Viceroy's Executive Council** from 1942 to 1946, where he worked on labour and social policies to improve the conditions of workers and the marginalized.

6. Buddhist Leader and Religious Reformer

- Disillusioned with the Hindu caste system, Ambedkar converted to **Buddhism** in 1956, along with hundreds of thousands of his followers, in a mass conversion ceremony in Nagpur. He chose Buddhism as a path of equality and rationality, promoting a social order based on **non-discrimination**.

- His conversion is seen as one of the most significant social movements of modern India, as it inspired millions of Dalits to reject caste oppression and embrace a more egalitarian way of life.

Personal Achievements

1. Educational Pioneer

- Ambedkar's academic journey was extraordinary for someone from a Dalit background in British India. His academic achievements, including multiple doctorates and a law degree from prestigious global institutions, were groundbreaking for an Indian at the time, particularly for someone from a marginalized community.

2. Key Publications

- Ambedkar's scholarly works continue to influence social and political thought in India. Some of his most influential publications include:

- *"The Annihilation of Caste"* (1936) – A radical critique of the Hindu caste system.
- *"The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution"* (1923) – A landmark study on India's currency issues and economic policy.
- *"Buddha and His Dhamma"* (1957) – A comprehensive work on Buddhism, written after his conversion.
- *"States and Minorities"* (1947) – A proposal outlining state socialism and economic rights for marginalized communities.

3. Awards and Honors

- In 1990, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** was posthumously awarded **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian award, in recognition of his contributions to the nation, particularly in the fields of law, social reform, and human rights.

- Several institutions and landmarks have been named in his honor, including **Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University** and numerous statues, parks, and public spaces across India.

4. Formation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- Ambedkar's ideas on banking and public finance, as outlined in his book *"The Problem of the Rupee,"* were influential in the establishment of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** in 1935. His economic theories on monetary stability and public finance played a key role in shaping the foundation of the Indian banking system.

5. Architect of Affirmative Action

➤ Ambedkar was the principal advocate for **affirmative action (reservation) policies** in India. These policies reserve government jobs, educational opportunities, and political seats for Dalits, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes, helping to address centuries of social and economic inequality.

6. Champion of Human Rights

➤ Ambedkar was a global advocate of **human rights** and **equality**. His advocacy for the rights of the oppressed and marginalized, particularly his lifelong fight against untouchability and caste-based discrimination, positioned him as a pioneering figure in the global struggle for human dignity and social justice.

Summary of Achievements

- **Educational pioneer:** First Dalit to earn doctorates from prestigious global institutions.
- **Principal architect of the Indian Constitution:** Ensured legal provisions for equality, social justice, and civil rights.
- **Social reformer:** Led movements for Dalit rights, including access to public spaces and temple entry.
- **First Law Minister:** Worked for labour rights, women's rights, and Hindu law reform.
- **Advocate of economic reform:** Influenced the formation of the Reserve Bank of India and promoted state socialism.
- **Buddhist leader:** Inspired a mass conversion to Buddhism, rejecting caste oppression.

Ambedkar's legacy as a scholar, leader, and reformer continues to inspire millions in India and beyond. His life stands as a testament to the power of education, perseverance, and a commitment to justice in transforming both individual lives and society as a whole.

III. B. R. Ambedkar contribution to economics and his books

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was not only a social reformer but also an accomplished economist. His contributions to economics are significant, especially in the context of **India's financial and economic policies** during its formative years. His academic background in economics, with doctorates from **Columbia University** and the **London School of Economics**, enabled him to approach economic issues with a deep understanding and analytical perspective.

Here's a look at Ambedkar's contributions to economics and his notable books:

Key Contributions to Economics

1. Public Finance and Monetary Economics

➤ Ambedkar's most notable work in economics revolves around **public finance** and **monetary policy**. His early research focused on the fiscal policies of colonial India, where he critiqued the then-prevailing economic policies and their impact on the Indian populace.

➤ He argued that colonial policies were detrimental to India's economic development, as they mainly served British interests. He believed that economic freedom was crucial for India's overall progress.

2. Role in the Indian Reserve Bank

➤ Ambedkar was instrumental in shaping India's **monetary policy**. His work titled "*The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution*" (1923) presented his deep insights into the **stability of the Indian currency**. He was critical of the British government's policies, which had weakened the Indian rupee.

➤ Ambedkar's recommendations were later adopted in the **formation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** in 1935. Many of his ideas on monetary policy, central banking, and financial regulation found their way into the RBI's working framework.

3. State-Led Economic Development

➤ Ambedkar was an early advocate of **state-led economic development**. He believed the state should play an active role in the economy to address social and economic inequalities. He proposed **nationalization of key industries** and **land reform** to redistribute wealth more equally among the population.

➤ He emphasized the **need for planned economic development**, which influenced the later planning process adopted in independent India, especially during the **Five-Year Plans**.

4. Labour and Employment Policies

➤ Ambedkar was deeply concerned with issues of labour welfare and employment. As a member of the **Viceroy's Executive Council** (1942–1946), he held the portfolio for labour and played a crucial role in shaping labour policies.

➤ He pushed for the **rights of workers**, better working conditions, and protection against exploitation. His initiatives included **minimum wages, equal pay for equal work, and social security** measures.

5. Water Management and Agriculture

- Ambedkar's vision for India's economic future also included **rural development** and **agriculture**. He advocated for large-scale irrigation projects and believed that proper water management was key to improving agricultural productivity.
- His involvement in drafting water management policies influenced the development of several irrigation projects across India, including the **Damodar Valley** and **Hirakud Dam** projects.

Notable Economic Works and Books by B.R. Ambedkar

1. "The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution" (1923)

- This was Ambedkar's seminal work on monetary economics. In this book, he analyzed the issues surrounding the Indian currency and proposed solutions to stabilize the rupee. He argued for a **gold standard** to maintain currency stability and was critical of the **Gold Exchange Standard** imposed by the British colonial authorities.

2. "Administration and Finance of the East India Company" (1915)

- This was Ambedkar's first thesis submitted for his Master's degree at Columbia University. It analyzed the financial administration of the **East India Company** and its impact on India's economy. Ambedkar argued that the financial policies of the colonial government were designed to extract wealth from India, leading to economic stagnation.

3. "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India" (1925)

- Ambedkar's doctoral dissertation from the **London School of Economics** was a detailed examination of provincial finance in colonial India. He studied the fiscal relationship between the central and provincial governments and critiqued the **unbalanced revenue-sharing** system, which he believed hindered provincial economic development.

4. "Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies" (1918)

- This paper dealt with the challenges of India's agrarian economy. Ambedkar analyzed the problem of **small land holdings** and argued that they were inefficient for agricultural production. He proposed **land consolidation** and other reforms to improve agricultural productivity and economic efficiency.

5. "States and Minorities" (1947)

- Though not directly focused on economics, this book proposed a **state socialism** framework to

protect the rights of Dalits and other marginalized communities. Ambedkar argued for **state ownership of land** and key industries to ensure equitable distribution of wealth.

6. "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development" (1916)

- In this sociological paper, Ambedkar explored the economic roots of the caste system and its impact on India's labour and productive efficiency. He argued that caste was not just a social but also an economic system that restricted mobility and economic growth.

Ambedkar's Vision for Economic Democracy

- Ambedkar believed that **political democracy** would not be sustainable without **economic democracy**. He advocated for comprehensive economic reforms that would ensure **economic justice** for all sections of society, particularly the marginalized. His economic thought was closely tied to his vision of **social justice**.

In summary, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to economics were pioneering for their time. His writings on public finance, labour policies, monetary economics, and agrarian reforms were instrumental in shaping modern India's economic landscape. His books and papers reflect his deep concern for **economic justice** and the upliftment of the oppressed.

IV. Nehru taught about B.R. Ambedkar

Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, and B.R. Ambedkar had a complex relationship, defined by mutual respect for each other's intellect and contributions but also marked by differences in ideology and approach. Nehru admired Ambedkar's scholarly brilliance and his commitment to social justice, particularly his efforts to uplift the Dalits (historically marginalized communities), but their views on how to achieve a fair and equitable society sometimes diverged.

Here are some notable points about what Nehru thought of Ambedkar:

1. Respect for Ambedkar's Intellect and Knowledge

- Nehru respected Ambedkar's academic and intellectual prowess, recognizing him as one of the finest minds in India at the time. When Ambedkar was appointed as the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution**, Nehru fully supported the decision, acknowledging his expertise in law and social issues. Nehru viewed Ambedkar as essential for creating a democratic, secular, and just society.

2. Collaboration on the Indian Constitution

- Despite coming from different political and social backgrounds, Nehru and Ambedkar worked together closely on the **drafting of the Indian Constitution**. Nehru praised Ambedkar's role in shaping the Constitution, particularly for including provisions that promoted **social equality, justice, and protection of civil liberties**.
- Nehru and Ambedkar shared the vision of a free and democratic India, although Ambedkar often focused more on the rights of marginalized communities, while Nehru emphasized national unity and social reforms for the country as a whole.

3. Differences on Economic and Social Policies

- Nehru, a democratic socialist, believed in gradual economic reform and industrialization to lift the country out of poverty. He was committed to a **mixed economy** and saw the state as playing a key role in promoting social equality.
- Ambedkar, on the other hand, was an advocate of **state socialism**, and he proposed a more radical approach to economic reform, including **nationalization of key industries** and land redistribution. Ambedkar's focus was on directly addressing the economic and social injustices faced by Dalits and other marginalized groups.
- Their differences were not just economic but also extended to how they viewed social reforms. While Nehru believed in reforming society gradually through democratic institutions, Ambedkar was more skeptical about whether the existing Hindu social order could ever overcome its deeply ingrained caste hierarchies.

4. Debate on Hindu Code Bill

- One of their significant ideological differences emerged during the debate over the **Hindu Code Bill**, a set of laws aimed at reforming Hindu personal laws related to marriage, inheritance, and family rights. While both leaders wanted reforms, Nehru's approach was more gradual and politically cautious.
- Ambedkar, who was **India's first Law Minister**, resigned in 1951 from the cabinet due to frustrations over the lack of progress on the bill, as he believed Nehru's government was not moving fast enough on key social reforms. Despite this, Nehru later pushed the reforms through, albeit in a more diluted form.

5. Personal Relations

- While Nehru and Ambedkar often disagreed, they had mutual respect for each other. Nehru

understood that Ambedkar represented the voice of the **oppressed classes**, and Ambedkar acknowledged Nehru's role as a leader of independent India.

- After Ambedkar's death in 1956, Nehru praised him as a great leader who had contributed immensely to India's democracy and social justice framework. Nehru remarked that Ambedkar had a deep understanding of the challenges faced by India and worked tirelessly for the downtrodden.

6. Legacy and Influence

- Nehru recognized that Ambedkar's contributions went beyond the Dalit cause. He saw Ambedkar as a national figure who was instrumental in ensuring that India's democracy would protect the rights of all its citizens, particularly the most marginalized. Nehru appreciated that Ambedkar's work on the Constitution laid the foundation for India's modern democracy.

In conclusion, Nehru viewed Ambedkar as a towering figure in India's history, deeply committed to equality and social justice. Their personal and political interactions shaped the course of modern India, with Ambedkar focusing on the rights of the marginalized and Nehru on building a strong and unified nation. Despite their differences, both leaders shared a common goal of creating a more just and inclusive India.

Conclusion

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's life and career are a testament to the power of education, determination, and a relentless pursuit of social justice. Despite facing severe discrimination, he rose to become one of the most influential figures in Indian history. His foreign travels to the U.S., U.K., Germany, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Nepal expanded his intellectual horizons, shaping his ideas on democracy, equality, and social reform.

Ambedkar's role as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, his advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities, his contributions to economic thought, and his embrace of Buddhism as a path of social liberation mark him as a visionary leader. His achievements across multiple fields—from law and politics to economics and social reform—continue to inspire millions in India and beyond. Ambedkar's legacy is a reminder of the transformative impact of **dedication to justice, human rights, and equality**.

Acknowledgement

We are thankful to open-source Artificial Intelligence, various MBA books and various fields experts, Scientists. We are also thankful to late Prof.

Jagmohan Singh Verma, Lucknow University, Lucknow, Dept. of Sociology (Special visiting faculty in context to Nigeria). Also, we are thankful to late Vice Chancellor Ram Prakash Singh, University of Lucknow, Lucknow.

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