

---

**MAHAPURUSHA SRIMANTA SANKARADEVA VISWAVIDYALAYA**

**DHUBRI**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement**

**For the Master of Arts Degree in English At**

**Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya**

**Master of Arts (M.A. in English)**

**Session : 2023-2025**



**Dr B.R. Ambedkar And The Struggle Against Untouchability: A Socio-Political  
Analysis**

**Supervisor :**

**Dr.Tapashi Mazumdar**

**Assistant Professore**

**Department of English**

**MSSV, Dhubri, Assam**

**Submitted by :**

**Suman Das**

**M.A. 4<sup>th</sup> Semester**

**Roll no. ENG 01/23**

**Course Code: M.A-ENG-04-401**

**Title:Dissertation**

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research work have not been possible without the support, encouragement and guidance of many people. Firsrtly , my sincere goes to my research supervisor **Dr. Tapashi Mazumder** for her mentorship and guidance at every stage of this research journey. Thank you for your wisdom, support and kind words of praise and encouragement that made me a better student. I deeply grateful for the generous support and guidance rendered by **Dr.Tapashi Mazumder**, Department of English.

---

**CERTIFICATE OF THE SUPERVISOR**

This is to certify that **Suman Das** ,an M.A ,Fourth semester student in the Department of English ,Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya ,Dhubri, Assam ,Roll No ENG-01/23, of the Academic Session 2023-25, has carried out his research work for the dissertation entitled , “Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Stuggle Against Untouchability: A Socio-Political Analysis”. for the partial fulfillment of the degree of Master in Arts in the department of English, MSSV, Dhubri under my supervision. He has fulfilled all the requirements for the research work.

The study is the result of his own investigation. It has not been submitted and published anywhere else .

**Place - MSSV, Dhubri**

**Name of the Supervisor –**

**Dr Tapashi Mazumdar**

**Date -**

**Signature -**

---

## DECLARATION

I ,Mr. **Suman Das**, hereby declare that the M.A Dissertation entitled Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the Struggle Against Untouchability : A Socio- Politocal Analysis submitted to the Department of English, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Dhubri, to acquire the degree of Master of Arts in English, is my original work, done under the supervision of **Dr Tapashi Mazumdar** , Assistant Professor, Department of English, Dhubri, in the fourth semester of the Academic session 2023-2025.

I declare that I have not submitted the dissertation to any other institution and have not published anywhere else.

**Place - MSSV, Dhubri**

**Name- Suman Das**

**Date -**

**Signature –**

**Roll No.- ENG-01/23**

**Department of English, MSSV, Dhubri**

**Assam**

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Particulars	Page No.
Acknowledgement	i
Certificate of the Supervisor	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
<b>Chapter One</b>	<b>1-7</b>
Dr B.R. Ambedkar And The Struggle Against Untouchability: A Socio-Political Analysis	
<b>Chapter two</b>	<b>8-12</b>
Historical Context of Untouchability of India	
<b>Chapter Three</b>	<b>13-22</b>
Ambedkar's Socio-Political Thought	
<b>Chapter Four</b>	<b>23-38</b>
Socio-Political Struggle and Movement Led by Ambedkar	
<b>Chapter Five</b>	<b>39-40</b>
Conclusion	
<b>Bibliography</b>	

---

## ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's struggle against socio-political efforts and untouchability and his to strengthen the dalit communities of India is one of the most significant chapters in Indian history. His work focused not only on the legal and political liberation of the untouchables but also on the cultural and social transformation of Indian society. A dissertation on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his struggle against untouchability would ideally examine his life, work, ideas, and the socio-political impact of his efforts.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a key leader in the fight against untouchability in India. His efforts combined social, political, and legal strategies to boost up the Dalits and ensure their rights. He believed that caste discrimination was a major problem to equality and worked towards social reforms, education, and political representation for Dalit communities. This study examines Ambedkar's role in the struggle against untouchability, focusing on his activism, writings, and legal contributions. It explores how he challenged the caste system, promoted education, and advocated for constitutional safeguards like reservations. The study also highlights the impact of his work on modern India, showing how his ideas continue to influence policies and social movements.

---

## CHAPTER-1

### INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) was a pioneering social reformer, jurist, economist, and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution. His lifelong struggle was dedicated to eradicating untouchability and ensuring social justice for the oppressed Dalit community. His fight against caste-based discrimination was not just a social movement but also a political and legal battle, which led to significant changes in Indian society.

This socio-political analysis explores Ambedkar's role in challenging untouchability, his efforts in mobilizing Dalits, and the constitutional measures he introduced to ensure their rights. It examines the strategies he employed, such as education, legal reforms, political participation, and social movements, to empower the marginalized sections of society.

Ambedkar's activism against untouchability was deeply rooted in his personal experiences of discrimination as a Dalit. However, his response was not limited to emotional protests; rather, he adopted a systematic approach that combined intellectual rigor with mass mobilization. Through organizations like the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, the Independent Labour Party, and later, the Scheduled Castes Federation, he worked towards securing political representation and equal rights for Dalits.

The struggle against untouchability also led Ambedkar to challenge the dominance of orthodox Hindu traditions. His call for Dalits to "Educate, Agitate, and Organize" became the foundation for a broader movement of social transformation. Eventually, his dissatisfaction with Hindu orthodoxy culminated in his conversion to Buddhism in 1956, along with millions of his followers, marking a radical shift in the fight for equality.

---

This study will delve into Ambedkar's major contributions, including his role in shaping the Indian Constitution, his critique of the caste system, and his vision for an egalitarian society. By understanding his methods and impact, we gain insight into the continuing struggle for social justice in India today.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

- i. To analyze Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's contributions in eradicating untouchability and uplifting the Dalit community.
- ii. To understand the socio-political impact of his struggle on Indian society.
- iii. To examine the legal measures and policies introduced by Ambedkar for Dalit empowerment.
- iv. To explore the role of caste in Indian society and how Ambedkar sought to dismantle caste-based discrimination.
- v. To assess the effectiveness of constitutional safeguards introduced by him against untouchability.
- vi. To study his movements, such as the Mahad Satyagraha and the Temple Entry Movement, in fighting social discrimination.
- vii. To analyze Ambedkar's views on Hinduism, caste, and social justice, particularly his advocacy for conversion to Buddhism.
- viii. To explore the role of education in Dalit empowerment, as emphasized by Ambedkar.
- ix. To examine his political ideology and its influence on modern Dalit movements.
- x. To compare Ambedkar's strategies with other social reformers like Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotirao Phule, and Periyar.



---

## **RATIONAL AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The study will significantly contribute to the fields of political science, social justice, and Dalit studies by offering a comprehensive analysis of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's lifelong fight against untouchability. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of Ambedkar's legacy and its continued relevance in contemporary India. It will also offer insights into the effectiveness of legal and political measures against caste discrimination, informing future policy interventions.

By analyzing Ambedkar's strategies and philosophical underpinnings, the study will enrich current scholarship on Dalit politics and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of India's ongoing fight against untouchability and caste-based oppression.

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATION:**

The study focuses on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's role in the fight against untouchability, covering key events from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The study examines Ambedkar's contributions to Indian politics, including his role in drafting the constitution and advocating for Dalit rights.

The study primarily focuses on India and does not extensively cover Ambedkar's influence on global anti-caste movements.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The research is primarily descriptive and analytical, examining historical documents, political writing, and legislative measures that shaped the anti-untouchability movement.

---

### Primary vs. Secondary Sources:

Primary sources include writings and speeches of Dr. Ambedkar, Government records, and constitutional debate, legislative documents related to untouchability and dalit rights and archival materials such as newspaper articles, letters and reports from Ambedkar's time.

The research may rely significantly on secondary sources like books, journal articles, theses analyzing Ambedkar's political thought and activism.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

A review of the existing literature on Dr. Ambedkar's life and work reveals several key themes:

Numerous scholars have examined the origins of caste and untouchability in India.

Scholars like Gail Omvedt (1994,2004) in *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution And Ambedkar: Towards And Enlightened India* analyze how Ambedkar's rejection of Hindu Orthodoxy shaped his political philosophy.

D. D. Kosambi (1956,1975) in *The Culture And Civilization Of Ancient India In Historical Outline And An Introduction To The Study Of Indian History* traces the development of caste through economic and social changes, showing how Brahmanical supremacy played a role in institutionalizing untouchability.

Louis Dumont (1966) in *Homo Hierarchicus* provides a structuralist analysis of caste and hierarchy, emphasizing the purity-pollution dichotomy. However, Dumont's framework has been criticized for justifying caste rather than analyzing it as a social evil.

Granville Austin (1966) in *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* highlights Ambedkar's role in drafting the Indian Constitution.

---

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study aims to examine Dr. Ambedkar's strategies in combating untouchability through legal, political, and social means. It will analyze the historical context of untouchability, Ambedkar's role in legislative reforms, and the impact of his ideas on contemporary socio-political movements. The study will also explore the challenges and limitations of his efforts, addressing questions such as: To what extent has Ambedkar's vision been realized in modern India? What are the socio-political obstacles that still hinder Dalit empowerment? How have Ambedkar's ideas influenced contemporary caste-based movements and policies?

This research will adopt a socio-political lens to analyze Ambedkar's work, using historical data, legal documents, and contemporary case studies. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the academic discourse on caste discrimination and explore practical solutions to achieve Ambedkar's vision of an egalitarian society.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

This study posits that Ambedkar's approach went beyond the pursuit of social justice; it sought to transform the Indian political landscape by promoting the idea of equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution. By analyzing his works, speeches, and political activities, the research will argue that Ambedkar's vision for the Dalits was a radical departure from traditional notions of caste and untouchability. His advocacy for constitutional guarantees, the establishment of separate electorates, and his eventual conversion to Buddhism were all part of a broader strategy aimed at socio-political liberation.

---

**TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION:**

The present study is tentatively divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1: This chapter attempts to define about Dr. B.R Ambedkar and its role against untouchability, aims and objectives, rational and significance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology, hypothesis, review of related literature, statement of the problem and tentative chapterization.

Chapter 2: This chapter will focus on the Origin of untouchability in India. It will highlight the British colonial policies and their impact on caste structure as how these policies creates discriminations among people on the basis of caste which begins untouchability and breakdown the unity among Indians. This chapter also explores the early social reformers before Ambedkar, who tried to change and made an evolution on the indian traditional caste system.

Chapter 3: This chapter will highlight Ambedkar's Personal Experiences With Untouchability and it will also focuses on his view about Hindu Social Order (Annihilation of Caste, The Untouchables: Who Were They?).This chapter will also explain the key themes of Ambedkar's ideologies about social justice, equality and rights-based approach.

Chapter 4: This chapter will highlight the political struggle and movement led by Ambedkar ,The legal and constitutional reforms with the role in drafting the Indian constitution and article 17. It also exposes the abolition of untouchability, the significance of Article 17, the Hindu Code Bill and reform for dalit rights ,the opposition and failure of the bill, with the impact of Ambedkar's legal and constitutional reforms . It also shades light on the institutional and political engagement, the formation of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha 1924, the role in the Round table conference and the poona pact,with the independent labour party

---

and Scheduled Castes Federation. It also focuses on the Kalaram Temple Entry Movement by Ambedkar, Mahad Satyagraha with its different waves.

Chapter 5: This chapter focuses on the major findings and pedagogical implication of the study.

---

## REFERENCES:

Ambedkar, Bhimrao. Ramji. *Annihilation of Caste. Navayana*, 2014.

Austin, Granville. *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. Oxford University press, 1966.

Dumont, Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. University of Chicago press (1966).

Guru, Gopal, and Suraj Yengde, editors. *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*. Oxford UP, 2020

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste*. Columbia UP, 2005.

Kosambi, Damodar Dharmananda. *The Culture And Civilization Of Ancient India In Historical Outline*. Vikas Publication house 1956.

Kosambi, Damodar Dharmananda. *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*. Popular Prakashan, 1975.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution And Ambedkar: Towards And Enlightened India*. 1994, 2004.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity*. Orient Blackswan, 2006.

Sharma, Arvind. *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A Biography*. HarperCollins, 2018.

---

## **CHAPTER- 2**

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF UNTOUCHABILITY IN INDIA**

#### **PRELIMINARY**

This chapter focuses on the origin of untouchability in India. It highlights the British colonial policies and their impact on caste structure as how these policies creates discriminations among people on the basis of caste which begins untouchability and breakdown the unity among Indians. This chapter also explores the early social reformers before Ambedkar, who tried to change and made an evolution on the Indian traditional caste system.

#### **ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL REPRESENTATION OF CASTE DISCRIMINATION**

Caste discrimination in India has its roots in ancient texts and social structures that evolved over centuries. The earliest references to a hierarchical social order appear in the Rig Veda, where society was divided into four varnas—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Over time, this system became rigid, and the Manusmriti codified caste-based discrimination by prescribing duties, privileges, and limitations for each group, particularly relegating Shudras and "untouchables" to a position of servitude and exclusion.

During the medieval period, caste hierarchies continued to control social structures. The rise of temple-based economies and feudalism reinforced Brahmanical supremacy, while lower castes were denied access to education, religious institutions, and public spaces. Bhakti movement saints like Kabir, Ravidas, and Chokhamela challenged caste discrimination, advocating for social equality and devotion beyond caste barriers. However, the caste system remained fixed, and untouchability persisted despite these reformist efforts. The medieval era also saw the emergence of caste-based occupations, further deepening social stratification.

The arrival of Islam in India led to some mobility for lower castes through conversion, but caste-like hierarchies continued even within Muslim communities. Thus, both ancient religious texts and medieval socio-economic structures reinforced caste discrimination, setting the stage for later struggles against untouchability, including those led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

## **BRITISH COLONIAL POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CASTE STRUCTURE**

British colonial rule in India (1757–1947) had a profound impact on the caste system, both reinforcing and transforming its structure. The British initially viewed caste as a useful tool for governance, incorporating it into their administrative framework. The Census of 1871–72 classified Indians strictly by caste, solidifying caste identities and making them more rigid than before. The British legal system, including the Government of India Act and personal laws, codified caste distinctions, often favoring upper-caste interests.

At the same time, colonial policies also created new opportunities for lower castes. Western education, introduced by the British, allowed marginalized communities to challenge Brahmanical dominance, with figures like Jyotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar emerging as leaders of caste reform. The British also introduced reservations in government jobs and education for Dalits, recognizing their socio-economic disadvantage. However, the colonial "divide and rule" strategy often pitted castes against each other, weakening unified resistance against British rule. While British policies institutionalized caste distinctions, they also indirectly enabled the emergence of anti-caste movements, which played a crucial role in India's social transformation after independence.



---

## EARLY SOCIAL REFORMERS BEFORE AMBEDKAR

Before the emergence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as a prominent social reformer and the principal architect of modern India's anti-caste movement, several reformers laid the foundational groundwork for social transformation in India. These early reformers, active during the 19th and early 20th centuries, challenged entrenched social norms, caste discrimination, and regressive practices such as untouchability, child marriage, and the denial of education to marginalized communities. One of the most significant figures was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, often hailed as the "Father of the Indian Renaissance." He strongly advocated for the abolition of sati (the practice of widow immolation), promoted women's education, and emphasized rationalism and monotheism through the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828. His efforts inspired a wave of reform movements across India. Another important figure was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who championed widow remarriage and worked tirelessly to expand educational opportunities for girls in Bengal. He combined deep traditional scholarship with a progressive outlook, challenging orthodox Hindu customs from within the framework of the scriptures themselves.

In Western India, Jyotirao Phule emerged as a radical voice against the caste system and Brahminical dominance. Along with his wife, Savitribai Phule, he pioneered education for women and the so-called 'untouchables,' establishing the first school for girls in Pune in 1848. Phule's critical work, *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), compared the condition of lower castes in India to slavery in the West and directly questioned the sanctity of Hindu scriptures that justified caste-based discrimination. He also established the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society of Truth Seekers) in 1873, aiming to liberate the oppressed castes from religious and social bondage. Another significant reformer was Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who founded the Arya Samaj in 1875. He called for a return to the original teachings of the Vedas, which he

---

interpreted as being against caste discrimination and idol worship. Though his views were at times contradictory, his movement contributed to the social awakening and inspired many to think critically about the rigid structures of society.

In South India, Narayana Guru, a spiritual leader and social reformer from Kerala, played a pivotal role in the upliftment of the Ezhava community and other marginalized groups. He preached the message of "One caste, one religion, one God for all" and established temples that were open to all, challenging the Brahminical monopoly on religious practices. His emphasis on education, moral reform, and spiritual unity had a deep and lasting impact on Kerala society. Similarly, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, though slightly later and contemporary to Ambedkar, began his work in the early 20th century and led the Self-Respect Movement in Tamil Nadu. He strongly opposed the caste system, religious orthodoxy, and patriarchal norms, promoting rationalism and social justice.

These early reformers, despite their varied backgrounds and ideologies, shared a common goal of challenging oppressive traditions and uplifting the marginalized. Their efforts laid the ideological and institutional foundation upon which later reformers like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar could build a more direct, politically grounded, and constitutionally empowered movement against caste oppression and untouchability. While many of these reformers worked within religious frameworks to initiate reform, Ambedkar took a more radical and systemic approach, ultimately rejecting the caste foundations of Hinduism itself. Nonetheless, the legacy of the early reformers remains significant in India's long and ongoing struggle for social equality and justice.

---

## CONCLUSION

Untouchability and caste discrimination have been deeply rooted in Indian history, evolving from ancient religious texts to medieval practices and colonial policies. While early reformers challenged caste hierarchy, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's leadership was pivotal in transforming these struggles into legal and political reforms, culminating in constitutional protections for Dalits. However, caste-based discrimination persists in many forms, making the fight for social justice an ongoing struggle.

---

## REFERENCES:

Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*.

Princeton University Press, 2001.

Guha, Ranajit. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Duke University

Press, 1999.

Kopf, David. *The Brahmo Samaj and The Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*.

Princeton University Press, 1979.

O'Hanlon, Rosalind. *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste*

*Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India*. Cambridge University press, 1985.

Sharma, Ram. Sharan. *Sudras in Ancient India: A Social History of The Lower Order Down to*

*Circa A.D. 600*. Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1990.

---

## **CHAPTER- 3**

### **AMBEDKAR'S SOCIO-POLITICAL THOUGHT**

#### **PRELIMINARY**

This chapter highlights Ambedkar's personal experiences with untouchability and it also focuses on his view about Hindu Social Order (Annihilation of Caste, The Untouchables: Who Were They?). This chapter also explains the key themes of Ambedkar's ideologies about social justice, equality and rights-based approach.

#### **AMBEDKAR'S SOCIO THOUGHT**

#### **AMBEDKAR'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH UNTOUCHABILITY**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's socio-political thought was deeply shaped by his personal experiences with untouchability. Born into the Mahar caste, one of the most oppressed communities in India, he faced discrimination from an early age. His childhood experiences of exclusion, humiliation, and systemic oppression laid the foundation for his lifelong struggle against caste-based discrimination. One of the most well-known incidents from his childhood occurred when he traveled with his siblings to visit his father in Goregaon. Despite having money, he was denied transportation because of his caste. Similarly, at school, he was not allowed to sit with upper-caste students and was often denied access to water because no one would touch the vessel after him. These early experiences instilled in him a deep sense of injustice and fueled his resolve to fight for the dignity and rights of the untouchables.

Ambedkar's personal struggles with untouchability extended into his academic and professional life. Despite earning prestigious degrees from institutions like Columbia University and the London School of Economics, he continued to face discrimination in

---

India. When he was appointed as the Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda, he was subjected to humiliation by his colleagues, who refused to share office space with him or provide him accommodation. This experience reinforced his understanding that education and personal achievements alone could not eradicate untouchability; systemic change was necessary.

These experiences profoundly influenced his socio-political thought, leading him to advocate for radical reforms. He argued that mere social reforms were insufficient and that political power was essential for the upliftment of Dalits. His vision was centered on annihilating caste through legal and constitutional measures. As the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, he ensured provisions for social justice, including reservations in education and government jobs for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He also emphasized the need for fraternity, equality, and liberty as the guiding principles of democracy, ensuring that untouchables had equal rights.

Ambedkar's experiences made him realize that Hindu society was structurally discriminatory. He rejected the idea that untouchability could be reformed within the caste system and instead called for its complete dismantling. His conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was a direct rejection of the caste-based hierarchy of Hinduism. Through his socio-political philosophy, he laid the foundation for Dalit emancipation, advocating for both legal rights and social transformation. His personal experiences with untouchability were not just individual struggles but reflections of the collective oppression faced by millions, making his fight for justice a landmark in Indian history.

---

## AMBEDKAR AS A CRITIQUE OF HINDU SOCIAL ORDER

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was one of the fiercest critics of the Hindu social order, particularly its caste-based hierarchy, which he saw as the root cause of social injustice in India. His works, *Annihilation of Caste* and *The Untouchables: Who were they?*, provide a deep critique of the oppressive caste system and the subjugation of untouchables. He argued that the Hindu social order was not merely a social arrangement but a deeply entrenched system of graded inequality that denied basic human rights to the lower castes.

In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar launched a scathing attack on the caste system, which he considered an inhumane and rigid structure upheld by Hindu religious texts, particularly the *Manusmriti*. He argued that caste was not just a division of labor but a division of laborers, perpetuating a strict social hierarchy that prevented social mobility. He emphasized that caste was a religiously sanctioned system of exploitation, which made it impossible to reform Hindu society from within. His call for the annihilation of caste was a demand for the complete dismantling of this system, rather than mere reforms. He believed that without destroying caste, Indian society could never achieve true equality and democracy.

In *The Untouchables: Who were they?*, Ambedkar traced the historical origins of untouchability and challenged the Brahmanical narrative that justified their oppression. He argued that untouchables were originally Buddhists who resisted Brahmanism and, as a result, were ostracized by the dominant Hindu society. He refuted the notion that untouchability was a natural or religiously ordained condition, instead asserting that it was a result of historical processes that marginalized certain groups. He also highlighted that untouchables were forced into degrading occupations, denied access to education, and subjected to inhumane treatment to maintain Brahminical supremacy.

---

Ambedkar's socio-political thought was revolutionary as it sought not just to critique but to dismantle the Hindu social order. He recognized that mere social reform movements led by upper-caste Hindus were inadequate and that the only way forward was for untouchables to organize, educate themselves, and embrace alternative ideologies, such as Buddhism, which promoted equality. His thoughts laid the foundation for Dalit assertion and the fight for social justice in India. By advocating for a society based on liberty, equality, and fraternity, Ambedkar provided an alternative vision of social order that rejected caste-based discrimination and emphasized the dignity of all individuals.

## **AMBEDKAR'S POLITICAL THOUGHT**

### **AMBEDKAR'S THOUGHT ON UNTOUCHABILITY AND DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF LIFE**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a key architect of the Indian Constitution, envisioned democracy not merely as a system of governance but as a way of life that should permeate social, economic, and political structures. His understanding of democracy was deeply rooted in the fight against untouchability and caste-based discrimination. Ambedkar believed that true democracy could not exist in a society where a section of people was denied basic human rights and dignity due to their birth. His thought process was shaped by his own experiences as an untouchable and by his deep study of democratic principles in Western political philosophy.

For Ambedkar, democracy was not just about elections and political representation but about ensuring liberty, equality, and fraternity in all spheres of life. He argued that the caste system, especially the practice of untouchability, was fundamentally undemocratic because it denied individuals the basic rights of association, movement, and participation in society. In



---

his famous speech, *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), he asserted that democracy and caste could not coexist, as caste was based on a rigid social hierarchy that treated some as inferior and others as superior by birth. A society based on caste was inherently anti-democratic because it deprived people of their dignity and opportunities to progress.

Ambedkar emphasized that democracy should be a way of life rather than just a political arrangement. He pointed out that a society that upholds caste discrimination cannot truly practice democracy, even if it holds regular elections and has democratic institutions. According to him, social democracy—ensuring justice, equality, and fraternity—was a prerequisite for political democracy. If a society remained divided by caste and untouchability, the political system would be hollow, as those at the bottom of the hierarchy would be unable to exercise their rights effectively.

To combat untouchability and establish democracy as a way of life, Ambedkar proposed several measures. He advocated for legal safeguards, such as the abolition of untouchability through constitutional provisions, which later became a reality in Article 17 of the Indian Constitution. However, he also understood that laws alone were not enough; there had to be a fundamental shift in social attitudes. He urged for education, economic empowerment, and inter-caste dining and marriages as ways to erode the caste system. Education, in particular, was a crucial tool for the upliftment of Dalits, as it would enable them to challenge their oppression and participate fully in democratic life.

Ambedkar also believed in the role of state intervention to ensure equality. He championed affirmative action policies such as reservations in education and government jobs, arguing that without such measures, Dalits would remain excluded from democratic institutions. His vision of democracy extended beyond formal political structures to an inclusive society where every individual had the opportunity to lead a dignified life.

---

Ambedkar's thought on untouchability and democracy highlights that democracy is not just about governance but a moral and social principle that ensures justice and equality for all. A society that upholds caste-based discrimination cannot be truly democratic. For democracy to be meaningful, it must dismantle hierarchical structures and ensure equal participation for all citizens, making democracy not just a system of government but a way of life.

## **CONSTITUTIONALISM AND RULE OF LAW IN THE VISION OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, was a profound thinker and legal scholar whose vision of governance was rooted in the principles of constitutionalism and the rule of law. For Ambedkar, constitutionalism was not just the act of having a written Constitution, but the broader philosophy that government should be limited by law, accountable to the people, and committed to the protection of individual rights and freedoms. He believed that a Constitution must act as a check on arbitrary power and ensure that governance is conducted according to the rule of law, not at the whims of individuals or majorities. In the Indian context, where centuries of social hierarchy, caste oppression, and colonial rule had denied large sections of the population their basic rights, Ambedkar saw constitutionalism as a revolutionary tool for restructuring society on the basis of justice, equality, and liberty. He consistently emphasized that a successful democracy must be anchored in the rule of law, where every citizen is equal before the law and the legal framework functions without bias or discrimination. For Ambedkar, the rule of law was not a mere legal formality—it was a deeply moral and political commitment to equality, fairness, and non-arbitrariness in governance. He viewed law as an instrument of social transformation and believed that only a strong constitutional structure could uphold the dignity of the marginalized and ensure that democracy does not devolve into majoritarian oppression.

---

In his role as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar played a pivotal role in embedding the spirit of constitutionalism into the Indian legal and political system. He ensured the inclusion of a comprehensive set of Fundamental Rights, which formed the bedrock of constitutional morality and guaranteed civil liberties to all citizens, regardless of caste, creed, religion, or gender. Ambedkar strongly believed that rights must not be left to the generosity of the government; they must be constitutionally guaranteed and legally enforceable. This belief led to the inclusion of Article 32 in the Constitution, which allows individuals to approach the Supreme Court directly for the enforcement of their fundamental rights. Ambedkar famously described Article 32 as the “heart and soul” of the Constitution, as it empowered the common citizen to seek protection against the violation of their rights. His emphasis on enforceable rights reflects his deep commitment to the rule of law, where every action of the state is subject to judicial scrutiny and must conform to constitutional norms. He believed that unless people had a reliable mechanism to challenge injustice, democracy would be meaningless. In this way, constitutionalism became a safeguard not only for governance but for human dignity itself.

Ambedkar’s vision of constitutionalism also involved a strong belief in institutional checks and balances. He supported the separation of powers among the legislature, executive, and judiciary to prevent the concentration of power in any one branch of government. This was a critical feature of the Constitution that Ambedkar helped shape, ensuring that each branch could function independently while holding the others accountable. The judiciary, in particular, was envisioned as the guardian of the Constitution and the protector of fundamental rights. Ambedkar stressed the need for an independent and impartial judiciary, free from political influence, to interpret laws and resolve disputes in accordance with constitutional principles. He had immense faith in the judiciary’s role in upholding the rule of law and maintaining the democratic fabric of the nation. He was also deeply conscious of the

---

need for judicial review, where courts could invalidate laws and executive actions that violated the Constitution. This provision, he believed, was essential to protect individuals from the excesses of state power and to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution.

Ambedkar's concern for constitutionalism also extended to economic and social dimensions. He argued that political democracy must be complemented by social and economic democracy, and that the rule of law must apply equally in all spheres of life. He believed that without social equality, constitutional rights would remain merely symbolic for large sections of society, particularly Dalits and other oppressed communities. His insistence on equality before the law was thus not only legalistic but also deeply rooted in the social realities of India. He understood that formal equality alone was insufficient in a society plagued by structural inequalities; what was needed was substantive equality that would enable real access to justice and opportunities. Ambedkar's vision of constitutionalism therefore demanded active intervention by the state to dismantle social hierarchies and promote inclusive development. He supported affirmative action, land reforms, and state regulation of the economy to ensure that the constitutional promise of justice and equality was fulfilled in practice.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's thoughts on constitutionalism and the rule of law remain foundational to India's democratic identity. For him, constitutionalism was not simply about governance through laws, but a moral commitment to protect human dignity, restrain power, and promote justice. The rule of law, in his vision, was the cornerstone of democracy, ensuring that no one is above the law and that the state operates within clearly defined constitutional boundaries. Ambedkar's legacy continues to resonate in contemporary debates on governance, justice, and civil rights, reminding us that a Constitution is only as strong as the commitment of its people and institutions to uphold its principles. Through his work and vision, Ambedkar not

---

only gave India a Constitution but also a democratic conscience that seeks to uphold the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity through the rule of law.

### **AMBEDKAR'S IDEOLOGY: SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideology is deeply rooted in the principles of social justice, equality, and a rights-based approach, shaping his lifelong struggle against untouchability and caste discrimination in India. He firmly believed that a just society must be based on liberty, equality, and fraternity, without which democracy would remain incomplete. His advocacy for social justice aimed at dismantling the rigid caste hierarchy that marginalized Dalits and other oppressed communities. Ambedkar viewed caste as a deeply entrenched social evil and worked tirelessly to secure equal rights for those historically deprived of dignity and opportunities.

Central to Ambedkar's vision was the principle of equality. He rejected the idea of social stratification based on birth and instead emphasized merit, individual dignity, and access to resources for all. His efforts led to the inclusion of fundamental rights and the abolition of untouchability in the Indian Constitution. He argued that true equality required more than legal provisions; it necessitated social and economic empowerment through education, employment, and representation in governance. His advocacy for reservations in education and government jobs was a step toward achieving substantive equality, ensuring that marginalized communities had a fair chance to progress.

Ambedkar's rights-based approach focused on empowering the oppressed by providing them with constitutional safeguards. He believed that legal and institutional mechanisms were necessary to challenge systemic discrimination. As the chief architect of the Indian

---

Constitution, he enshrined provisions that guaranteed civil liberties, equal rights, and protection against discrimination. His vision extended beyond legal reforms to ensuring that the state played an active role in uplifting disadvantaged sections of society. Ambedkar's ideology continues to inspire movements for social justice, reinforcing the idea that democracy must be inclusive, where every individual, regardless of caste or class, enjoys equal rights and dignity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's socio-political thought was shaped by his personal struggles, academic pursuits, and deep commitment to justice. His critique of the Hindu social order and his demand for caste annihilation continue to inspire social movements in India. His emphasis on constitutionalism, affirmative action, and social justice laid the foundation for an inclusive and egalitarian India. Ambedkar's legacy remains relevant today as India continues to grapple with caste-based discrimination, economic inequalities, and social injustices. His thoughts and actions remain a guiding force for those striving for an equitable society, reinforcing the idea that political democracy must be accompanied by social and economic democracy for true justice to prevail.

---

## REFERENCES:

Ambedkar, Bhimrao.Ramji. *The Hindu Social Order: Its Essential Features*. Critical Quest, 2016.

Ambedkar,Bhimrao.Ramji. *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution*. P.S. King & Son, 1923.

Ambedkar,Bhimrao.Ramji.*The Constitution of India :As Framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar*. LexisNexis,2015.

Ambedkar,Bhimrao.Ramji. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in India*. Navayana, 2014.

Gore,Madhav.Sadashiv. *The Social Context of an Ideology: Ambedkar's Political and Social Thoughts*. Sage Publications, 1993.

---

## **CHAPTER-4**

### **SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENT LED BY AMBEDKAR**

#### **PRELIMINARY**

The present chapter posits Ambedkar's political struggle for legal and constitutional reforms was one of the most significant aspects of his lifelong fight against caste oppression and social injustice. His role in drafting the Indian Constitution and enacting Article 17 ensured that untouchability was legally abolished, even though the social practice persisted. His advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill, though met with resistance, paved the way for progressive legal reforms in Hindu society.

Ambedkar's contributions continue to shape India's socio-political landscape. His legal and constitutional efforts laid the foundation for a more just and equal society, and his ideas remain a guiding force for social reformers, policymakers, and marginalized communities even today. His vision for an egalitarian India, free from caste discrimination, remains an unfinished task, but the legal frameworks he established provide a strong foundation for future struggles for justice and equality.

#### **LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS**

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was one of the most prominent social reformers and political leaders in Indian history. His struggles against untouchability and caste-based discrimination were deeply rooted in his vision for a classless society. His political movements were primarily focused on securing legal rights for the Dalits and other marginalized communities. Among his most significant contributions were his role in drafting the Indian Constitution and advocating for legal reforms such as the Hindu Code Bill.



---

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956) was one of the most influential social reformers, political leaders, and intellectuals in modern Indian history. His tireless efforts to eradicate caste-based discrimination and untouchability significantly shaped the legal and constitutional framework of independent India. Ambedkar's political struggles focused on securing fundamental rights and social justice for marginalized communities, particularly Dalits.

One of his greatest contributions was his role as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, where he ensured provisions that aimed to dismantle centuries of caste-based oppression. Additionally, his efforts to introduce the Hindu Code Bill reflected his commitment to achieving gender and social justice. This essay explores Ambedkar's contributions to legal and constitutional reforms, focusing on Article 17 of the Indian Constitution and the Hindu Code Bill.

## **ROLE IN DRAFTING THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND ARTICLE 17**

Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution on August 29, 1947. This role gave him the opportunity to shape the legal foundation of the newly independent nation, ensuring that it upheld the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. His commitment to ending untouchability and caste-based discrimination was reflected in various provisions of the Constitution, the most significant being Article 17, which abolished untouchability.

## **ARTICLE 17: ABOLITION OF UNTOUCHABILITY**

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution states:

---

"Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offense punishable in accordance with the law."

This provision was a landmark legal reform that sought to dismantle the social hierarchy that had oppressed Dalits for centuries. Ambedkar ensured that untouchability was not merely condemned in principle but also made punishable by law. Later, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, was enacted to give effect to this constitutional provision, making it a criminal offense to discriminate against Dalits.

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution is a fundamental provision that abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form. It states: "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offense punishable in accordance with law." This article is significant as it provides constitutional protection against caste-based discrimination and ensures social equality, particularly for historically oppressed communities such as the Dalits.

Untouchability was a deeply entrenched social evil in India, primarily affecting lower-caste communities, especially the Dalits. They were subjected to extreme forms of discrimination, including social segregation, denial of access to public places, and exclusion from temples, schools, and wells used by upper castes. This oppressive system denied them fundamental human rights and dignity. Recognizing the need to eliminate this inhumane practice, the framers of the Indian Constitution included Article 17 as a fundamental right under Part III of the Constitution, ensuring legal protection and social justice for marginalized communities.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and a leading voice against untouchability, played a crucial role in advocating for its abolition. His efforts, along with those of other social reformers like Mahatma Gandhi, Jyotirao Phule, and Periyar, laid

---

the groundwork for constitutional safeguards. Ambedkar, himself a victim of untouchability, believed that mere legal provisions were not enough; social transformation was necessary for true equality.

To enforce Article 17, the Indian Parliament enacted the Untouchability Act, 1955, later amended and renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955. This law criminalized the practice of untouchability and prescribed penalties for its violation. Further strengthening legal provisions, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989 was introduced to prevent violence and discrimination against Dalits and Adivasis. These laws serve as a deterrent against caste-based discrimination and provide legal recourse to victims.

Despite these constitutional and legal safeguards, untouchability continues to persist in various forms in Indian society. Reports of caste-based violence, social exclusion, and discrimination in employment, education, and public spaces indicate that deep-rooted prejudices still exist. Manual scavenging, a practice associated with caste-based discrimination, remains a harsh reality for many Dalits despite being legally banned. Social and economic disparities continue to reinforce caste hierarchies, making it challenging to eradicate untouchability completely.

The abolition of untouchability requires not just legal measures but also social awareness and education. Schools, media, and civil society must play an active role in spreading awareness about constitutional rights and promoting values of equality and dignity. Initiatives like reservation policies in education and employment, as well as affirmative action programs, aim to uplift historically oppressed communities and provide them with equal opportunities.

---

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTICLE 17**

The inclusion of Article 17 in the Constitution was a revolutionary step in Indian history. Before this, Dalits faced extreme social ostracization, denial of access to public places, and restrictions on education and employment. By outlawing untouchability, Ambedkar laid the foundation for subsequent legal measures that aimed at social inclusion. However, he recognized that merely abolishing untouchability in legal terms would not be enough to eradicate caste discrimination. Hence, he pushed for affirmative action policies such as reservations in education, employment, and legislatures, which were enshrined in Articles 15(4), 16(4), and 330-342 of the Constitution.

## **THE HINDU CODE BILL AND REFORM FOR DALIT RIGHTS**

Dr. Ambedkar's fight for legal reforms was not limited to untouchability; he was also deeply concerned about gender justice and social reform within Hindu society. One of his most ambitious legal initiatives was the Hindu Code Bill, which aimed to modernize Hindu personal laws, particularly regarding marriage, inheritance, and property rights.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's efforts for Dalit rights extended significantly through his advocacy for the Hindu Code Bill(1947), which aimed to reform Hindu personal laws related to marriage, inheritance, and property rights. As the first Law Minister of independent India, Ambedkar saw this bill as a crucial step toward gender and social justice, ensuring equality for women and marginalized communities, including Dalits. The bill sought to dismantle discriminatory practices within Hindu society, thereby indirectly benefiting Dalits by challenging the rigid caste structure that upheld social hierarchies. However, strong opposition from conservative forces led to its initial failure, prompting Ambedkar's resignation in 1951. Despite this setback, his efforts laid the foundation for later legal reforms, which gradually improved the status of Dalits and other oppressed groups in India.

---

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE HINDU CODE BILL**

The Hindu Code Bill sought to:

### **Uniformity In Hindu Personal Laws**

Before the bill, Hindu personal laws were diverse and based on ancient religious texts, customs, and regional variations. The bill aimed to provide a uniform legal framework applicable to all Hindus across India.

### **Equality For Women In Marriage And Divorce**

The bill sought to establish legal rights for women in marriage, including the right to divorce. It introduced monogamy, making polygamy illegal among Hindus. Women were granted the right to seek divorce on grounds such as cruelty, adultery, and desertion.

### **Equal Inheritance Rights For Women**

The bill aimed to end gender discrimination in property rights. Daughters were given equal rights to inherit ancestral and self-acquired property, which was previously limited only to sons. Widows received stronger legal rights over their deceased husband's property.

### **Simplification Of Hindu Marriage Laws**

The bill defined conditions for a valid Hindu marriage, such as age requirements (18 for women, 21 for men). It also introduced provisions for inter-caste marriages and made child marriages voidable.

---

**Provision For Adoption Rights**

It allowed both men and women to legally adopt children, ensuring that women could also be recognized as legal guardians. This was a significant move toward gender equality in family law.

**Abolition Of Untouchability In Family And Marriage Laws**

The bill ensured that no discrimination could be made based on caste in matters of marriage and inheritance. It supported the right of Dalits and lower-caste individuals to marry without social restrictions.

**Recognition Of Widow Remarriage**

Previously, widows faced significant social and legal restrictions on remarriage. The bill granted them the right to remarry without losing rights over their deceased husband's property.

**Legal Framework For Maintenance And Guardianship**

The bill ensured that a wife, children, and aged parents had the legal right to claim maintenance from the earning male members of the family. It also provided women with the right to be the natural guardians of their children.

Ambedkar strongly believed that social justice could not be achieved without reforming Hindu laws, which had been used for centuries to oppress both lower castes and women. His proposals faced severe resistance from conservative Hindu leaders and politicians, who saw them as an attack on traditional Hindu values.

---

## **OPPOSITION AND FAILURE OF THE BILL**

The Hindu Code Bill was introduced in the Constituent Assembly in 1948, but it faced stiff opposition from orthodox Hindu leaders and even some members of the ruling Congress party. The debate over the bill continued for years, with conservative factions arguing that it interfered with religious freedom and Hindu traditions. Due to political pressure, the bill was watered down, and Ambedkar was deeply disappointed. He saw the failure of the Hindu Code Bill as evidence that upper-caste Hindus were unwilling to give equal rights to Dalits and women.

Frustrated by the lack of commitment to social justice, Ambedkar resigned from the position of Law Minister in 1951. However, his efforts were not in vain. After his resignation, many of the provisions of the Hindu Code Bill were gradually passed as separate laws, including:

The Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

The Hindu Succession Act (1956)

The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956)

The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956)

These laws collectively transformed Hindu personal laws and laid the groundwork for gender equality and social justice within the Hindu community.

## **IMPACT OF AMBEDKAR'S LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS**

The legal and constitutional reforms championed by Dr. Ambedkar had a profound and lasting impact on Indian society. Some of the key outcomes include:

---

**Formal Abolition of Untouchability:** Although caste discrimination still exists in various forms, the constitutional ban on untouchability gave legal protection to Dalits and empowered them to fight for their rights.

**Reservations for Scheduled Castes and Tribes:** Ambedkar's advocacy led to the establishment of affirmative action policies that provided opportunities in education, employment, and politics for historically marginalized communities.

**Strengthening of Civil Rights Laws:** The Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955) and later the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989) were direct outcomes of Ambedkar's legal vision.

**Women's Rights and Social Reform:** Though the Hindu Code Bill was diluted, its provisions significantly improved women's legal status in Hindu society.

**Inspiration for Future Dalit Movements:** Ambedkar's legal battles inspired later Dalit movements such as the Dalit Panthers (1970s) and contemporary struggles for caste-based reservations and social justice.

## **INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's institutional and political engagement was a crucial aspect of his lifelong struggle against untouchability and caste-based discrimination. He realized early on that achieving social justice for the depressed classes required both institutional efforts and active political participation. His engagement took various forms, from founding organizations to representing Dalit interests in national and international forums. Through these efforts, he worked towards the upliftment of the marginalized and sought to secure their rightful place in Indian society and governance.



---

## **FORMATION OF THE BAHISHKRIT HITAKARINI SABHA (1924)**

One of the earliest institutional efforts undertaken by Dr. Ambedkar was the formation of the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha in 1924. The Sabha was established with the motto, "Educate, Agitate, Organize," reflecting Ambedkar's belief that social and political awareness were fundamental to the empowerment of the oppressed classes. The Sabha primarily aimed to provide education, promote economic opportunities, and advocate for the civil rights of the "Bahishkrit" (the excluded or untouchables). At a time when Dalits were denied access to schools, public wells, and temples, the Sabha worked tirelessly to secure these basic rights. It played a vital role in mobilizing public opinion against caste discrimination and demanding policy changes from the colonial government.

Under the banner of the Sabha, Ambedkar led several campaigns for the rights of Dalits, including the famous Mahad Satyagraha of 1927. This movement challenged the caste-based restrictions on accessing public water sources. The Sabha also encouraged Dalits to pursue education, with Ambedkar emphasizing that knowledge was the key to emancipation. The Sabha's efforts were instrumental in fostering a sense of self-respect and dignity among the depressed classes and laid the groundwork for Ambedkar's future political endeavors.

## **ROLE IN THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCES AND THE POONA PACT**

Dr. Ambedkar's political engagement reached a significant milestone when he participated in the Round Table Conferences held between 1930 and 1932 in London. These conferences were convened by the British government to discuss constitutional reforms in India, and Ambedkar attended as the representative of the depressed classes. At these meetings, he

firmly articulated the demand for separate electorates for Dalits, arguing that political power was essential for their social and economic advancement. He criticized the Congress party and Mahatma Gandhi for failing to address the plight of untouchables effectively.

Ambedkar's demand for separate electorates was initially accepted by the British government in the Communal Award of 1932, granting Dalits the right to elect their representatives independently. However, this decision led to intense opposition from Mahatma Gandhi, who went on a fast unto death, arguing that separate electorates would divide Hindu society. Under immense pressure, Ambedkar was compelled to negotiate with Gandhi, leading to the Poona Pact of 1932. This agreement replaced separate electorates with reserved seats for Dalits within the general electorate. While the pact increased the number of reserved seats for Dalits, it was seen as a compromise that limited their independent political voice.

Despite his dissatisfaction, Ambedkar accepted the Poona Pact in the interest of maintaining social harmony. However, he remained critical of the Congress leadership and continued to advocate for the political empowerment of Dalits. The Poona Pact had far-reaching implications, as it laid the foundation for the system of reserved constituencies in independent India.

## **THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY AND SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION**

Recognizing that institutional engagement alone was insufficient, Ambedkar sought to create political platforms to represent the interests of Dalits and other marginalized communities. In 1936, he founded the Independent Labour Party (ILP), a political

---

organization aimed at addressing the issues of both the depressed classes and the working class. The Independent Labour Party focused on economic justice, land reforms, and labor rights, advocating for policies that would benefit not only Dalits but also the broader working population. Through the ILP, Ambedkar contested elections and won a seat in the Bombay Legislative Council in 1937, marking a significant step in his political career.

However, as Indian independence approached, Ambedkar felt the need for a more exclusive political organization dedicated to the rights of Dalits. Consequently, in 1942, he dissolved the ILP and founded the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF). The Scheduled Castes Federation was designed to be a strong political voice for Dalits, focusing on securing their representation in government and ensuring their rights in independent India. Unlike the ILP, which had a broader socialist agenda, the SCF was primarily concerned with the empowerment of Dalits as a distinct political entity.

Despite his efforts, Ambedkar faced challenges in gaining widespread electoral support due to the dominance of the Congress Party and its strategy of co-opting Dalit leaders. Nevertheless, the SCF laid the foundation for later Dalit political movements and was a precursor to the Republican Party of India, which emerged after Ambedkar's death.

### **KALARAM TEMPLE ENTRY MOVEMENT BY DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR**

The Kalaram Temple Entry Movement was a significant social reform movement led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1930. It was one of the earliest and most impactful struggles against caste discrimination and untouchability in India. This movement was aimed at securing equal rights for the so-called "untouchables" (Dalits) and challenging the deeply entrenched caste-

---

based discrimination in Hindu society. The movement sought entry for Dalits into the Kalaram Temple in Nashik, Maharashtra, which was then restricted to upper-caste Hindus.

Dr. Ambedkar, a staunch advocate of social justice, believed that religious discrimination was one of the primary tools used to subjugate the Dalits. He argued that Hindu temples, which claimed to be places of worship for all, systematically excluded a section of their own followers. This exclusion was not merely a religious issue but a broader socio-political problem that needed to be addressed. The Kalaram Temple Entry Movement was one of the many efforts he undertook to break the social and religious barriers that reinforced caste discrimination.

During the early 20th century, the caste system in India was deeply entrenched, with Dalits (then referred to as "Untouchables") facing severe social exclusion. They were denied access to temples, public wells, schools, and other common facilities. This exclusion was justified on religious grounds, with the upper castes believing that the presence of Dalits in sacred spaces would "pollute" them. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a strong advocate of social justice and equality, recognized that the denial of temple entry was not just a religious issue but a symbol of the institutionalized discrimination against Dalits.

Ambedkar had already initiated movements for equal rights, such as the Mahad Satyagraha (1927), which aimed to secure Dalit access to public water sources. The Kalaram Temple Entry Movement was a natural extension of these efforts. By targeting a prominent temple like Kalaram, Ambedkar aimed to expose the hypocrisy of Hindu religious leaders and force the caste Hindus to acknowledge the injustice meted out to Dalits.

---

## **MAHAD SATYAGRAHA: DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S FIGHT FOR WATER RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

The Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was a pivotal movement in the struggle against untouchability in India. It was not just about access to water but symbolized the broader fight for equality, dignity, and human rights. This movement marked a crucial moment in India's social and political history, as it challenged the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination that denied basic rights to millions of Dalits.

During British rule, despite legal provisions granting equal rights to public resources, caste discrimination was so deeply rooted that Dalits were denied access to common water sources, temples, roads, and public spaces. Mahad, a town in present-day Raigad district, Maharashtra, had a public tank that was officially open to all citizens. However, the upper-caste Hindus refused to allow Dalits to drink or collect water from it.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a staunch advocate for social justice, saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate that Dalits were entitled to the same rights as other citizens. He organized the Mahad Satyagraha as a non-violent protest, inspired by Gandhian methods but focused on caste oppression rather than British colonial rule.

### **THE FIRST MAHAD SATYAGRAHA: MARCH 20, 1927**

Dr. Ambedkar and his supporters chose Mahad, a town in present-day Raigad district of Maharashtra, as the site for the satyagraha. The town had passed a municipal resolution in 1924 allowing untouchables to use the Chavdar Tank, but upper-caste Hindus continued to resist its implementation.

---

On March 20, 1927, Ambedkar led a gathering of over 10,000 Dalits to the Chavdar Tank. The participants peacefully marched to the tank, drew water, and drank it in defiance of the prevailing caste restrictions. This act was a symbol of dignity, self-respect, and a demand for equality. The event was a landmark in the Dalit struggle for civil rights.

However, soon after the satyagraha, upper-caste Hindus purified the tank with cow dung and cow urine, claiming that it had been polluted by the Dalits. This incident highlighted the deep-seated caste prejudices in Indian society and the urgent need for a radical transformation.

The Mahad Satyagraha was met with fierce resistance from upper-caste Hindus. Dalits were attacked, beaten, and socially boycotted. Following the event, a riot broke out in which upper-caste mobs attacked Dalits participating in the movement. The situation escalated to the extent that many Dalits had to flee for their safety.

Realizing that the struggle for equality would not be easy, Ambedkar decided to take the movement further. He understood that social reform was necessary before political reforms could be effective. The Mahad Satyagraha became a turning point in his vision for Dalit emancipation.

## **THE SECOND MAHAD SATYAGRAHA AND THE BURNING OF MANUSMRITI (DECEMBER 25, 1927)**

The first satyagraha had made a strong statement, but caste oppression remained intact. Ambedkar and his supporters regrouped and launched the second phase of the Mahad Satyagraha on December 25, 1927. This time, Ambedkar not only reaffirmed the right of Dalits to access public water but also took a stronger stance against Hindu religious texts that

---

justified untouchability. On this day, Dr. Ambedkar and his followers publicly burned copies of the Manusmriti, an ancient Hindu scripture that legitimized caste discrimination and untouchability. The burning of Manusmriti was a radical act—it symbolized a complete rejection of the oppressive caste system and marked the beginning of Ambedkar’s movement towards a new, just society.

This event laid the foundation for Ambedkar’s later decision to embrace Buddhism in 1956, as he realized that Hinduism could not provide equality to Dalits. The burning of Manusmriti also inspired other social reform movements and intensified the discourse on caste-based oppression in India.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s institutional and political engagement was a transformative force in the struggle against untouchability. Through organizations like the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, he worked to educate and uplift Dalits, while his participation in the Round Table Conferences and negotiations in the Poona Pact demonstrated his commitment to securing political rights for the oppressed. His establishment of the Independent Labour Party and the Scheduled Castes Federation reflected his strategic approach to political mobilization. These efforts were crucial in shaping the discourse on Dalit rights and laid the groundwork for their constitutional protections in independent India. Ambedkar’s legacy as a social reformer and political leader continues to inspire movements for justice and equality in India today

---

## REFERENCES

*Constitution of India*, Art. 17. Government of India, 1950.

Sharma, Rajiv. *Hindu Code Bill: Ambedkar's Last Battle for Justice*. Penguin Books, 2019.

Rao, p. Sreenivas. *Constitutional Rights and Social Change: Ambedkar's Vision*. Routledge, 2017.

Choudhary, Sunil. *Ambedkar and The Making of Indian Constitution*. Oxford University Press, 2018.



---

## **CHAPTER-5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **PRELIMINARY**

This chapter focuses on the major findings and pedagogical implication of the study.

#### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

Ambedkar's legal and constitutional efforts, particularly the drafting of the Indian Constitution, laid the foundation for social justice and affirmative action. Untouchability was not just a social stigma but a deeply entrenched system of oppression sustained by religious, economic, and political structures. Ambedkar's critique of Hindu orthodoxy and his call for annihilation of caste remains a radical and relevant framework for social justice. His contributions to constitutional safeguards (Articles 17, and reservation policies) continue to influence contemporary policies for marginalized communities.

Ambedkar's role in forming the Independent Labour Party (1936) and later the scheduled Castes Federation (1942) emphasized the need for Dalit political representation. His advocacy for universal access to education and critical thinking helped create a foundation for Dalit consciousness and mobilization. Despite constitutional safeguards, caste discrimination persists in various forms, including economic exclusion, violence, and social ostracization. Ambedkar's ideas continue to inspire Dalit movements, affirmative action policies, and contemporary debates on caste and democracy.

Ambedkar launched mass movements for temple entry, water rights, and the right to dignity, as seen in the Mahad Satyagraha (1927) and Kalaram Temple Entry Movement (1930). He emphasized education as a tool of empowerment, urging Dalits to seek knowledge as a means to break caste oppression.

---

## **PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Incorporating Ambedkar's works and Dalit narratives in history, political science, and social studies curricula to provide a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of India's socio-political history.

Encouraging interdisciplinary approaches that connect Ambedkar's thoughts with law, human rights, sociology, and ethics.

Using Ambedkar's struggles as a case study for critical pedagogy, helping students analyze structural inequalities and the role of education in social transformation.

Promoting discussions on caste, discrimination, and constitutional rights to cultivate an informed and empathetic student body.

Encouraging participatory learning through debates, group discussions, and research projects on caste and social justice movements.

Implementing experiential learning methods, such as field visits, interactions with marginalized communities, and engagement with grassroots activism.

Developing teacher training programs that emphasize caste sensitivity, diversity, and equity in classrooms.

Encouraging teachers to use inclusive language and examples that resonate with students from marginalized backgrounds.

Advocating for affirmative action policies in higher education institutions and ensuring their effective implementation.

Promoting the establishment of research centers dedicated to Ambedkarite studies, caste studies, and social justice.

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ambedkar, Bhimrao.Ramji. *Annihilation of Caste*. Navayana, 2014.

Austin, Granville. *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. Oxford University Press, 1966.

*Constitution of India, Art. 17*. Government of India, 1950.

Choudhary,Sunil. *Ambedkar and The Making of Indian Constitution*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Dumont,Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. University of Chicago press (1966).

Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton University Press,2001.

Guru, Gopal, and Suraj Yengde, editors. *Dalit: The Black Untouchables of India*. Oxford UP, 2020.

Guha, Ranajit. *Elmentary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Duke University Press,1999.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Analysing and Fighting Caste*. Columbia UP, 2005.

---

Kosambi, Damodar.Dharmananda. *The Culture And Civilization Of Ancient India In*

*Historical Outline* .Vikas Publishing house ,1956.

Kosambi, Damodar.Dharmananda. *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*. Popular

Prakashan,1975

Kopf, David. *The Brahmo Samaj and The Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*. Princeton

University Press, 1979.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution And Ambedkar: Towards And Enlightened India*. 1994, 2004.

Omvedt, Gail. *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian*

*Identity*. Orient Blackswan, 2006.

O'Hanlon, Rosalind. *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest*

*in Nineteenth-Century Western India*. Cambridge University press,1985.

Rao, p. Sreenivas. *Constitutional Rights and Social Change: Ambedkar's Vision*.Routledge, 2017.

Sharma, Arvind. *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A Biography*. HarperCollins, 2018.

Sharma, R.S. *Sudras in Ancient India: A Social History of The Lower Order Down to Circa*

*A.D. 600*. Motilal Banarasidass,1990.

---

Sharma, Rajiv. *Hindu Code Bill: Ambedkar's Last Battle for Justice*. Penguin Books, 2019.

Zelliot, Eleanor. *Dr. Ambedkar and the Untouchable Movement*. Blueskart, 2013.

Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

---

**Date:**

**Place:**

**Signature of the Student**

**Signature of the Supervisor**