



## Role of Dr B.R. Ambedkar in the Making of New Modern Labour Class : Perspectives and Policies

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### Abstract

*Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is best known as the father of the Indian constitution. Dr. Ambedkar was also an economist and the former labour minister of India. He was well aware of the root causes of Indian social problems and their connectivity with the economy. He did an excellent job for labour welfare with his ideas of liberty, fraternity, and justice. He connected labour issues with the social roots of the problem and solved it with a particular Indian understanding. He also mentioned the problem of Indian agricultural labour and gave a unique solution for making them 'Economic labour.' 'Human resource development' is a modern concept in our global economic system. But many decades ago, Dr. Ambedkar presented all the ways to make labour a resource while maintaining socio-economic equality. In this paper, I will present his idea of labour welfare in India. In this paper, I used historical and descriptive research methodologies and primary and secondary methods of data collection.*

**Key words:** *Economic labour, Socio-economic Equality, Untouchability, Human Resource.*

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### Introduction

Dr. Ambedkar expressed his view as a scholar with appropriate knowledge of analysis. After 1930, he was appointed to different presidential posts for the reform movement and as head of political units. That was his emerging journey as a labour leader in India. In 1934, he was nominated as the president of the 'Mumbai Municipal Employee Organisation.' According to Narendra Jadhav, it was the entry of Dr. Ambedkar as a labour leader. After some time, he founded the 'Independent Labour Party' (1936), and it was the milestone of his work for the Indian working class. The motto of his party was a vision for the future to remove inequality and poverty. During this period, he addressed different meetings and gave a speech on labour leadership in India. He was also elected to the Bombay Presidency and presented different bills for labour welfare. His party had a particular agenda for the welfare of the landless, poor, agricultural, and industrial workers.<sup>1</sup>

### Perspectives and Policies

In his paper 'Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies' published in 'The Journal of the Indian Economic Society Vol. I, 1918, he divided the Indian economy into two sectors.<sup>2</sup> They were the primary sector (agriculture and allied industries) and the secondary sector (manufacturing). On labour matters, Dr. Ambedkar picked up the root of the problem of Indian labourers, and according to him, Indian labourers are facing problems on a social and economic basis and socially, they are suffering from caste discrimination, and economically, they are already a weaker section of society. Dr. Ambedkar says that caste discrimination is a negation of the spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and it can be present in all classes and castes. This unequal ideology affects socioeconomic fields.<sup>3</sup> He also explains the problems between labour and government relations. Dr Ambedkar says that the depressed class peoples were unskilled labours so, they found employment mostly at low wages and due to the practice of untouchability they became more vulnerable. Dr. Ambedkar exposed the depressed class's lower occupational condition as labour in the workplace due to untouchability as a reason.<sup>4</sup> According to him, "The condition of labour in India was largely governed by the industrial development of this country, over which this government has hardly any control, and therefore it is of no use accusing the Government of India if conditions are really unsatisfactory."<sup>5</sup>

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If we talk about the perspective of Dr. Ambedkar on the emerging labour movement in India, then we know that after the Russian Revolution of 1917, a new form of the labour movement was established, which was political transformation of labour problems. After some time, the labour movement was dominated by communists and the strike was a common weapon for exposing their power. The 1924, 1925, and 1929 strikes were examples. During these strikes, Dr. Ambedkar was totally against the politicalisation of the labour problem, so that's why he did not support the strike of 1929–30. Dr. Ambedkar opposed the strikes in his pamphlets 'Janta' and 'Bahishkrit Bharat' and appealed to the depressed class workers to refrain from joining the strikes on the grounds that they were politically motivated and would bring economic distress to them. Dr. Ambedkar presented a great theory about labour needs in India, and the three magical words that were the key to happiness were :

Liberty

Equality

Fraternity

Labour's conception of liberty is very positive. It involves the idea of 'government by the people, and in the opinion of Labour, it doesn't mean parliamentary democracy, but it is a travesty of government by the people. So, government, which should be conceived by Labour, includes the right to equal opportunity and the duty of the state to provide the fullest facilities for growth to every individual according to their needs.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, labourers want equality, not only prosperity, for living their lives as they deserve. According to him, fundamental equality means the abolition of all processes that lead to inequality. Fraternity means the sense of human brotherhood, unifying all classes and all nations, with 'peace on earth and goodwill towards man' as its motto for the future.

Dr. Ambedkar took his ideas from the French Revolution and gave importance to the agenda of nationalism with particular emphasis on two principles: the principle of self-government and the principle of self-determination. It was a totally different ideology from communists, who ignored the concept of nationalism in all ways for labour and pushed them into conflicts with the state. And it may create a great barrier to the development of unity. Dr. Ambedkar had a different view of labour's ideological needs. By supporting two principles of French nationalism, he also argued that "nationalism is the only view of traditional worship of the blind path with inequality; otherwise, it would not be acceptable, and labour is not prepared to make a fetish of nationalism. If nationalism means the worship of the ancient past and the discarding of everything that is not local in origin and colour, then labour cannot accept nationalism as its creed".<sup>7</sup> Actually, he wanted to see new changes in the traditional structure of the labour world with the creation of labour rights on the basis of international idealism and democracy. According to his view, Labour's creed was internationalism. Labour was interested in nationalism only because of the wheel of democracy, such as representative parliaments, responsible executives, constitutional conventions, etc.<sup>8</sup>

During second world war period, he recommended a permanent and representative body for the discussion of the industrial problem of labour welfare with legislative and administrative aspects and also gave a proposal for two bodies: one bigger, called the Plenary Labour Conference and the other smaller, called the Standing Labour Committee. He was very sure that these structures would not be important only in the war period but might also be established as permanent structures in developing the Indian economy. He analysed the situation of poor labour and found that their poverty was the main thing to solve their problems, and every labourer was suffering from poverty, which resulted in inequality and in-fraternity with an injustice-full social economy. According to him, these problems can be solved only by organised labour without regard to caste or creed. And the legislative representative of the labour class is also an important tool for labour reforms. He suggested to the state the improvement of human



resources as a capital (the modern concept of globalisation) with technical education (for making skilled workers) as the remedy for removing poverty. He also presented an economic framework for securing their rights. It was as followed :

Agriculture should be nationalised,

Government should invest in important industries.

Compulsory life insurance for every adult (according to their income), all rights should be reserved to the government,

The government should take all private property rights from the owner and provide debentures against recovery, and debentures could be transferred or donated.

To make a land area of particular sizes and redistribute it on rent, and the government would provide natural resources for farming.<sup>9</sup>

He presented a tripartite approach to labour welfare in which the role of the government as a third party in any dispute was important. According to Dr. Ambedkar, it may be described as "collaboration between employer-employee and the government."<sup>10</sup> Overall, he presented three types of institutions in this system.

Conference

Permanent labour committee

Labour welfare committee

For this task, he suggested the appointment of labour officers. He sought to make the government responsible and accountable for labour issues. In the meeting of the plenary labour conference on September 6, 1943, eight points were covered on the agenda of labour-related welfare. In which employment, social security, minimum wages, allowance, representation of labour in the legislatures, adoption of the Rules of Procedure for the Plenary Conference, and model Rules for Provident Funds were important.

Dr. Ambedkar was a labour leader who protected workers from employers who violated the law in unfair ways. He protected their wage rights and made the workplace better. The majority of the labourers belonged to the untouchable class, who suffered more and worked in undesirable fields, including ambiguous ones like various household chores. The skilled labour class backed him in his efforts to increase human capital. Additionally, he made the government a third party in any industrial labour disputes and made it accountable for worker welfare. At the level of equilibrium, he also added a new dimension to the employer-employee interaction. Additionally, he aims to stop unneeded labour strikes. He helped shape India's industrial policy in the modern era and presented a new idea of human resource management.

## References

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