

# KNOWING BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR





On November 26, 1949, India proudly adopted its Constitution. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly, celebrated the remarkable dedication of the Drafting Committee members, especially its Chairperson, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. This heartfelt recognition of Dr. Ambedkar was met with resounding cheers from the Assembly.

# INTRODUCTION

This illustrated publication is a sincere effort to present the life, works, and enduring legacy of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in a comprehensive and accessible manner. The publication was conceived with the aim of reaching readers who may not be very familiar with the breadth and depth of his contributions to governance and law. The book has sought to consolidate key episodes, ideas, and milestones that have shaped both Dr. Ambedkar's personal journey and the national ethos that he helped envision.

This work does not seek to offer a critical or scholarly interrogation of Dr. Ambedkar's writings, theories and political engagements. Instead, it serves as an introductory companion, one that captures the essence and traces the contours of his multifaceted persona as a jurist, economist, social reformer, constitutional architect, and champion of equality. By weaving together narrative and never-seen-before images the book aspires to provide a holistic understanding of Dr. Ambedkar for a wide and diverse readership.

Our endeavour is sincerely rooted in respect for Dr. Ambedkar's towering contributions and guided by the belief that a holistic awareness of his ideas is vital for anyone seeking to appreciate the foundations of modern India. We hope that this book motivates readers to explore his works further and engage more deeply with his transformative vision for social justice, democracy, and human dignity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This illustrated volume on the life and legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has only been made possible by the generous support and encouragement of many esteemed individuals. We would like to express our profound gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, for his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in India. We are equally grateful to the Hon'ble Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Virendra Kumar, whose constant encouragement and commitment to advancing social justice has been inspirational to the team working on this project.

We extend our sincere thanks to Shri Sudhansh Panth, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, for entrusting us with this meaningful opportunity and for providing us with steady institutional support through every stage of this endeavour. We also place on record our genuine appreciation to Shri Akash Patil, Director, Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), whose sagacious guidance and unwavering encouragement strengthened the very spirit of this volume. His support reminded us time and again of the responsibility we carry while working on a project on the legacy of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar.

As a team, comprising the members of the Professorial Supervisory Committee and the Research Associates of the DAIC, we acknowledge with genuine gratitude that this work would not have been possible without the motivation, trust, and consistent support extended by the dignitaries mentioned above. Their collective vision has inspired us to approach this volume with the sincerity that the life and legacy of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar truly deserves.



## FROM DIRECTOR'S DESK

It is my privilege, as Director of Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), to present this exquisite coffee table book, a tribute to the enduring legacy of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a visionary leader, social reformer, and architect of India's Constitution. This beautifully crafted volume is a treasure trove of rare images, illustrations, and insights into the life and times of Dr. Ambedkar, making it a must-have for anyone inspired by his ideals.

At DAIC, we have been committed to promoting Dr. Ambedkar's vision of social justice, equality, and empowerment. Our initiatives, such as the Dr. Ambedkar First Memorial Lecture delivered by Hon'ble Justice BR Gavai on Dr. Ambedkar's birth anniversary, and the Prof. Dr. NR Madhav Menon Memorial Lecture, reflect our dedication to fostering a deeper understanding of his contributions. We have also organized expert talks, panel discussions, conferences, and lecture series, which have enriched the discourse on Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy and social contribution.

DAIC as the centre for excellence has had the honour of hosting notable dignitaries, including the Hon'ble President and Prime Minister of India, as well as in fostering international collaborations. These partnerships have enriched our understanding of Dr. Ambedkar's global relevance and the significance of his ideals.

This coffee table book is a culmination of our efforts to showcase Dr. Ambedkar's remarkable life and legacy. It features stunning illustrations, photographs, and narratives that bring his story to life. The book is a testament to the impact of Dr. Ambedkar's ideas on India's Constitution, social justice, and human rights.

I hope this book inspires readers to embrace Dr. Ambedkar's message of empowerment, inclusivity, and social justice. It is a valuable resource for readers, researchers, and anyone seeking to understand the making of modern India.

Akash Patil  
Director, Dr. Ambedkar International Centre

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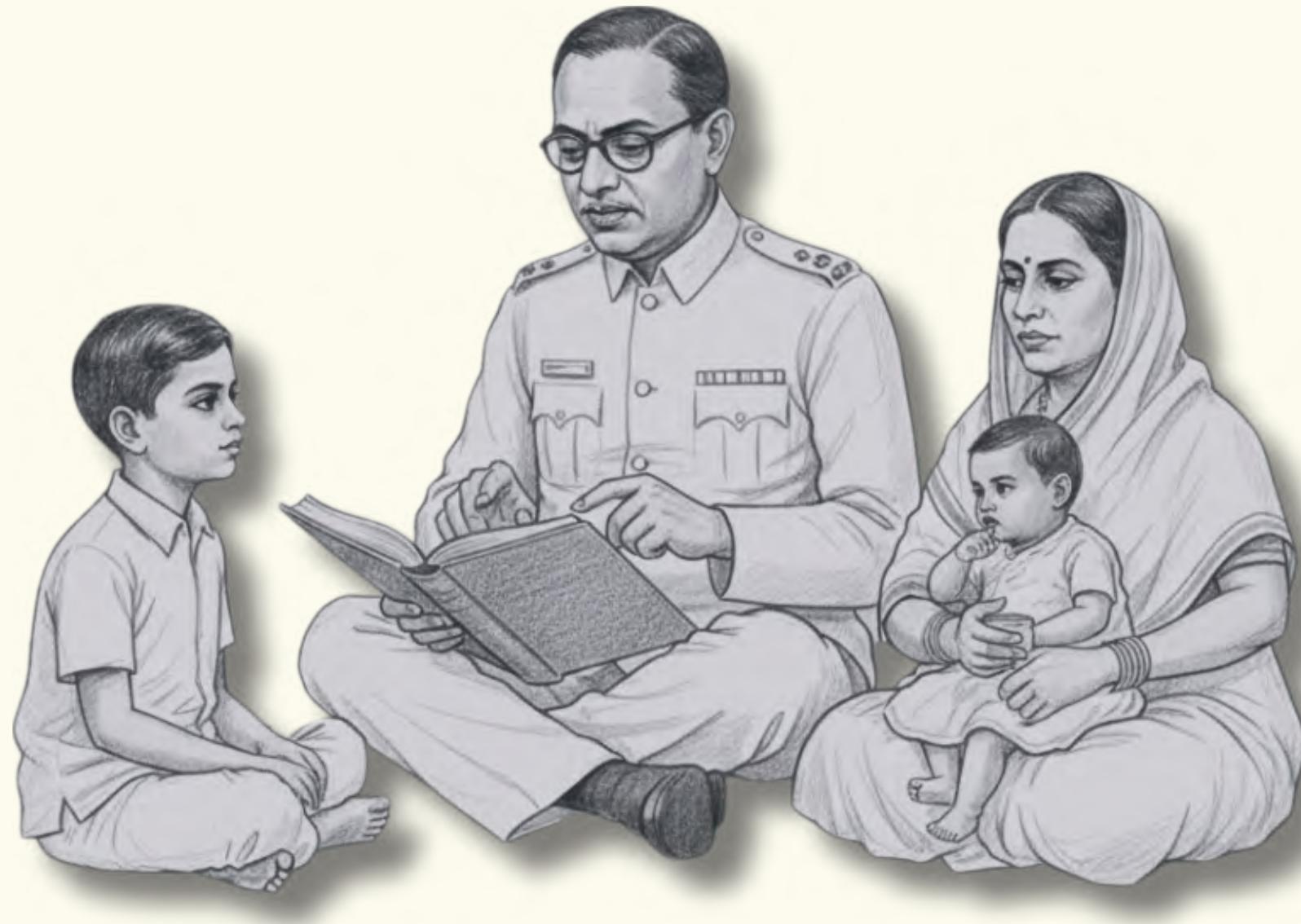
- FROM BHIM TO BABASAHEB BHIM RAO AMBEDKAR
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# SECTION 1

## FROM BHIM - BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR

## FROM BHIM TO DR. BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR

Dr. Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891. to Subedar Ramji Maloji sakpal and Bhimabai Ramji Sakpal. Subedar Ramji Maloji sakpal, Dr. Ambedkar's father, had once been a teacher in an Army school.<sup>6</sup> "My father was a military officer, but at the same time a very religious person. He brought me up under a strict discipline. From my early age I found certain contradictions in my father's religious way of life. He was a Kabirpanthi, though his father was Ramanandi. As such, he did not believe in Murti Puja (Idol Worship), and yet he performed Ganapati Puja--of course for our sake, but I did not like it. He read the books of his Panth."<sup>7</sup> Dr. Ambedkar's mother's name was Bhimabai Sakpal, she was the daughter of Laxman Murbadkar.



# FROM BHIM TO DR. BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR



Subhedar Ramji Maloji Sakpal (1838-1913)



Bhimabai Sakpal



Birth Place

# CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



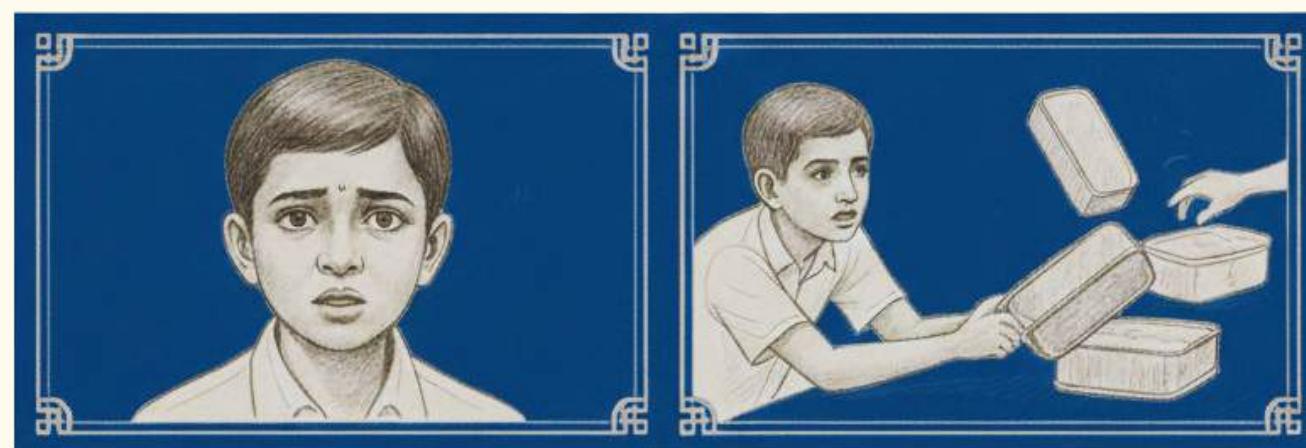
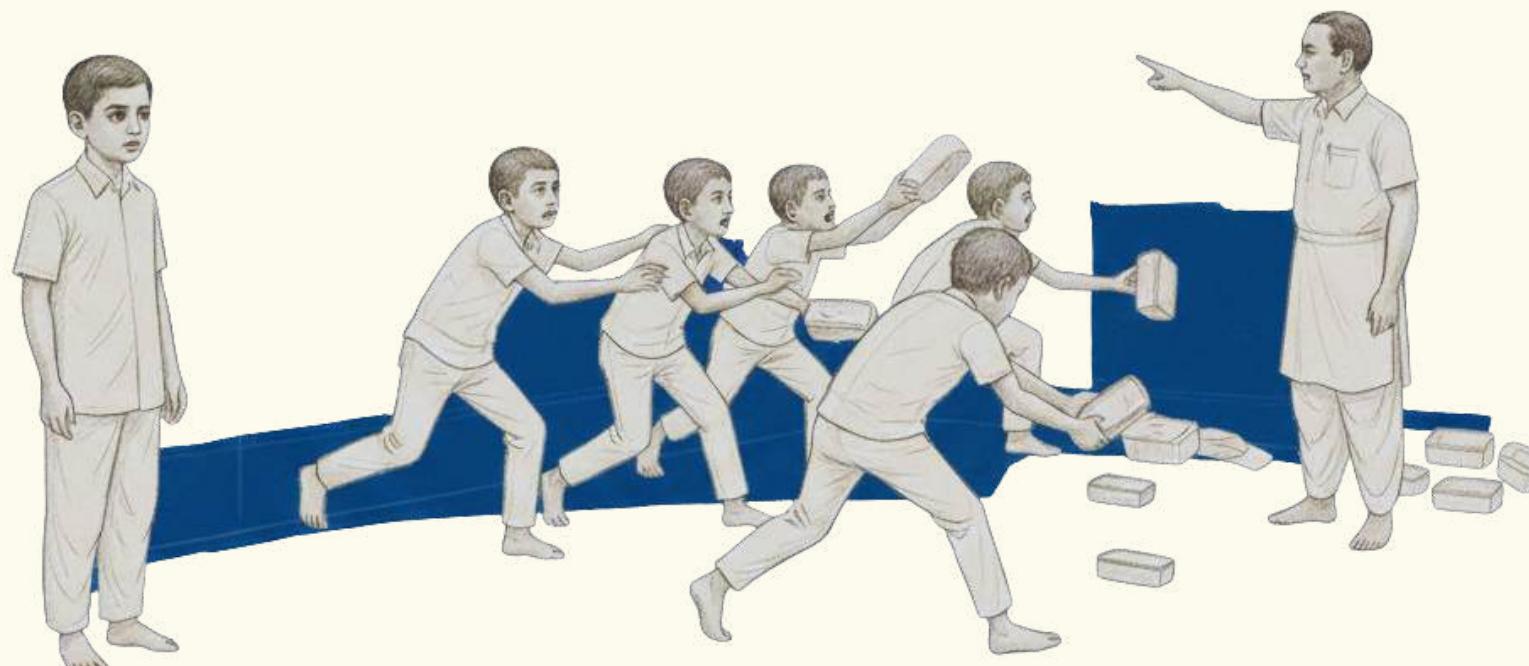
## Dapoli in Ratnagiri District -

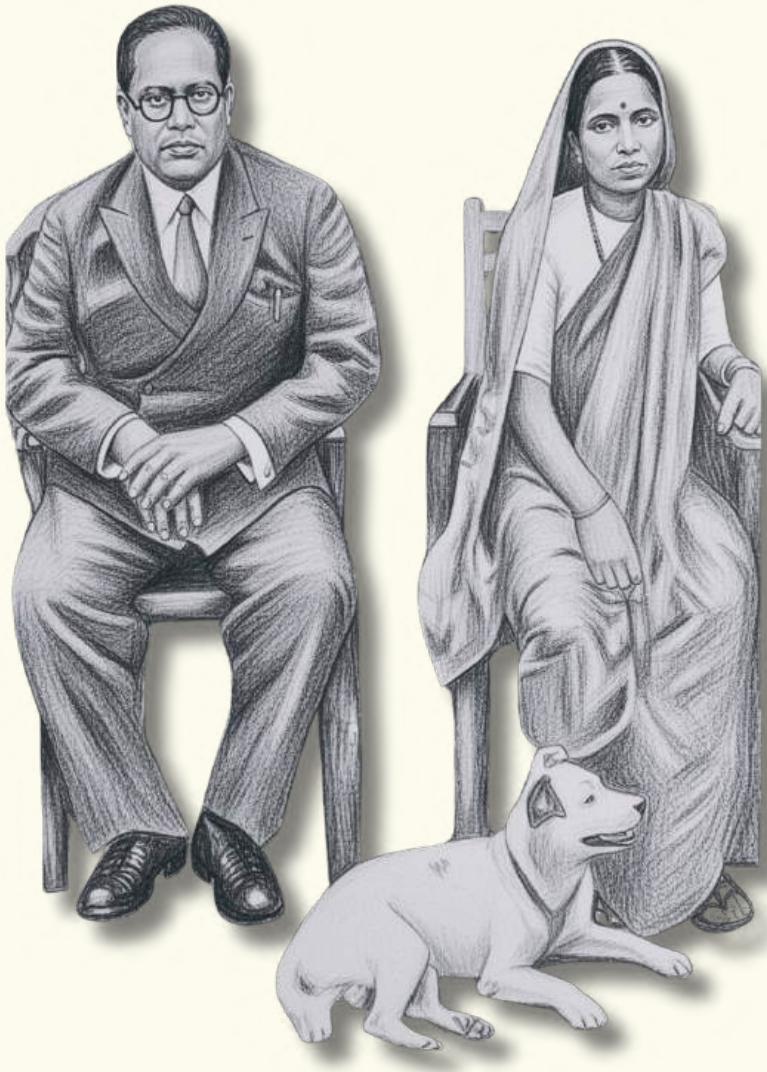
The young Bhimrao had his earliest education there. "At Dapoli in Bombay Presidency, however, there was a government-aided school, and the elder Ambedkar insisted his boys be allowed to attend on the ground that he was an army officer. It was finally arranged that they and four other "untouchables" might go to the school on the condition that they stay in a room by themselves and never come in contact with the caste children, and above all that they never take a drink from the school water supply. Those terms were accepted, and the future Doctor of Philosophy of Morningside Heights had his first conscious experience in ostracism and in learning at the same time. He was then 6 years old.



"His second experience was at Satara, where he was the only untouchable pupil. He was allowed to sit in the same room with other boys, but always on the floor by himself in a remote corner. None could play with him or speak to him." 8 "This incident gave me a shock such as I had never received before, and it made me think about untouchability which, before this incident happened, was with me a matter of course, as it is with many touchables as well as the untouchables.".... "The incident, which I am recording as well as I can remember, occurred in about 1901, when we were at Satara. My mother was then dead. My father was away on service..." 9

One day it so happened that the class teacher called upon Bhim to come to the black board to solve an example. Instantaneously there was an uproar in the class. The caste Hindu children used to keep their tiffin-boxes behind the blackboard. Since they feared that their food would be polluted by Bhim's presence near the board, they dashed to the blackboard and hurled their tiffin-boxes aside before Bhim could reach and touch the blackboard





### MATA RAMABAI

In 1906, Bhimrao's marriage was arranged, with Ramabai, nineyear-old daughter of Bhiku Dhutre of Wanand, near Dapoli.<sup>12</sup>

(Dr. Ambedkar with Ramabai Ambedkar)

"My community people wanted to celebrate the occasion by holding a public meeting to congratulate me. Compared to the state of education in other communities, this was hardly an occasion for celebration. But it was felt by the organisers that I was the first boy in my community to reach this stage; they thought that I had reached a great height. They went to my father to ask for his permission. My father flatly refused, saying that such a thing would inflate the boy's head; after all, he has only passed an examination and done nothing more. Those who wanted to celebrate the event were greatly disappointed. They, however, did not give way. They went to Dada Keluskar, a personal friend of my father, and asked him to intervene. He agreed. After a little argumentation, my father yielded, and the meeting was held. Dada Keluskar presided. He was a literary person of his time. At the end of his address he gave me as a gift a copy of his book on the life of the Buddha, which he had written for the Baroda Sayajirao Oriental Series. I read the book with great interest, and was greatly impressed and moved by it."<sup>10</sup>

## HOBBIES



Young Bhimrao loved cricket but faced caste-based exclusion. Inspired by P. Baloo, one of the greatest cricketers of modern India, who was denied captaincy due to his caste, he and Dr. Ambedkar fought for inclusivity in the sport and in Indian society.

Dr Ambedkar had a deep love for animals, which was evident in his gentle care for a deer and his nurturing nature towards dogs, inspired by Buddhist principles. His colleagues observed that he often welcomed dogs into his homes in Mumbai and Delhi, creating a warm and loving environment for them. Among his cherished pets were two dogs named Mohini and Toby. The bond he shared with Toby was particularly special, and when Toby passed away, it deeply affected him, causing him to mourn for days. Toby can be seen in the family picture of Dr. Ambedkar taken at Rajagriha.

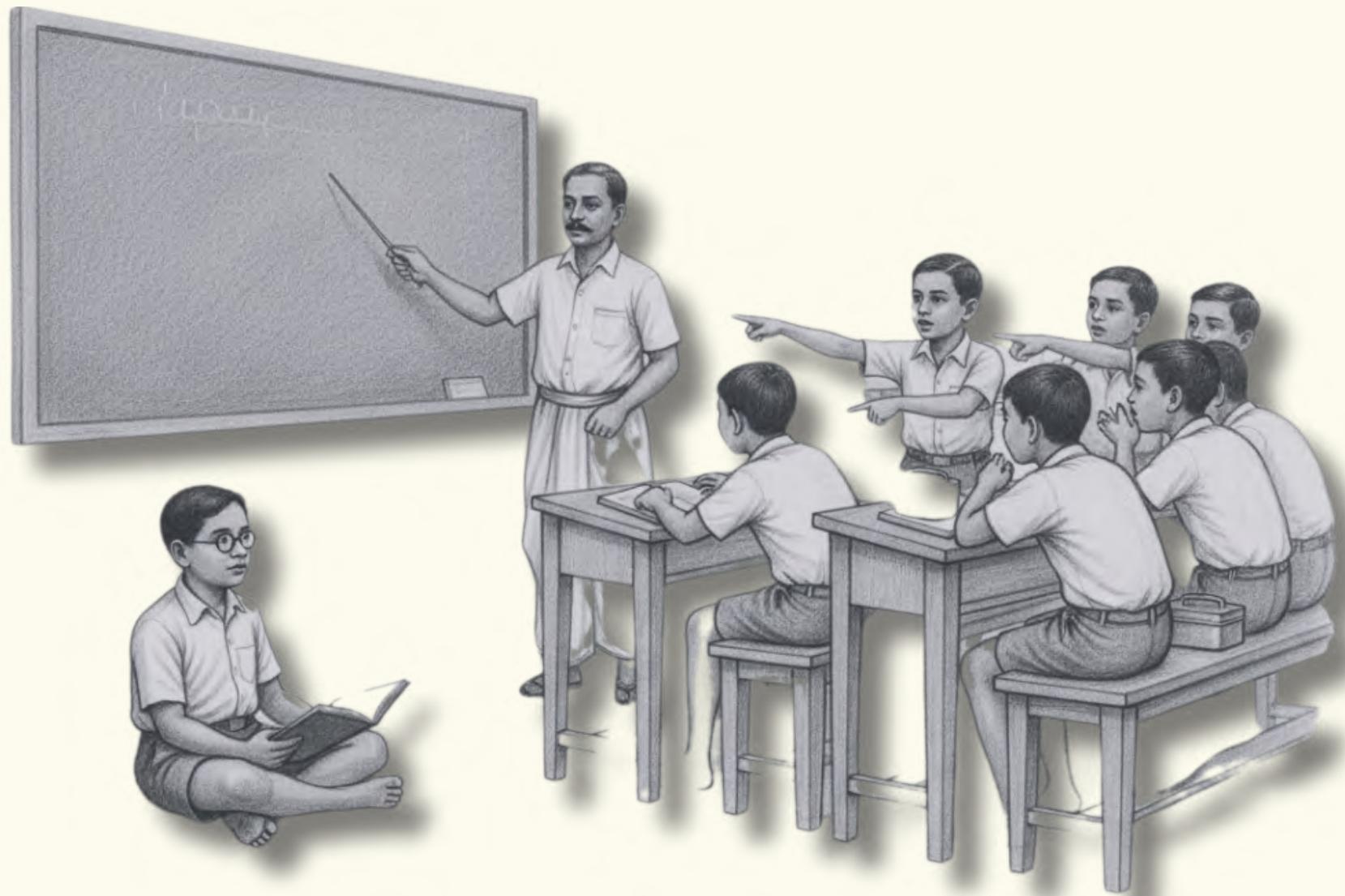
Dr Ambedkar pursued a diverse range of hobbies, including gardening, cooking, music, and painting. His deep passion for playing the violin led him to pursue dedicated lessons in Mumbai and Delhi, showcasing his commitment to personal growth and artistic expression.

Dr Ambedkar's passion for theatre and cinema was rooted in their potential for self-discovery and social change. In his youth, he directed a Marathi adaptation of Shakespeare's "King Lear" and used theatre to rally support and raise funds for his Mahad Conference at Damodar Hall in Parel

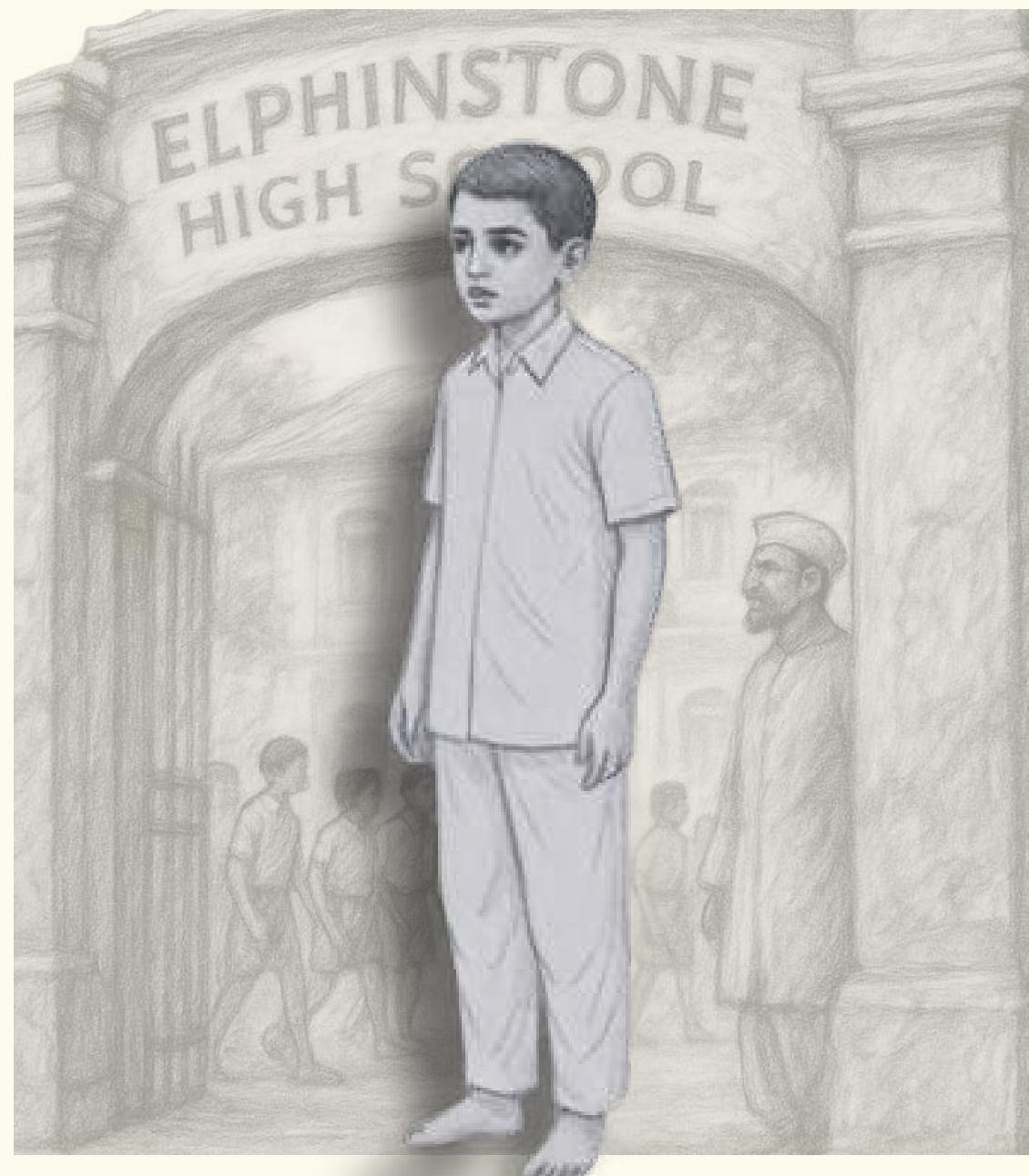


# EDUCATION

1896- The family moved to Satara, where Ramji Sakpal found a job with the Public Works Department in Goregaon; Bhimrao was enrolled in school in Satara. Bhimrao entered the Government Middle School at Satara in 1900.



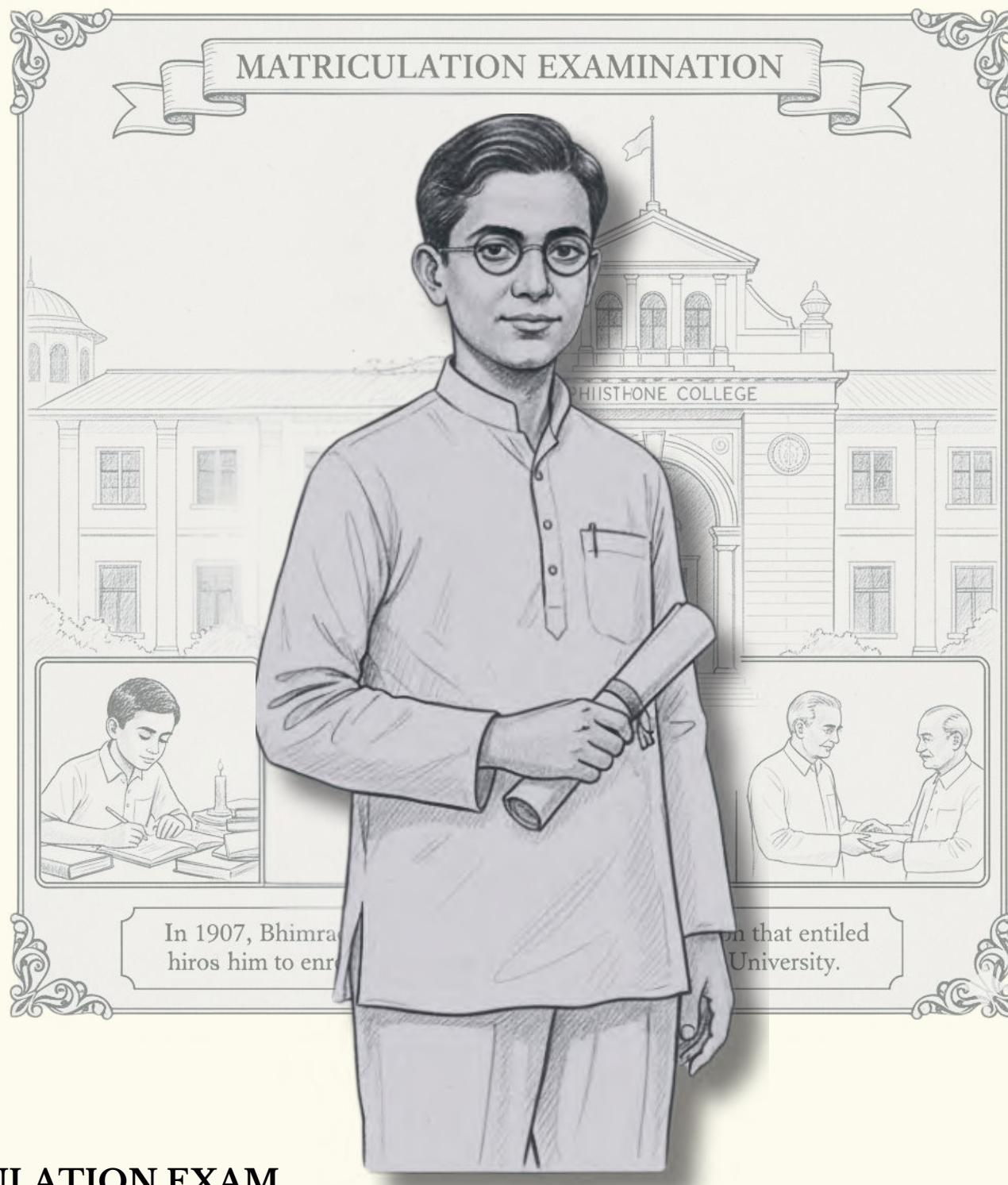
Dr. Ambedkar took admission in Government High School Elphinstone at the age of 13. "At the age of 13 he went to the government high school at [sic] Elphinstone, becoming its [one] untouchable student. Here also he was ostracized, but was allowed to sit alone on a back bench. By this time his abilities with his lessons began to attract attention." 18





## SHAHU JI MAHARAJ

In 1902, The progressive-minded Shahu I (1884-1922) Maharaja of Kolhapur ordered 50% of the posts in the Kolhapur state services to be reserved for the backward classes. In 1907 he started two hostels open to Depressed Class boys.<sup>19</sup>



## MATRICULATION EXAM

In 1907, Bhimrao passed the Matriculation Examination that entitled him to enroll in a college affiliated with Bombay University.

## ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE

In 1908, Bhimrao entered Elphinstone College, a college affiliated with Bombay University

## MAHARAJ SAYAJI RAO III

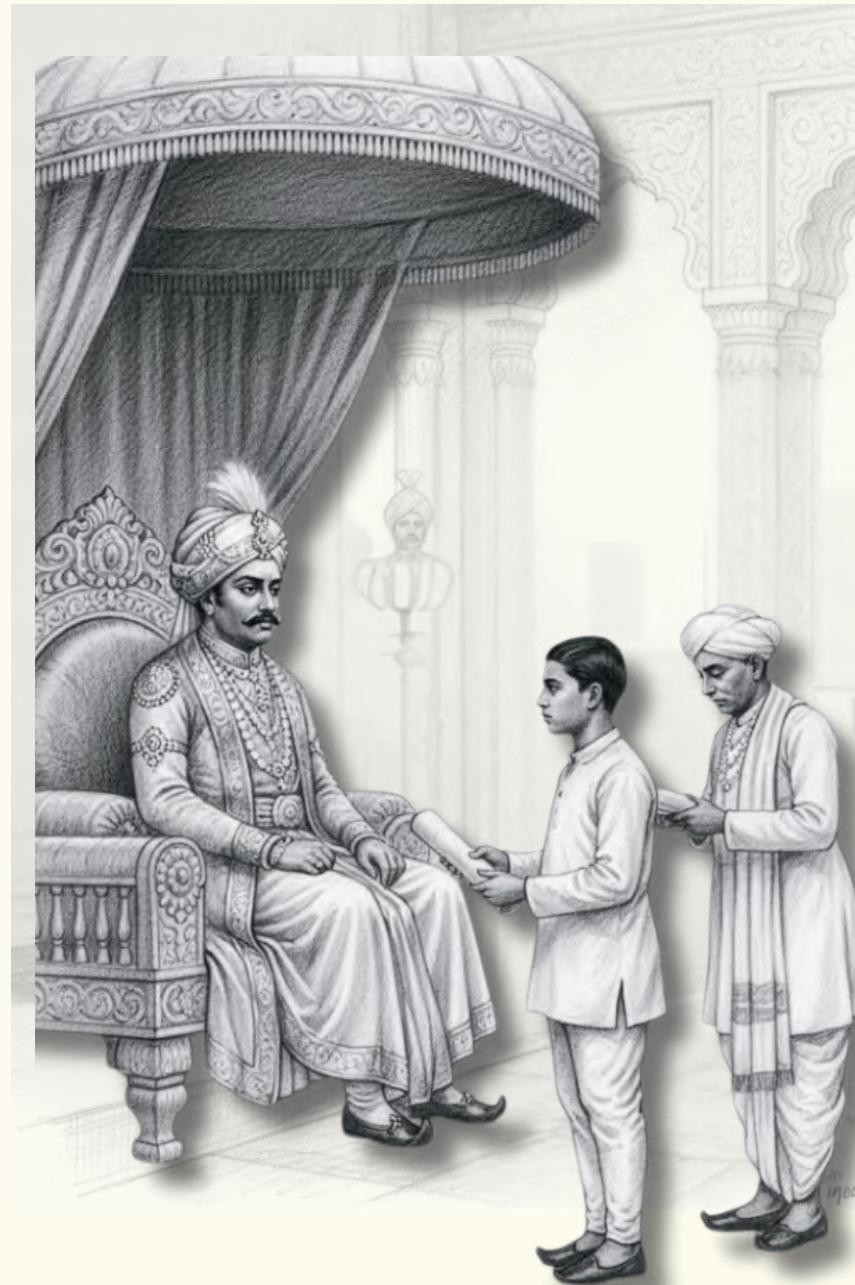
Dada Keluskar introduced young Bhimrao to the progressive Gaikwad of Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao III, who approved a monthly scholarship of Rs. 25 for his education. In due course B. R. Ambedkar finished school and joined the Elphinstone College at Bombay. Half way through his university course, his father ran out of funds and a friend took the young undergraduate to the Gaikwad of Baroda who gave him a scholarship which enabled him to secure his degree. After graduating, B. R. Ambedkar went to thank the Gaikwad, and to his surprise was asked if he would go overseas for further studies.<sup>20</sup>

## BARODA STATE SCHOLARSHIP 1913

The Gaikwad of Baroda announced his decision to offer scholarships to send students for higher education at Columbia University. A scholarship of 11.50 British pounds a month, for three years, was awarded to the young Ambedkar.<sup>21</sup>

## BOMBAY UNIVERSITY

In 1912, Bhimrao passed the B.A. Examination (special subjects: Economics and Politics) from Bombay University, and prepared to take a position in the administration of Baroda State.



## **DR. AMBEDKAR ARRIVED IN NEW YORK**

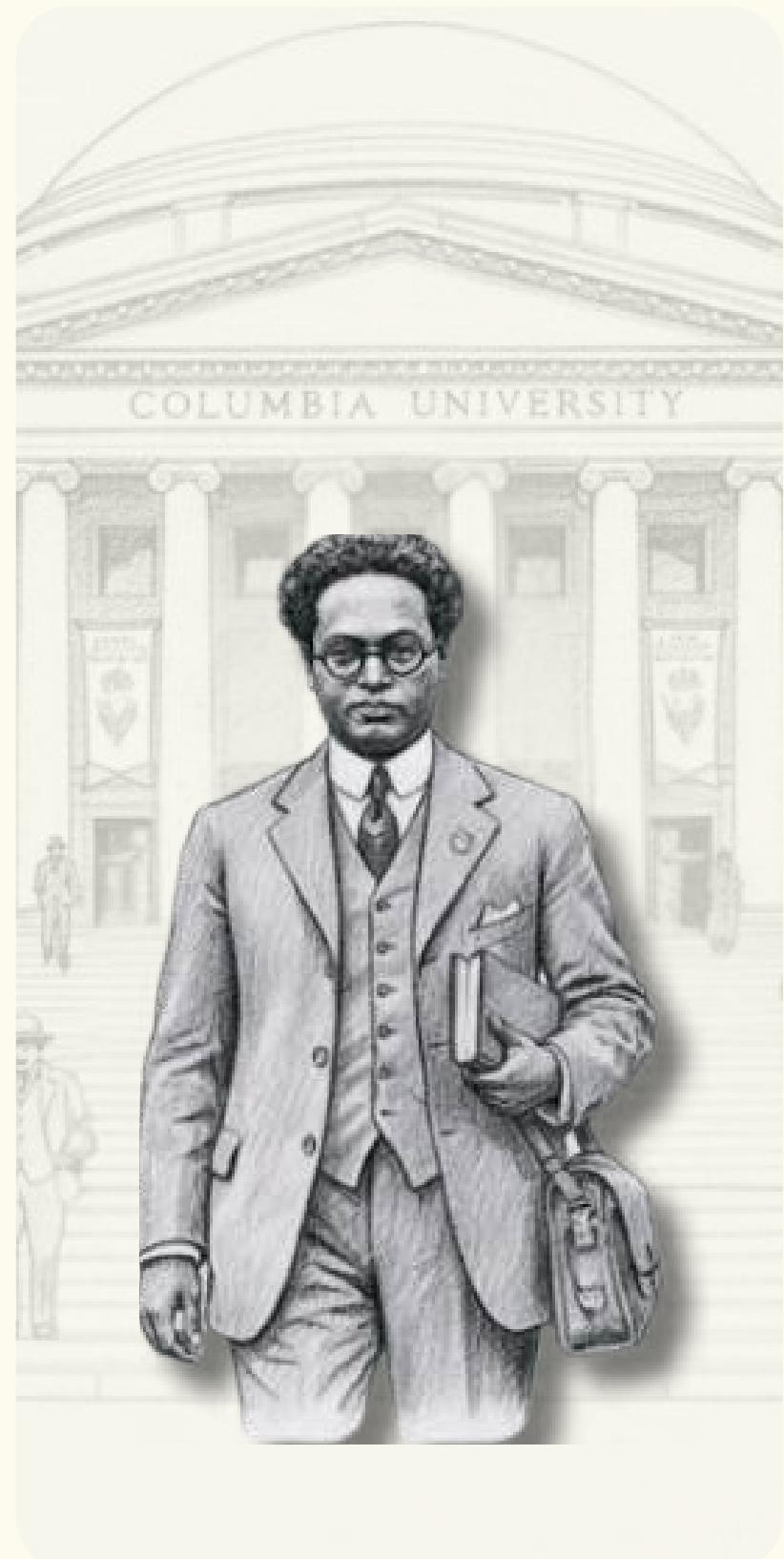
In 1913 Dr. Ambedkar, Arriving in New York during the third week in July, Bhimrao was housed in Hartley Hall. But he didn't care for the food, and only stayed for a week. In August he moved from Hartley Hall to "Cosmopolitan Club" (554 West 114th Street), a housing club maintained by a group of Indian students. He finally settled in a dormitory, Livingston Hall (since renamed Wallach Hall, with his friend Naval Bhathena, a Parsi; the two remained friends for life.<sup>22</sup>

## **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

-1913 At the Columbia University, he studied Economics, Sociology and Political and Moral Philosophy, securing his Master's degree and a Doctorate in Philosophy.<sup>23</sup> He passed his M.A. exam in June 1915, majoring in economics, and other subjects of Sociology, History, Philosophy and Anthropology. He presented a thesis, Ancient Indian Commerce. Ambedkar was influenced by John Dewey and his work on democracy. In 1916, he completed his second master's thesis, National Dividend of India – A Historic and Analytical Study, for a second M.A.

## **WENT TO LONDON**

1916 In 1916 On May 9th, he read his paper "Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development" before a seminar conducted by the anthropologist Prof. Alexander Goldenweiser (1880-1940)





## LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

1916 In June he went to London, and in October he was admitted to Gray's Inn for Law, and to the London School of Economics and Political Science for Economics, where he was allowed to start work on a doctoral thesis. He often worked in the British Library Reading Room.

## BACK TO INDIA

1917, Dr. Ambedkar Appointed as Military Secretary In 1917 He was appointed Military Secretary to the Gaikwar of Baroda; he had agreed to join the Baroda service as a condition of his scholarship.

## SYDENHAM COLLEGE

In 1918 Finally he became Professor of Political Economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics, in Bombay

## RESIGNATION AND RETURN TO LONDON

1920 In 1920 Having resigned from his teaching position, in July he returned to London, relying on his own savings, supplemented by loans from the Maharaja of Kolhapur and his friend Naval Bhathena. He returned to the London School of Economics, and to Gray's Inn to read for the Bar.

## PH.D. THESIS

1923 In 1923 His Ph.D. thesis at the University of London, The Problem of the Rupee, was challenged on political grounds (for its allegedly subversive, anti-British implications), but was resubmitted and finally accepted; it was at once published in London (by P. S. King and Son, Ltd.).



## BACK TO INDIA AND PRACTICE AS A BARRISTER

In 1924 Back in India, Dr. Ambedkar began to practice as a barrister in Bombay, and also began to lecture part-time at Batliboi's Accountancy Training Institute. He founded the "Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha" (Group for the Wellbeing of the Excluded), to help the Depressed Classes mobilize. Its motto was "Educate, Agitate, Organise.<sup>24</sup>

## PUBLISHED M.A. THESIS

In 1925 He published his London School of Economics M.A. thesis as 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India'; it was dedicated to the Gaikwar of Baroda<sup>25</sup> FORMALLY AWARDED PH.D DGREE 1927 On June 8, he was formally awarded the Ph.D. degree from Columbia University. His Ph.D. thesis was 'The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India'.

## SECTION 2

# AMBEDKAR'S IDEA OF DECOLONISATION



## AMBEDKAR'S IDEA OF DECOLONISATION

"What racial difference is there between the Brahmin of Madras and the Pariah of Madras? The Brahmin of the Punjab is racially of the same stock as the Chamar of the Punjab and the Brahmin of Madras is of the same race as the Pariah of Madras. Caste system does not demarcate racial division. Caste system is a social division of people of the same race".

# THE QUEST FOR NATION BUILDING

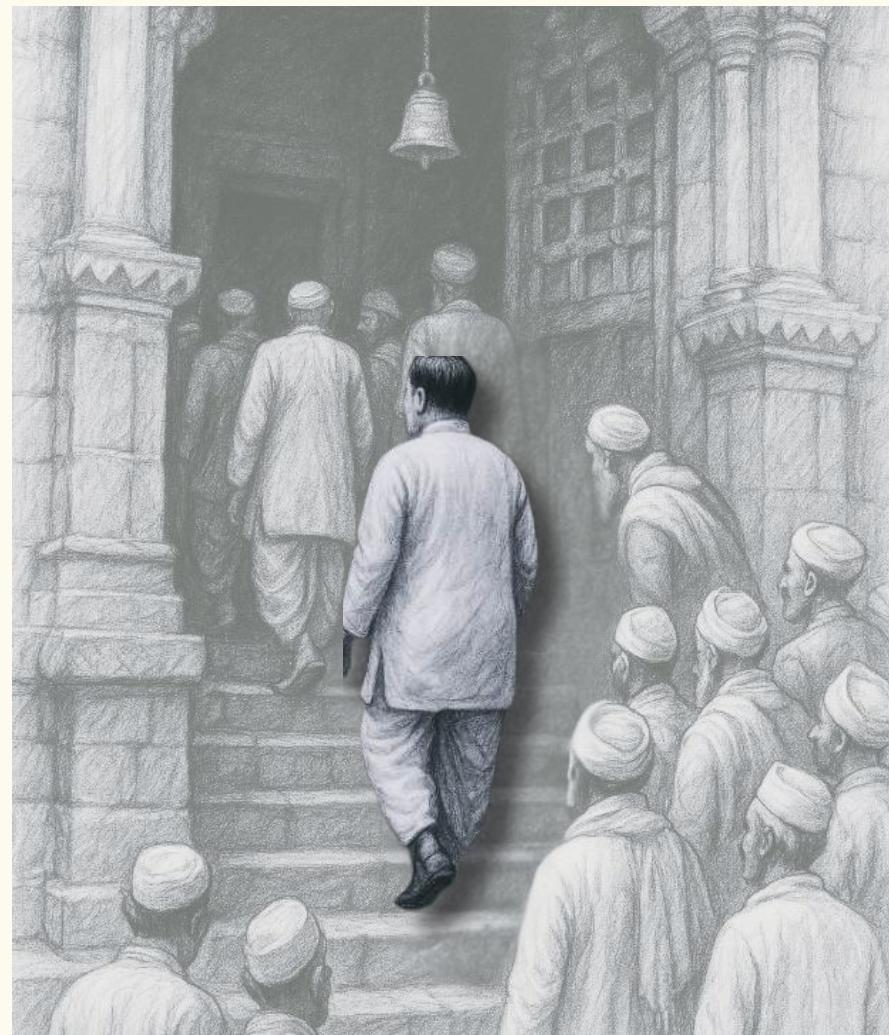
## MAHAD SATYAGRAHA

"We are resorting to this Satyagraha not because we believe that the water of this particular tank has any exceptional qualities, but to establish our natural rights as citizens and human beings." "Ours is a movement which aims at not only removing our own disabilities, but also at bringing about a social revolution, a revolution that will remove all man-made barriers of caste by providing equal opportunities to all to rise to the highest position and making no distinction between man and man so far as civic rights are concerned. If we achieve success in our movement to unite all the Hindus in a single caste, we shall have rendered the greatest service to the Indian nation in general and to the Hindu community in particular."



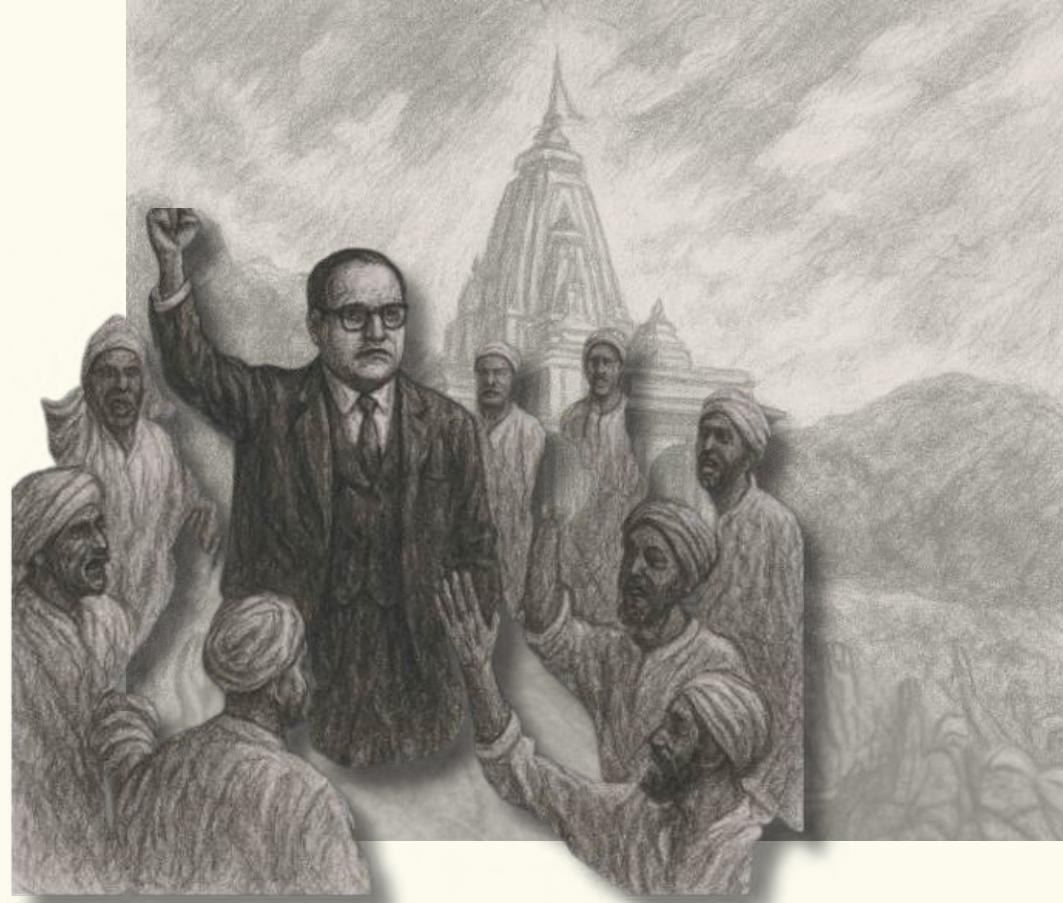
## KALARAM TEMPLE ENTRY SATYAGRAHA

"Dr. Ambedkar put forward a thought-provoking speech about the entry of Kalaran Temple. He said, today, we are about to enter the Temple. But the entry in the Temple would not solve the whole problem. Our problem is comprehensive. It is political, social, religious, economic, educational etc. "But our Satyagraha today is an effort to bring about a change of heart among the Hindus. With this principled position we are launching this Satyagraha." "We must take the burden on our shoulders and do what we can to free ourselves from this course at any cost. If the Government does not help us, it must not at least hamper our just cause".



## PARVATI TEMPLE SATYAGRAHA

In October 1929, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led an effort to secure the entry of Untouchables into Pune's Parvati Temple. The caste-based exclusions continued, barring untouchables from worship. Historically, Mahars prayed at a modest stone-circle shrine at the hill's base dedicated to Vetal and Mhasoba. Ambedkar's leadership in this initiative challenged deep-rooted spatial and social segregation, making it an important precursor to later temple entry and civil rights movements that sought to dismantle caste-based discrimination in public religious spaces.



## DALIT PANTHERS MOVEMENT

The Dalit Panther organisation obviously owed its inspiration to the Black Panthers of America. Its avowed aim was to break with all established parties, especially its parent, the Republican Party of India. Using dramatic and confrontational measures such as morchas (demonstrations), gheraos (sit-ins), and bandhs (strikes) and a political vocabulary resonant with violence, the Panthers captured newspaper headlines in India and abroad. The movement created a new literature of protest whose scope goes far beyond the confines of a single caste, striving to articulate the fears, hopes, and aspirations of a whole class of exploited segments of Indian humanity, the Indian 'proletariat'.

## LOTHIAN MOVEMENT

Dr. B R Ambedkar argues that the term "depressed classes" should be confined to untouchables, but only to those who share a common consciousness of discrimination. Untouchability, being a matter of social behaviour, naturally varies, even though key markers like temple entry restrictions or pollution by touch exist almost everywhere. He also insists that the test of "pollution by touch" must be understood in its notional, not literal, sense. Even if social or economic constraints force people to disregard traditional avoidance practices, the belief in impurity persists.

॥ दलित पंथर ॥



मुंबईतील तस्णांच्या शौर्याचा आलेख

## NAMANTAR ANDOLAN

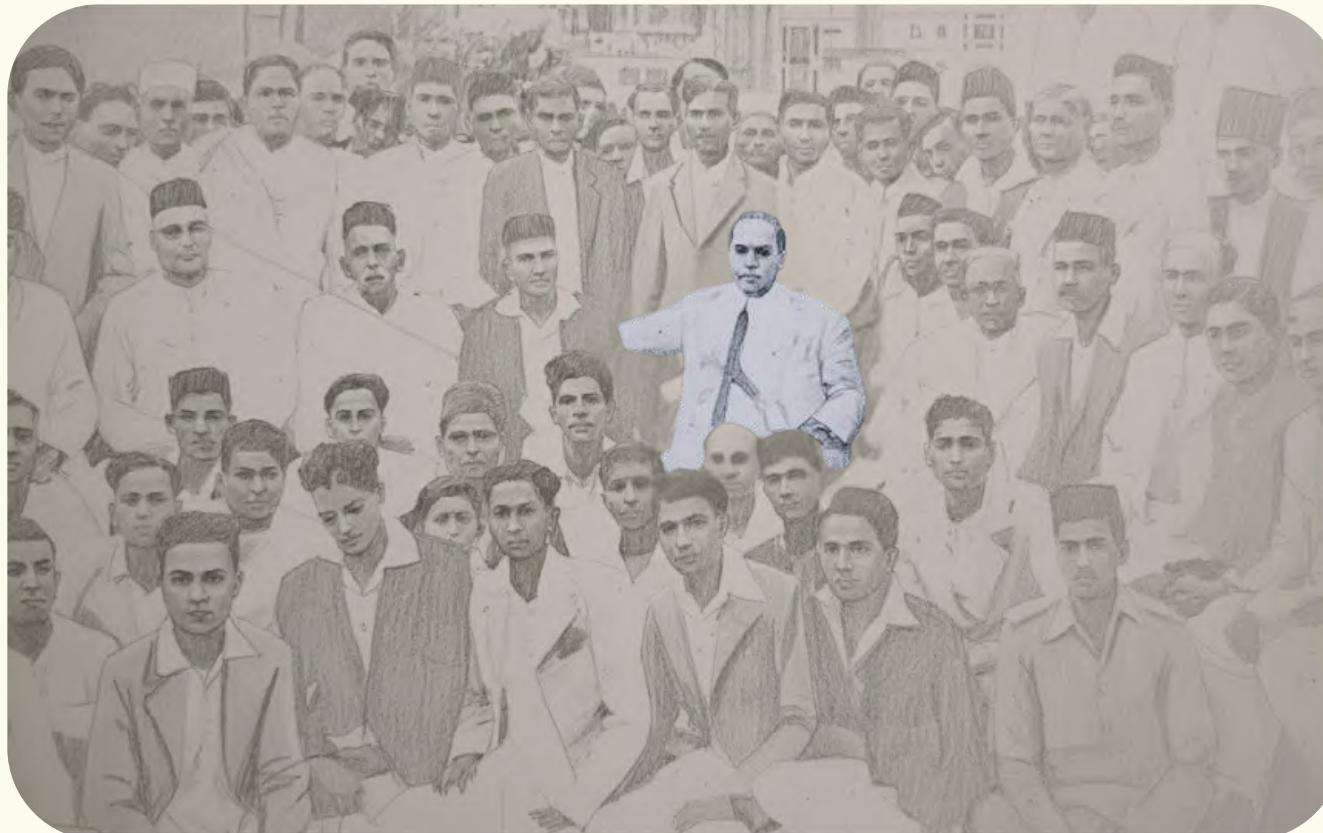
The Namantar Andolan, which demanded renaming Marathwada University after Ambedkar was the first major self-organized, mass-scale Dalit movement. Namantar remained a non-religious, political assertion that united youth, elders, and women across the region, strengthening consciousness, dignity, and social awakening among Dalits. After two decades of agitation, the Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar announced the renaming in January 1994. The renaming day, 14 January 1994, continues to be commemorated annually as Namantar/Naamvistar Din, symbolizing resilience, identity assertion, and the ongoing fight for dignity.



# DEEPENING DEMOCRACY: ORGANISATIONS

## BAHISHKRIT HITKARINI SABHA

Dr. Ambedkar organized a meeting on 9th March 1924 at Damodar Hall, Bombay, with objectives to establish a Central Institute which would place the grievances of the Untouchables before the Government and after many discussions, Central Institute was established. He proposed the name of the Institute as ‘Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha’ which was supported by all. The Vow of the Institute was decided “Educate, Agitate and Organize” and was approved unanimously. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the Chairman of the Managing Committee.”



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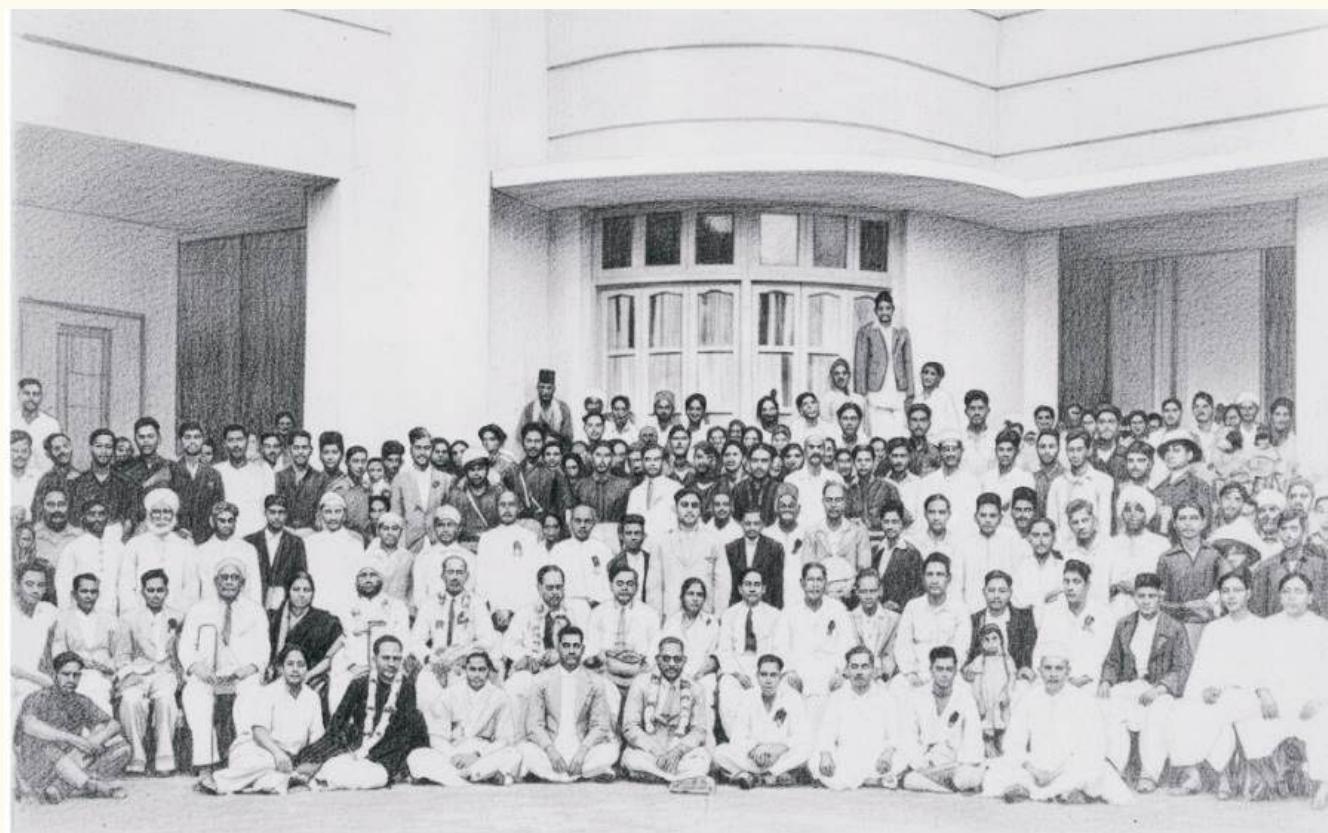
## INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY

“Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, having discussed with his colleagues, formed a Political Party, called Independent Labour Party. Aim behind forming the party was to concentrate and solve the problems and grievances of the landless, poor tenants, agriculturists and workers” .Explaining the programme of the Party, Dr. Ambedkar said that it had been formulated after mature consideration and in consultation with all those who were interested in it, so far as the new Constitution was concerned. “The Party recognises that the new constitution is full of defects and falls much short of full responsible Government. The Party objects to several features of the Provincial Constitution, particularly the institution of the second Chamber. All the same, the party believes in working the Constitution. But while prepared to work the Constitution, the party will strive to see that the Special Emergency and Reserved Powers vested in the Governor, are not exercised in a manner which altogether nullifies the system of responsible Governments.”



## SCHEDULED CASTE FEDERATION (SCF)

The All India Depressed Class conference was held between 17th to 20th July 1942 at Nagpur. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar attended this conference. A resolution was passed unanimously on 19th July 1942 to establish "All India Scheduled Castes Federation." 'All India Scheduled Castes Federation' and the Constitution was made public on 7th September 1942."The aims and objects of the Federation are: (i) to organise the Scheduled Castes of India, to educate them and to agitate for their social, economic and political freedom and to make them strive for their well-being and advancement (ii) to secure for them equality of opportunity and thereby enable them to achieve equal status with their fellow citizens in all walks of life (iii) to engage itself in organising the Peasantry, the landless labourers and the workers in factories and other wage-earners"



Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches (Vol. 17, Part 2). Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (Pp.455)

## PEOPLES EDUCATION SOCIETY

The Scheduled Castes, numbering nearly 50 million, continued to face severe educational, social, and economic disadvantages across India. Their lack of access to higher education had long hindered progress and prevented them from overcoming entrenched discrimination. To address this gap, the People's Education Society was established and formally registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, with recognition from the Government of India. Its central mission was to expand higher educational opportunities for Scheduled Castes nationwide. The Society planned to start a comprehensive college in Bombay offering both Arts and Science degree programmes, open to all communities but with special provisions for Scheduled Caste students through scholarships, freeships, admissions support, and hostel facilities. Aiming to create a model cosmopolitan institution, the Society had received Rs. 6 lakhs from the Government of India, but needs Rs. 15 lakhs in total. With a remaining shortfall of Rs. 9 lakhs, it sought public donations to realise its transformative educational mission.



With the officials of People's Education Society at Aurangabad

# CONVERSATION WITH CONTEMPORARIES

## B.S MUNJE

The Moonje-Ambedkar Pact of 1936 created significant stir in Indian politics. B. S. Moonje, former president of the Hindu Mahasabha, wanted to peacefully resolve Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's "revolt against Hinduism." In contrast, M. C. Rajah, President of the All-India Depressed Classes Association, strongly criticised it, arguing that it treated Untouchables as commodities who could be transferred between religious communities for political gain. However, as the pact was never implemented, it remains little more than a brief footnote in India's twentieth-century political history.



## Santaram B A

On December 12, 1935, I received the following letter from Mr. Sant Ram, the Secretary of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal: My dear Doctor Saheb, Many thanks for your kind letter of the 5th December.

You are a great thinker, and it is my well-considered opinion that none else has studied the problem of Caste so deeply as you have. I have always benefited myself and our Mandal from your ideas.

Our Executive Committee persists in having you as our President for our Annual Conference. We can change our dates to accommodate your convenience. Independent Harijans of Punjab are very much desirous to meet you and discuss with you their plans. So if you kindly accept our request and come to Lahore to preside over the Conference it will serve double purpose

## Veer Savarkar

To achieve his goal of creating a Hindu rashtra based on a pan Hind identity, the barrier between Untouchables and the rest of the Hindu society had to be broken down, and Savarkar undertook some efforts in that direction after he was released from jail in January 1924 and allowed to do 'non-political' work in Ratnagiri district. Despite opposition from other Brahmins, he organised the entry of untouchables into temples and inter-caste dining events. He supported the march to the Chavdar Tank, saying untouchability had to be abolished 'not only as the need of the hour but also as the command of true religion'. Referring to the ritual performed by the Savarnas at the Chavdar Tank, he reportedly said purifying oneself with animal urine was 'more ridiculous and despicable than the notion of defilement at human touch'



# HIS INSPIRATIONS

## Kabir

“My father was a military officer, but at the same time a very religious person. He brought me up under a strict discipline. From my early age I found certain contradictions in my father's religious way of life. He was a Kabirpanthi, though his father was Ramanandi. As such, he did not believe in Murti Puja (Idol Worship), and yet he performed Ganapati Puja--of course for our sake, but I did not like it. He read the books of his Panth.” Source: unpublished preface to The Buddha and his Dhamma .

Ramji was a follower of Kabir and observed the prayers and rituals of the Kabirpanthi sect. Ramji was not only a very pious person but also a strict disciplinarian. He made it a practice to recite parts of the great epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata as well as the devotional songs of Kabir and the great saints of Maharashtra to his children every day.

## Buddha

“Positively, my Social Philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Let no one, however, say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution. I have not. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master, the Buddha. In his philosophy, liberty and equality had a place; but he added that unlimited liberty destroyed equality, and absolute equality left no room for liberty. In His Philosophy, law had a place only as a safeguard against the breaches of liberty and equality; but He did not believe that law can be a guarantee for breaches of liberty or equality. He gave the highest place to fraternity as the only real safeguard against the denial of liberty or equality or fraternity which was another name for brotherhood or humanity, which was again another name for religion”.

## Saint Tukaram

Dr. Ambedkar drew inspiration from the Bhakti Saint Tukaram, notably incorporating his Abhangas on the front page of his fortnightly, Mooknayaka, despite his overall critical stance on the Bhakti Movement for failing to abolish the caste system completely. The specific verse he used, “काय करू आत धरूनिया भीड । निःशंक हे तोंड वाजविले ॥ नहे जगी कोणी मुकीयांचा जाण । सार्थक लाजून नव्हे हीत ॥” conveyed his bold commitment to speaking out for the marginalized, translating to: “What would I do by harbouring wishes? Why should I needlessly blow my trumpet? The world does not hear the voice of the dumb. No real good can be secured by over-modesty.”



## Ravi Das, Cokhamela

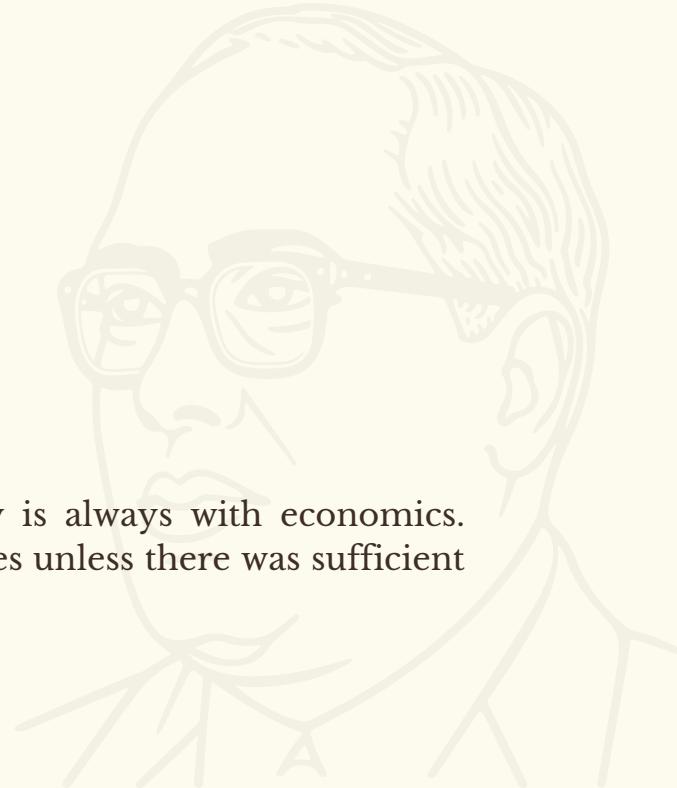
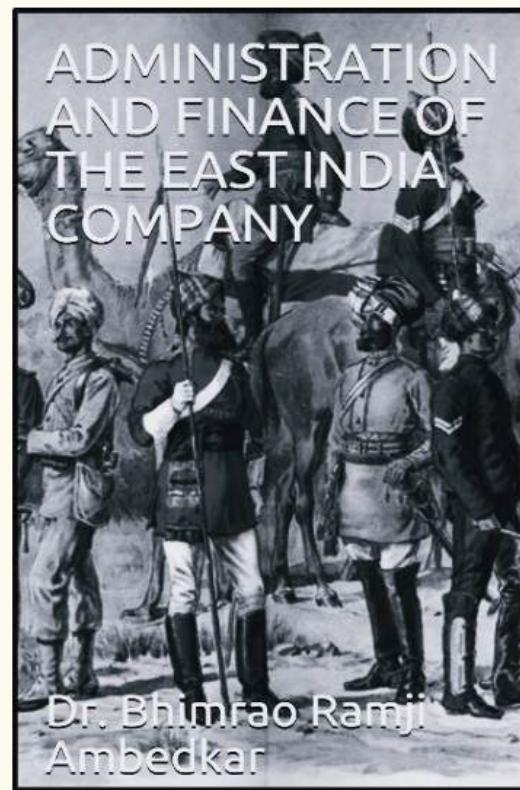
Nandanar Ambedkar dedicated *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchable* in 1943 to the memory of three Dalit saints: Nandanar, Cokhame|a, and Ravidas. In 1952, he sent a letter congratulating a newly opened center of bhakti-related research, writing, "I am happy to know that there has come into existence the Eknath Research Society in Aurangabad. In my young days I was very fond of the literary works of the Maharashtra Saints and I can say how great a contribution the reading of this literature can make to the moral rearmament of man. I wish the Society every success and can promise all help from the Peoples Education Society."



## SECTION 3

# THE TRIAD OF JUSTICE: GENDER EQUALITY, ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, LABOUR RIGHTS

# DR. AMBEDKAR'S ECONOMIC VISION: FOUNDATIONS FOR VIKSIT BHARAT



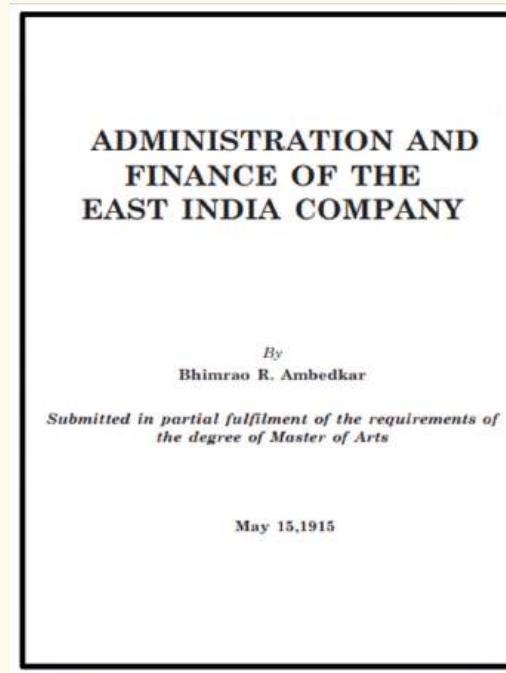
History shows that where ethics and economics come in conflict, victory is always with economics. Vested interests have never been known to have willingly divested themselves unless there was sufficient force to compel them.

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Ambedkar is my father in Economics. He deserves more than what he had achieved today. However, he was a highly controversial figure in his home country, though it was not the reality. His contribution in the field of economics is marvelous, and will be remembered forever.” (1)

- Prof. Dr. Amartya Sen

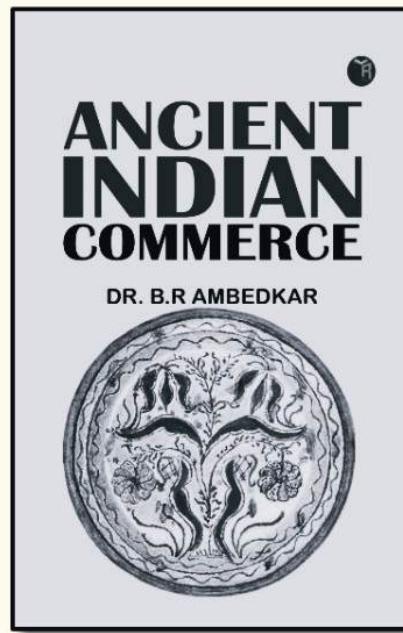
# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE OF EAST INDIA COMPANY (1915)



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wrote the, 'Administration and Finance of the East India Company' (1915), as his first M.A. dissertation at Columbia University.

In this study, Dr. Ambedkar examines the fiscal and administrative structures of the East India Company between the mid-18th and 19th centuries. He argued that the East India Company's administrative machinery was essentially a device for revenue extraction, which did not prioritise governance and development.

# ANCIENT INDIAN COMMERCE: COMMERCIAL RELATIONS OF INDIA IN THE MIDDLE EAST (1916)



After 40% ad. average rate during the Anthony years went up about 9% more than twice from 1848 £ 171. In 1824 a bill was passed limiting the Corporation of the East India Company, and further fact of 18% passed an increase of 10% on the foundation of the British Empire in 1858. In 1857 it was again by 9% and continued up to the end for eleven years in spite of the continual war between England and France. In 1860 the various countries got 2% and at last had effect a fall of 1% in 1862. In 1863 & 1864 of America & the business was the War with the South, after this happened kept the dividend at 1% until the new war in 1865. It was only 1866 £ 11,466. In 1875 in consequence of the acceptance of the territorial sovereignty of Bengal, the dividend was 10% & 11% of the amount distributed reached £ 109,462. This was not quite impossible because largely due to the exaggerated demands of the treasury of India. The war was conducted declared as undertaken for a loss of large profits which were never fully realized, were paid by means of heavy taxes at the time of war. Before you can understand him in the date of little days, but in the "Great Game" the expenditure fell from 1% to 1% of last another 10% increased, and following, the company's dividends 10% subject to the maximum rate. The Royal Exchange was followed by means of heavily the annual revenue from 1869. In 1872 the dividends of the year were 12%, then by the company received a revenue of £ 264,000 and an increase by 1% £ 1,600,000.

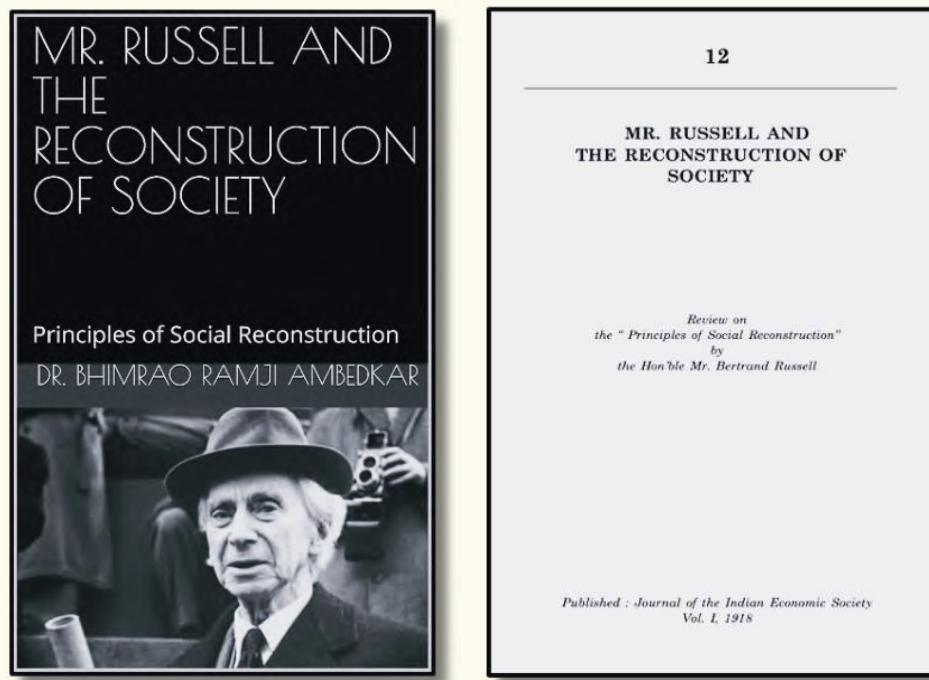
Article	Old - 1866	New - 1872
Sugar in Cwt	1. 1. 4	1. 3. 4
Coffee in lb	1. 12. 0	1. 4. 0
Spices, Saffron, M. galas	1. 10. 0	1. 0. 0
- - -	0. 10. 0	0. 8. 0
Implements per 16	0. 0. 1	0. 0. 2
Timber	0. 0. 6	0. 0. 8
Silks -	0. 3. 0	0. 2. 9
Wood salt under 8 with copper in lbs	1. 10. 0	0. 10. 0
Gold with heavily mounted 22 carat	24 per cent	5 per cent

The English tariff in India could not reasonably accommodate the items with the one point to which they were sent to England, can be seen from the following extract of the Report of the Committee of Enquiry on Commerce - 1875  
Q. "Can you tell me what is the ad valorem duty on Liverpool salt at the port of Madras?"  
A. "The duty on the class called Salines is £3,61. 8d per ton upon importation and if they are used for home consumption there is a further duty of £1. 12. 8d. per cent."  
"There is another class called Marlines, on which the duty on importation is 10 per cent, and if they are used for home consumption is £187. 6d per cent."

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's second M.A. dissertation at Columbia University, explores the economic history of pre-colonial India and seeks to reconstruct India's place in the world economy before the disruptive entry of the European mercantile.

He traces India's historic significance in global commerce, through trading routes and links to the Middle East. Dr. Ambedkar argues that trade was not episodic but continuous, demonstrating that India had sustained systems of production and exchange; rejecting the notion that India was isolated from the global trade system.

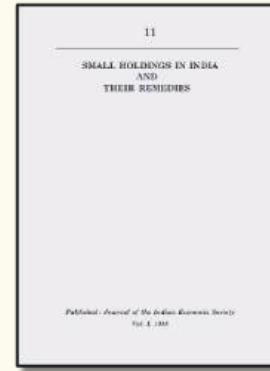
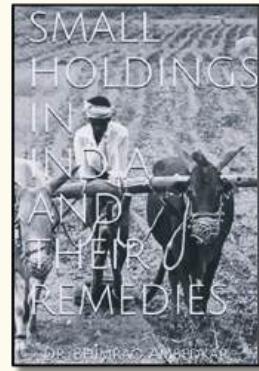
# MR. RUSSELL AND THE RECONSTRUCTION IN SOCIETY (1918)



In the review titled, “*Mr. Russell and the Reconstruction in Society*” (1918), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar appraises Bertrand Russell’s ‘*Principles of Social Reconstruction*’, a book critiquing industrial civilisation and emphasising the need for creativity, love, and individuality as guiding forces in rebuilding society after the First World War (1914-1918).

For Dr. Ambedkar, real progress is made by tackling concrete economic and political issues, especially in the Indian society where inequalities of caste and class were entrenched. He critiques Dr. Russell’s view on money and property, arguing that the pursuit of money should be seen as the actualisation of economic purpose and not as materialism alone. In this manner, Dr. Ambedkar advocates for the alignment of economic interests for the promotion of societal reconstruction.

## SMALL HOLDINGS IN INDIA AND THEIR REMEDIES, 1918 (PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN ECONOMIC SOCIETY, VOLUME (1)

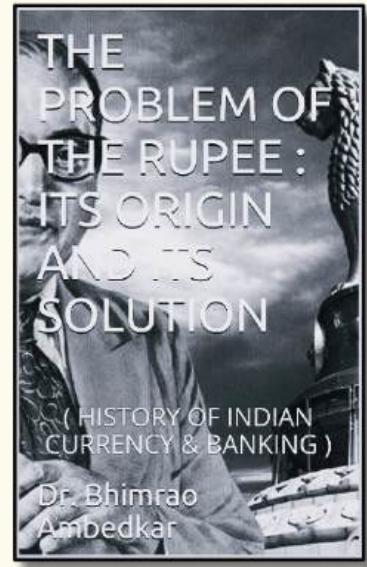


Dr. Ambedkar, in his essay titled, 'Small Holdings in India and their Remedies' investigates the problem of reducing agricultural productivity in India. He traces the cause to the fragmentation of land holdings which render economic activity carried upon them unprofitable.

**He recommended the following solutions to the problem of small holdings:**

- Consolidation of Holdings : Merging of fragmented holdings into unified plots so that resource allocation, labour efforts and consequently productivity can also be improved.
- Enlargement of Holdings: Increasing the “economic holding” size of farms by instrument of regulation to prevent further fragmentation. However, Dr. Ambedkar argues that, for the success of this intervention, capital and farm equipment must also be simultaneously increased and made available.
- Change in Inheritance Laws: In order to preserve consolidated holdings, Dr. Amebedkar suggests that this could be achieved by restrictin
- Change in Inheritance Laws: In order to preserve consolidated holdings, Dr. Amebedkar suggests that this could be achieved by restricting subdivision beyond an economic minimum and compensating the excluded heir.
- Industrialisation and the Issue of Idle Labour: Advocating for the creation of alternative employment opportunities outside agriculture,Dr. Ambedkar argues that by shifting surplus rural labour to the industrial sector, industrialisation holds the potential to reduce the population pressure on agricultural land and facilitate natural consolidation of holdings.

# THE PROBLEM OF THE RUPEE: ITS ORIGIN AND ITS SOLUTION (1923)

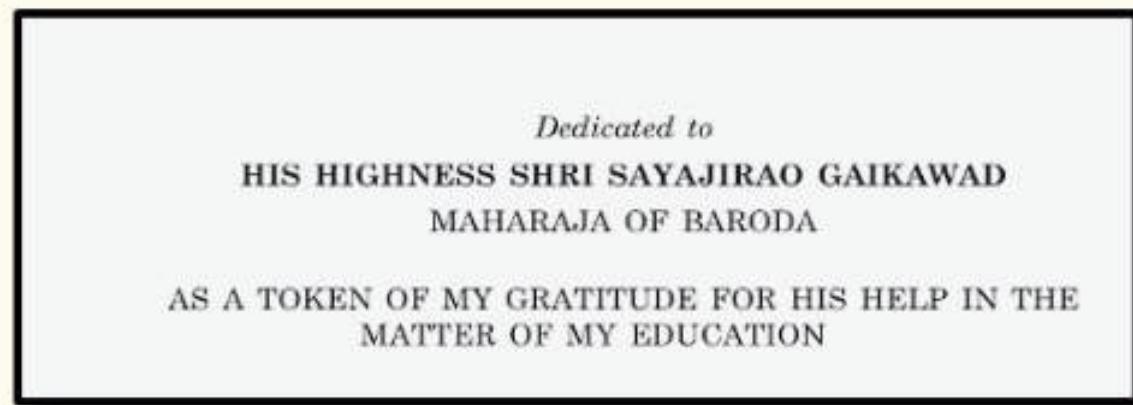
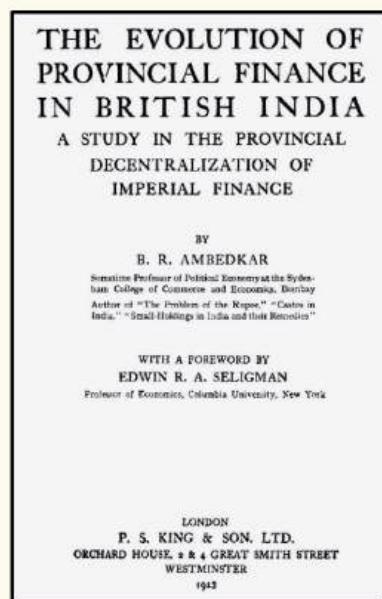


Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution* (1923) is a seminal work in Indian economic history. He was awarded a Master of Science (D.Sc.) upon the completion of his dissertation from the London School of Economics (1919-1921). It was later published as a book in the same year.

He examines the evolution of currency and banking under colonial rule and argues in favour of a uniform currency regime, criticising the gold exchange standard for fueling inflation and hurting the working Indians. In emphasising the importance of stabilising the rupee's general purchasing power, he is seen to be disagreeing with John Maynard Keynes, an influential western economist.

Dr. Ambedkar's dissertation is also credited to have conceptualised the creation of the Reserve Bank of India.

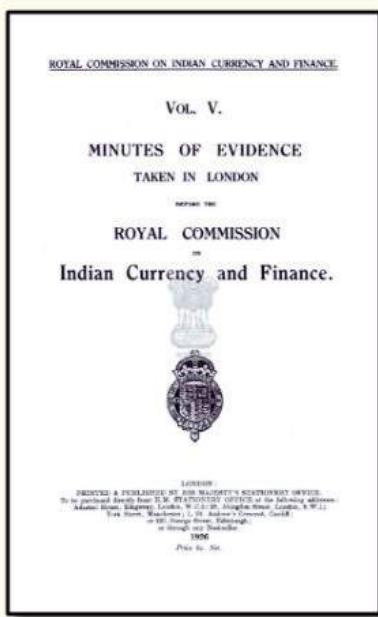
# THE EVOLUTION OF PROVINCIAL FINANCE IN BRITISH INDIA (1925)



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India* (1925) was written as his D.Sc. thesis at the London School of Economics. Here he examines the fiscal architecture of colonial India and traces the evolution of decentralisation reforms in British India. He argues that despite the promise of devolution of fiscal powers, the acts introducing "Diarcy" only reinforced the dominance of the imperial government over the provinces. Through the dissertation Dr. Ambedkar issues a pointed critique of colonial financial governance which foreshadows his role in influencing fiscal federalism in independent India.

Ambedkar, B.R. 1925. *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India: A Study in The Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance*. Reprint of the edition published by P.S. King & Son Ltd. Westminster, Great Britain, 1925. *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India: A Study in the Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance* was dedicated to High Highness Shri Sayajirao Gaikwad, the Maharaja of Baroda

# EVIDENCE BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON INDIAN CURRENCY AND FINANCE (HILTON YOUNG COMMISSION), 1926



The Reserve Bank of India was set up on the basis of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance

The Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance (Hilton Young Commission, 1926) was established to review India's monetary system. Its recommendations reflected imperial priorities which included safeguarding the sterling and the interests of the British investors. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who had outlined his views in *The Problem of the Rupee* (1923), appeared before the Commission in 1926 and presented a sharp critique alongside constructive proposals.

His key recommendations included:

Transitioning from the gold exchange standard to a pure gold standard which would stabilise India's currency and purchasing power

Establishment of an independent central bank which would regulate currency and credit efficiently

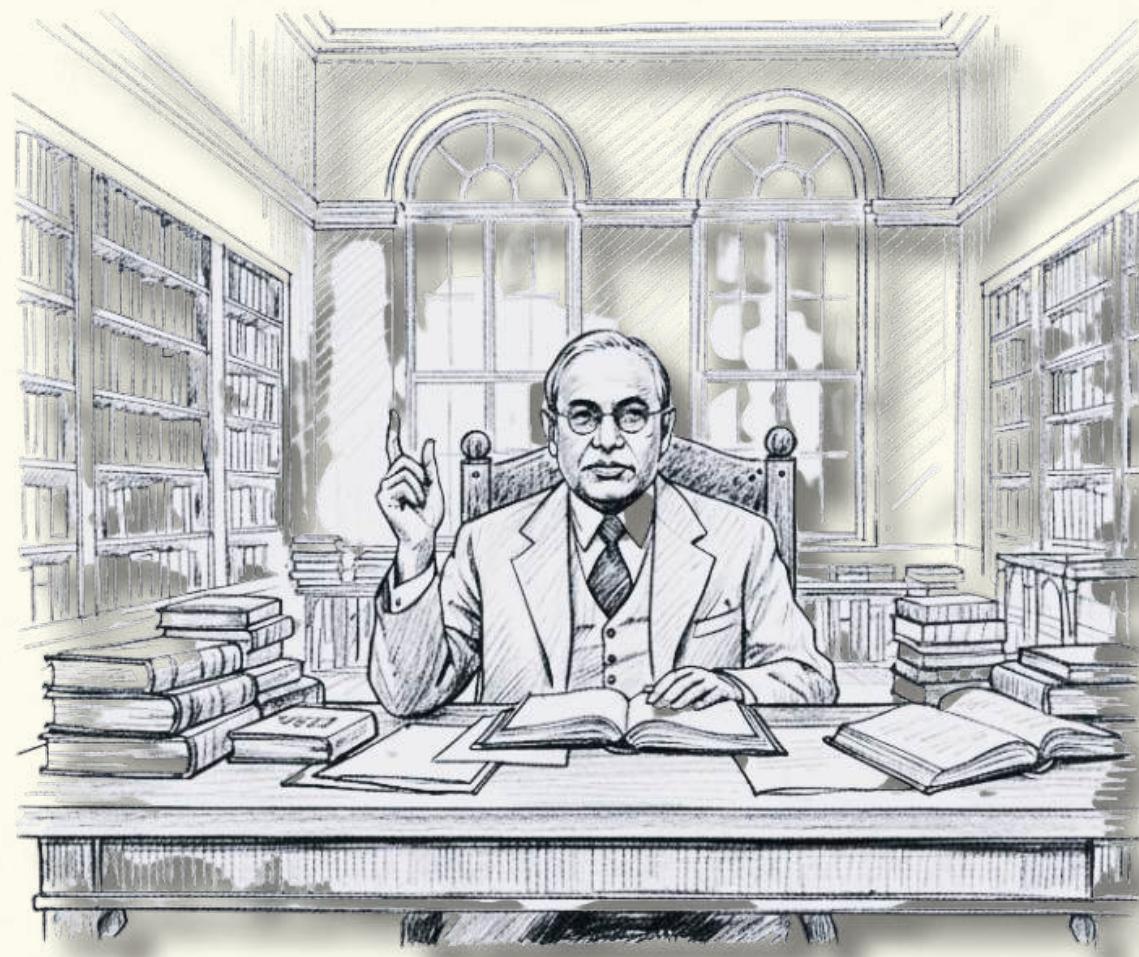
Reforming to create the uniform currency system across India to replace multiple provincial currency systems

Minutes of Evidence Taken in London Before the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance. 1926. London, His Majesty's Stationery Office. Central Secretariat Library, Government of India

### On the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India

"I am of opinion this dignitary or officer is probably the most important officer in the Constitution of India. He is the one man who is going to see that the expenses voted by Parliament are not exceeded, or varied from what has been laid down by Parliament in what is called the Appropriation Act. If this functionary is to carry out the duties and his duties, I submit, are far more important than the duties even of the judiciary..... I personally feel that he ought to have far greater independence than the Judiciary itself....."

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Constituent Assembly Debates on 30 May, 1949 Part I)



# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



**"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."**

Dr. Ambedkar, All India Depressed Classes Women's Federation, 1927. BAWS Vol 17, Pt. 3

## The Hindu Code Bill: Dr. Ambedkar's Pursuit for Societal Equity

### Significance of the Hindu Code

"No law passed by the Indian Legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to it (Hindu Code) in point of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, sex and sex, which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code."



*Dr. Ambedkar discussing regarding Hindu Code Bill at New Delhi during 1955. Seen behind him is Mr. Sahgal Shastri.*

The Hindu Code Bill was Dr B.R. Ambedkar's bold attempt to secure gender equality by reforming Hindu personal law. He believed that legal change was essential to dismantle social inequality between men and women in Indian society.



*Dr. Ambedkar inaugurating the Conference on Hindu Code Bill at New Delhi 21.4.1950*



The Code Bill was built on Sir B.N. Rau Committee bills of 1941, which dealt with Hindu interstate succession and Hindu marriage. In 1944, the committee was reestablished to gather public opinion from representative groups, prominent lawyers and so on. They then drafted the first iteration of the Hindu Code Bill. The Bill was introduced on August 1, 1946 in the old legislature but was not acted upon (John, 1952).

As Law Minister, Dr. Ambedkar enlarged the scope of rights and presented a comprehensive reformulation to the Legislative Committee on 12 August 1948. The draft was large: nine parts, 137 clauses and seven annexures (Karat, n.d.).

#### A few key provisions in the Hindu Code Bill included:

- Establishing monogamy as the only valid form of marriage and abolishing polygamy.
- Provide equal inheritance rights to daughters and abolishing discriminatory customs against women in property succession.
- Converting women's limited estate into an absolute estate; thereby, granting women full control over their property.
- Legally validating inter-caste marriages and adoption
- Establishing clear grounds for divorce and allowing judicial separation.
- Granting women legal rights to their earnings and dowry properties.

**AMBEDKAR RESIGNS**

**REGRETS LAPSE OF BILL**

(From Our Correspondent)

NEW DELHI, Sept. 25: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who has been piloting the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament, has resigned his post as Law Minister to the Union Government, reliable sources said here today.

The letter of resignation, possibly regretting the lapsing of the Hindu Code Bill, was sent to Mr. Nehru in the morning, soon after Parliament finally dropped the debate on it, after adopting Clause four.

Prolonged delays, incessant opposition and inconsistent support from the progressive Congress leaders led to Dr. Ambedkar submitting his resignation as the Law Minister to President, Rajendra Prasad on the 25th of September, 1951.

# DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR: CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S LABOUR RIGHTS



"I believe that it is in the interest of the nation that the mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the prenatal period and also subsequently. I am prepared to admit this fact because the conversation of people's welfare is primarily the concern of the Government. And, in every country, therefore, where the maternity benefit has been introduced, you will find that the Government has been subjected to a certain amount of charge with regard to maternity benefit. I think, therefore, the benefits contemplated by this bill ought to be given by this Legislature to the poor women who toil in our factories in this Presidency"

Dr. Ambedkar arguing for the bill in the Bombay Assembly

## **1. Maternity Benefit**

### **a. Maternity Benefit Bill, 1928 and Maternity Benefit Act 1929**

On July 28, 1928, Dr. Ambedkar introduced the Maternity Benefit Bill in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, seeking to provide paid leaves to women employed in factories. The bill sought to provide a mother adequate rest during pregnancy and after childbirth. The Bombay Legislative Council passed the bill in 1929, and later in 1934, the Madras Legislative Council also passed the Madras Maternity Benefit Act, with other states following. These developments eventually led the Central Government to adopt the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 for the benefit of women across India (Singh, 2024).

### **b. Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941**

As Labour Minister, Ambedkar piloted the Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941. This Act regulated women's employment in mines, prohibited underground work for women during late pregnancy and after childbirth, and provided maternity benefits for defined periods before and after delivery. While the exact duration was shorter than today's standards (around 8 weeks in total), the legislation was a critical step in embedding maternal protection into industrial law (Sharma, 2022).

## **2. Humane Hours of Work**

At the Seventh Indian Labour Conference (1942), Ambedkar pressed for more humane working hours, opposing the exploitative colonial norm of 12–14-hour shifts. Under his leadership in the Labour Department, the eight-hour workday was formally introduced across factories by the mid-1940s. In a landmark reform that aligned India with international labour standards. He also supported restrictions on night work for women in hazardous industries, balancing health and safety with the right to employment.



## **Equal Pay and Social Security**

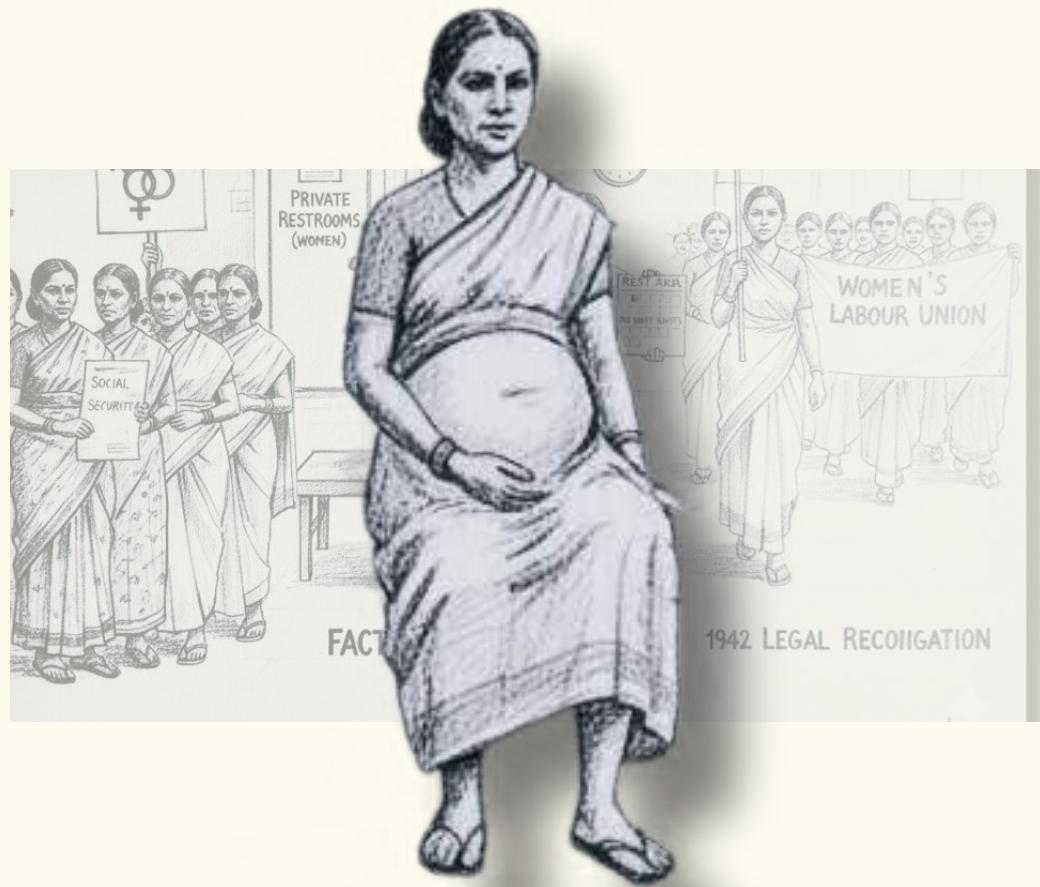
Dr Ambedkar was among the first few Indian leaders to champion the principle of “equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex”. He advanced this idea in the legislative assembly debates of the year 1944. This was later enshrined in Article 39 (d) of the Constitution as a Directive Principle of State Policy (DPSP).

### **3. The Factories Act, 1948**

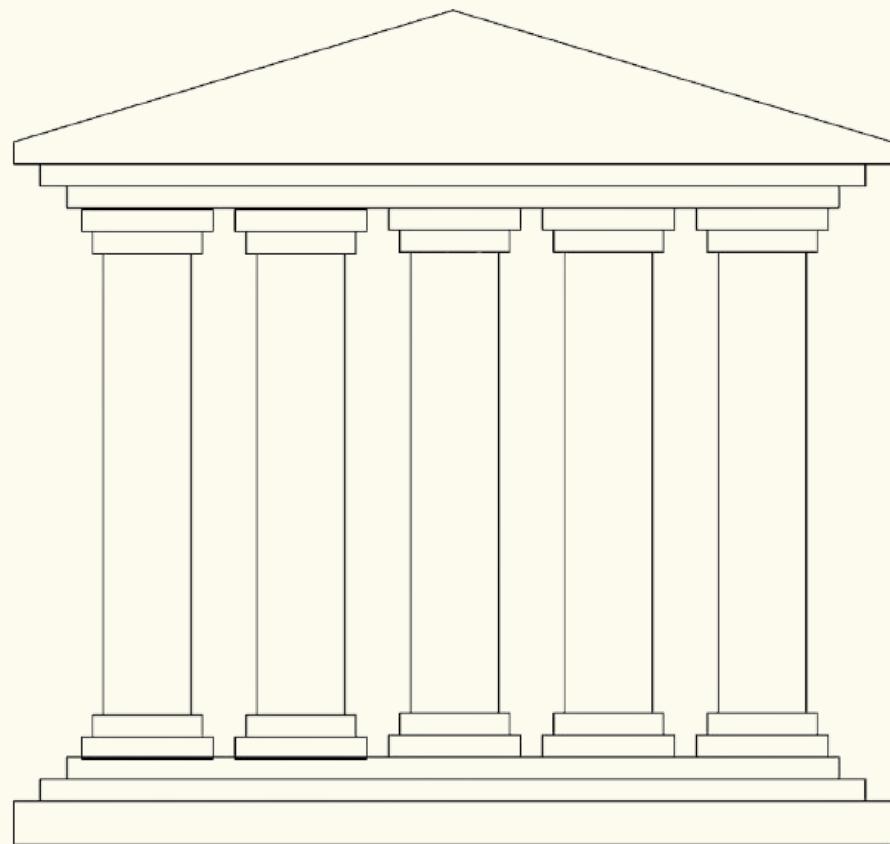
The Factories Act 1948 established key safeguards for women workers, which include a ban on women from working night shifts to ensure their safety, providing maternity leave and adequate rest. It mandated clean and private restrooms and rest facilities for women. The Act also regulated working hours with a special consideration for pregnant and nursing women.

### **4. Support for the Right to Organise and Participate in Labour Unions**

Dr. Ambedkar supported the rights of women to organise and form trade unions. He endorsed their participation in trade unions and supported them to take up leadership roles in the labour movement. In 1942, women led labour unions were given legal recognition.



## Foundations of Women's Labor Rights



### Maternity Benefits

Ensures paid leave and rest for pregnant women.



### Workplace Safety

Restricts hazardous work and mandates safe facilities.



### Equal Pay

Advocates for equal compensation for women.



### Work Hours

Promotes reasonable work hours and discourages night shifts.



### Union Participation

Encourages women's involvement in labor unions.

# DR. AMBEDKAR'S ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION THROUGH HIS NEWSPAPERS

**"We shall see better days soon and our progress will be greatly accelerated if male education is persuaded side by side with female education."**

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in a letter to his friend's father during his studies in New York

Education was a critical component of Dr. Ambedkar's vision for women's liberation. As a social reformer, he actively promoted female literacy and women's access to education.

He believed "education is the milk of a tigress; those who drink it can roar," and his newspapers Mooknayak (1920), Bahishkrit Bharat (1927), and Janata (1930)—became central vehicles for spreading this vision.

## 1.1 Mooknayak (1920–1923)

*Mooknayak* ("Leader of the Voiceless") articulated the plight of untouchables and women who were doubly marginalised. Ambedkar's editorials emphasised that girls were denied schooling by both caste prejudice and patriarchal norms.





### 1.1 Mooknayak (1920–1923)

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### 1.2 Bahishkrit Bharat (1927–1929)

Following the Mahaad Satyagraha (1927), Ambedkar launched *Bahishkrit Bharat* to mobilise “excluded India.” This weekly consistently reported on women’s conferences and meetings, where activists such as Tulsabai Bansode stressed the need for women’s education as a route to self-respect.

### 1.3 Janata (1930 onwards)

In 1930, Ambedkar started Janata, which became a space to publicise Dalit women’s participation in national conferences. For instance, the 1942 Nagpur Women’s Conference was covered extensively, where Ambedkar exhorted women to “educate, agitate and organise.” Shrimati Savitribai Borade and Shrimati Ambubai Gaikwad were included among the 16 members of the 1932-33 executive committee of the Janata newspaper.

# DR. AMBEDKAR'S THOUGHTS ON BIRTH CONTROL



"Many women become invalid for life and some even lose their lives by the birth of children in their deceased condition or in too rapid succession. Birth control is the only sovereign specific remedy that can do away with such calamities. Whenever a woman is disinclined to bear a child for any reason whatsoever, she must be in a position to prevent conception and bring forth progeny which should entirely be dependent on the choice of women."

- Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was an advocate of birth control and family planning. He made a clarion call for birth control back in the 1937 Bombay Provincial Assembly elections (Kulkarni, 2023). Ambedkar supported education on birth control and the economic independence of women, warning against early marriage and large families.

# WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN KEY MOVEMENTS

## Mahad Satyagraha

*Here, here, here it comes, the train with a  
steam  
engine roaring through the forest  
And standing at the Chavdar Tank is Bhim,  
Ramji's dearest  
Here, here, here it comes, the train with  
candles lit in each coach  
All these, our sisters, had gone to the  
Chavdar Tank  
Woman, let's go to see the Chavdar Tank  
And stand by Bhimai's son  
See how four fingers dipped in the  
Chavdar Tank transformed us  
  
Woman, how courageous he was, Ramji's  
son*



- Opening lines of a song composed in Marathi by Kusum Sonawane, a Dalit woman of Nandgaon village, aged seventy, in Mulshi taluka of Pune district

The Mahad Satyagraha of 19–20 March 1927, led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, was closely tied to the First Conference of the Depressed Classes of Kolaba District, organised under the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha. This gathering, held at Mahad, brought together about 3,000 men and women to deliberate on social rights.

Its most radical resolution was that untouchables had the right to draw water from public sources maintained by municipalities. The passage of this resolution led directly to the historic march to the Chavdar Tank, marking the beginning of a new phase of collective struggle. Women were present in significant numbers and their participation gave the satyagraha both symbolic and practical strength.



## 2. Kalaram Mandir Satyagraha

The Kalaram Mandir Satyagraha, launched on 2 March 1930 under Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's leadership, was one of the most sustained and organised struggles against caste discrimination. Its goal was to secure Dalits' right to enter the Kalaram Temple in Nashik, a prominent shrine that barred untouchables. Over the years, the satyagraha drew thousands of participants from Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka, lasting until 1934.

Women played a visible and vital role in the movement. On the very first day, nearly 500 women marched in the procession to the temple. Their presence challenged not only caste hierarchies but also patriarchal norms that kept women out of public protest. In the weeks that followed, 35 women volunteered to sit in protest at the temple entrance, braving hostility from caste Hindus.

# CONSOLIDATION OF SUPPORT THROUGH FORMAL FORUMS

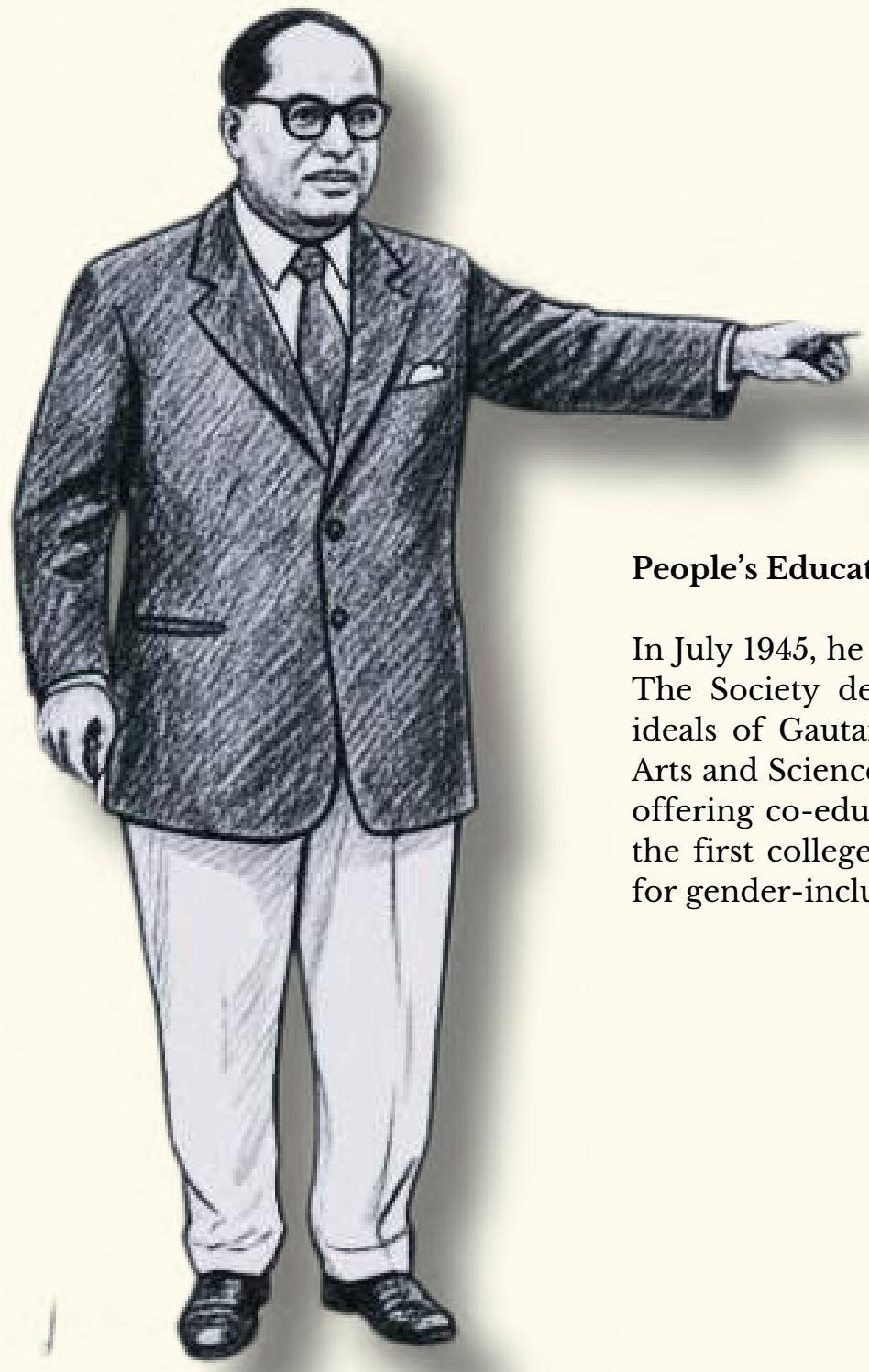
## All India Depressed Classes Women's Conference

On July 20, 1942 at Nagpur more than 25,000 Dalit women participated in the historic All India Depressed Classes Women's Conference led by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a historic milestone in the Ambedkarite movement.

For the first time, Dalit women from across India gathered on an all-India platform to articulate their demands as leaders with a distinct vision for social transformation. The conference was presided over by Shantabai Dani, who symbolised the emergence of a new generation of women leaders.

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### **People's Education Society**

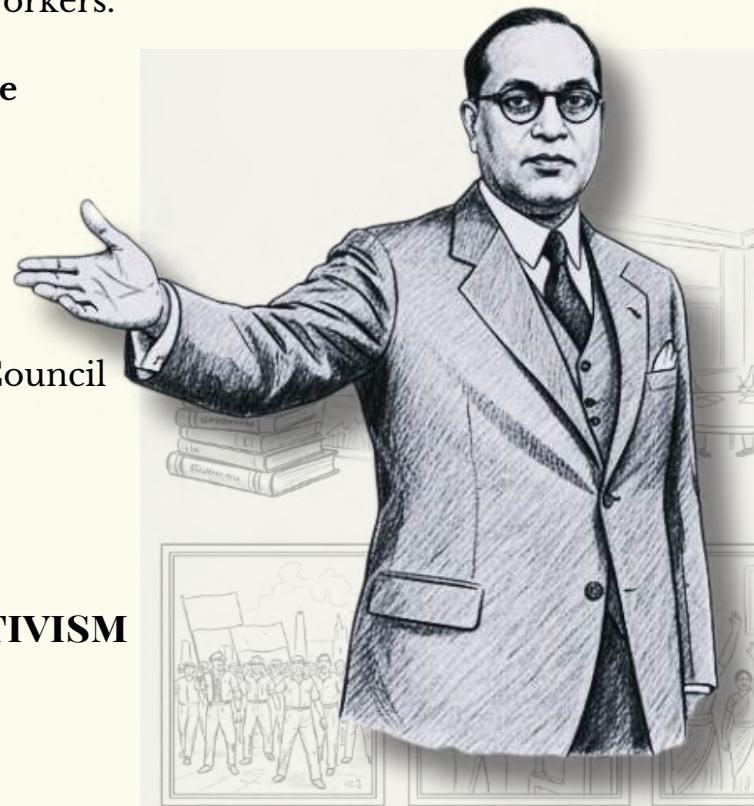
In July 1945, he founded the People's Education Society (PES). The Society derives its inspiration from the teachings and ideals of Gautam Buddha. Under PES, Siddharth College of Arts and Science was inaugurated on 20 June 1946 in Bombay, offering co-educational opportunities in higher education. As the first college under PES, it symbolised Ambedkar's vision for gender-inclusive learning environments.

# DR. AMBEDKAR'S LEGACY OF LABOUR EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Ambedkar has made profound and lasting contributions to the rights and welfare of the labouring class in India. His academic grounding as an economist at Colombia and the London School of Economics to his tenure as the Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942-1946) helped him define a unique philosophical framework for Indian workers.

**His engagement with the labour movement spanned three significant phases:**

- Early Struggle
- Political Party Formation
- Tenure as Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council



## DR. AMBEDKAR'S EARLY LABOUR RELATED ACTIVISM

### Confronting the Caste System

"The Caste System is not merely a division of labour. It is also a division of labourers. Civilised society undoubtedly needs division of labour. But in no civilised society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into watertight compartments ... it is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other."

**-Dr. Ambedkar, Annihilation of Caste (1936)**

Dr. Ambedkar recognised that caste biases were a major obstruction to class unity among workers. He believed that the problem of exploitation was not just that of "division of labour" but fundamentally that of "division of labourers" (Sengupta, 2023).

# BOMBAY TEXTILE WORKER'S STRIKE (1928-1929)

"A labourer not only wants equality but he needs liberty also, it is really intolerable and detrimental where system proposes equality but denies liberty. The constitution in which equilibrium of the both is established, it is the ideal constitution for the laborers."

-Dr. Ambedkar

Dr. Ambedkar leveraged his support for the Bombay Textile Worker's Strike by insisting that the communist trade unions must challenge the practice of caste discrimination and untouchability among the workers in the textile mills. He demanded that Dalit workers be granted access to jobs in the weaving departments, which offered higher wages but excluded Dalits on account of tasks involving handling threads with their mouths.

## G.I.P. RAILWAY DEPRESSED CLASS WORKER'S CONFERENCE IN NASHIK

Presidential Address by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at G.I.P. Railway Depressed Class Workmen's Conference, Manmad District, Nashik on the 12th and 13th February, 1938

Source: Velivada

# POLITICAL MOBILISATION AND OPPOSITION TO ANTI-LABOUR LAWS

## Formation of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), 1936

"Our organisation advocates the implementation of equitable goals and policies aimed at the emancipation of the labouring class, whose interests and relationships are prioritised by our party. The deliberate choice of the terminology, such as 'labourer,' over 'depressed classes,' underscores our recognition that individuals from marginalised communities, including Dalits, are encompassed within the broader labouring class."

- Dr. Ambedkar in an interview to the Times of India on 15th August, 1936

Dr. Ambedkar formed the ILP on 15 August 1936 to represent the interests of the landless, poor tenants, agriculturists and workers and advance their welfare (Prasoon, 2025).

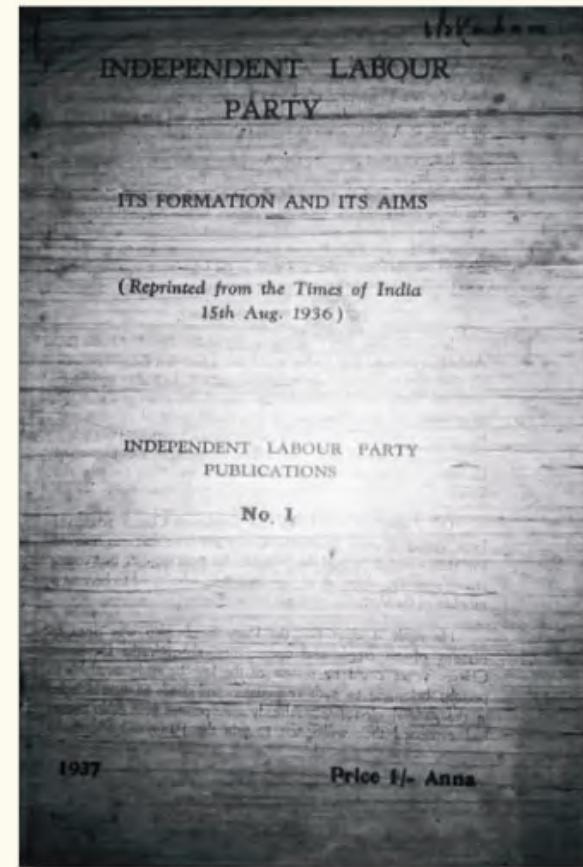
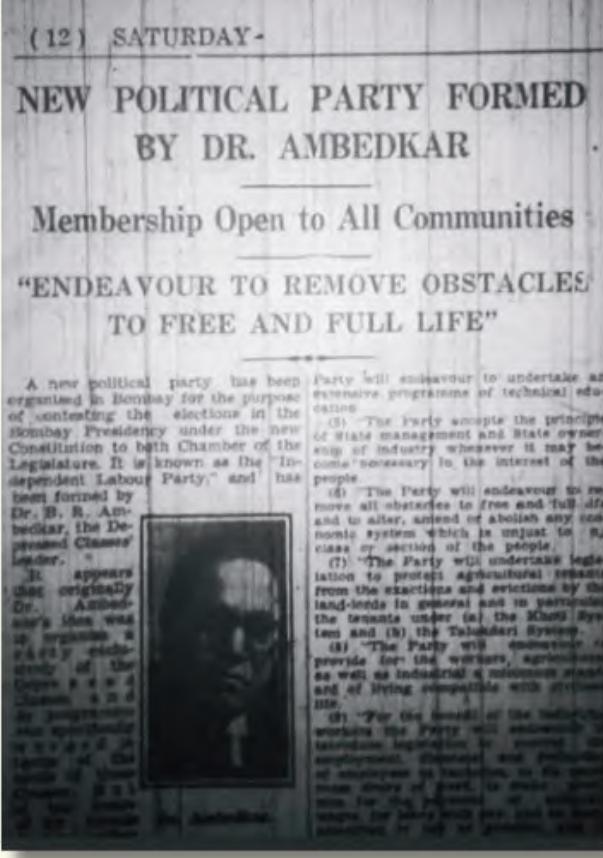
" Our party aims at safeguarding industrial workers, preventing unjust dismissals from their jobs, and ensuring fair promotion opportunities. We're committed to reducing work hours, ensuring fair wages, paid leave, and improving living conditions. Additionally, we seek to enact legislation for bonus, pension, and retirement benefits. We'll also push for social insurance to protect workers during illness or accidents. Our party will strive to build affordable and low-cost housing for the workers."

- Independent Labour Party (ILP) Manifesto



A few key rallying points in the ILP's agenda for the elections in 1937 included using surplus charity to fund education, advocating for state ownership of industries where necessary and introducing strong labour laws regarding remunerative wages, paid leaves, maternity benefits etc. The party won 15 out of 17 seats contested in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1937.





*Dr. Ambedkar with prominent social workers of the Independent Labour Party at Bombay in 1936. Seen in the second row (seated) are Mr. R. R. Bole, Advocate Gadkari, Dr. Ambedkar, Nanasaheb Tipnis of Mahad. Behind them are Mr. Ganpat Mahadev Jadhav (in cap) and on his left is Mr. Ramakrishna Bhatankar, the then MLA of Bombay Legislative Assembly.*



Early associates of Dr. Ambedkar in the Independent Labour Party, a political party founded by Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1937.

### Opposition to the Industrial Dispute Bill (1938)

"To penalise a strike, therefore, I contend, is nothing short of making the worker a slave. For what is slavery? As defined in the constitution of the United States, slavery is nothing else but involuntary servitude. And this is involuntary servitude. This is contrary to ethics ; this is contrary to jurisprudence."

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Volume 2 CWBA

The Industrial Dispute Bill (1938) had restricted the right to strike and made the act of striking a criminal offense. Dr. Ambedkar rallied that this would turn workers to slaves and labelled it the "Workers Civil Liberties Suspension Act". In September, 1938, Dr. Ambedkar's ILP and the Communist Party's AITUC led a large strike against the law, which was joined by over one lakh workers (Ram, 2024).

### Movement Against Feudal Exploitation (1938)

Dr. Ambedkar led significant movements for the rights of rural agricultural labourers against exploitative practices like the Khoti and Vatandari systems prevalent in Maharashtra (especially in the Konkan region). In January 1938, Dr. Ambedkar initiated a movement alongwith the Congress Socialist Party to oppose the Khoti and Watandari systems. He proposed a bill in the legislative assembly in 1937 for the complete abolition of the Khoti system, which ultimately paved a way for land reform legislation in post-independence India (Somwanshi, 2023) . This movement included a procession of 20,000 farmers (including Mahars and Kunbis) to Bombay in January, 1938.



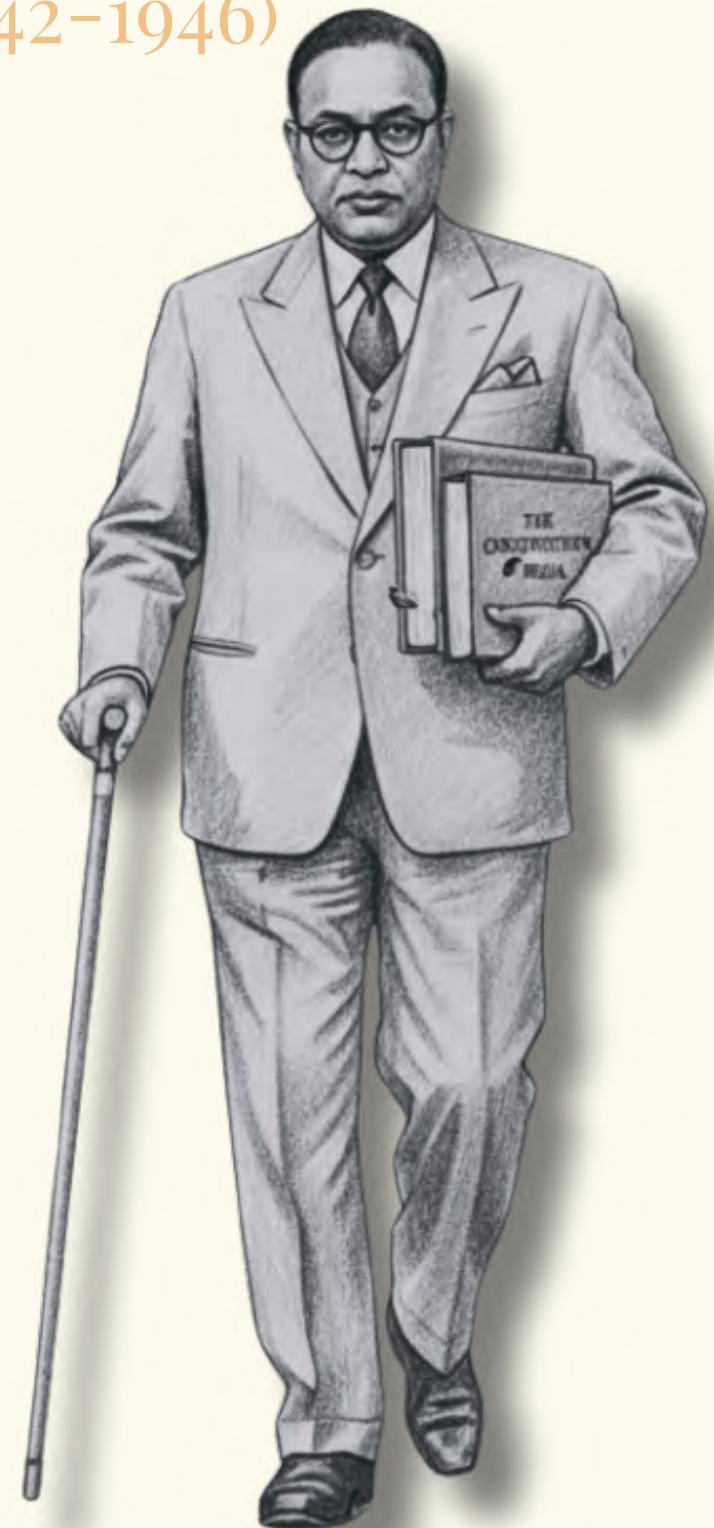
Independent Labour Party agitation against the Khoti System in Konkan, 1938

# LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS (1942-1946)

"Labour's creed is internationalism. Labour is interested in nationalism only because the wheels of democracy—such as representative Parliaments, responsible Executive, constitutional conventions, etc.—work better in a community united by national sentiments. Nationalism to Labour is only a means to an end. It is not an end in itself to which Labour can agree to sacrifice what it regards as the most essential principles of life."

**Dr. Ambedkar, All India Radio in December, 1942**

During his tenure as the Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942-1946), Dr Ambedkar played an instrumental role in shaping pro-labour regulations and policies, summarised in his Labour Charter, presented to the Executive Council in September 1945 (Prasoon, 2025).



## REFORMS IN THE WORKING CONDITIONS :

<b>Reform/Provision</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Year/Context</b>
Reduction of Working Hours	Dr. Ambedkar proposed and secured the reduction of working hours from 14 to 8 hours per day, following the English 48-hour week pattern, during the 4th Indian Labour Conference, 1942	1942, Indian Labour Conference
Paid Leave / Holidays	Initiated amendments to the Factories Act, 1934, providing paid holidays: 10 days for adult workers, 14 days for child workers, accumulable up to 2 years	During his tenure as the Labour Member 1942-1946
Overtime Pay	Introduced provisions for overtime pay at double the normal rate	During his tenure as the Labour Member 1942-1946
Employment Terms and Disputes	Introduced the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, to define, certify employment terms in writing and reduce industrial disputes	1946

SECTION - 4  
DR. AMBEDKAR AND BUDDHISM

# DR. AMBEDKAR AND BUDDHISM



# 1908

## The First Buddhist Turning Point

Keluskar Guruji gifts him the Marathi book “Gautam Buddhache Charitra” during a prize distribution ceremony, giving him his first formal exposure to the Buddha’s life and rational teachings. This moment plants the seeds of his lifelong affinity for Buddhism.



# 1913 - 1916

## Ambedkar engages deeply with:

He is introduced to John Dewey's pragmatism, a philosophy that resonates strongly with Buddhist rationality. Through his comparative religion courses, he begins a formal exploration of themes such as suffering and ethics, reason versus superstition, and the foundations of social morality. During this time, he also writes essays on social democracy that clearly reflect the influence of Buddhist ethical principles.

## 1930 - 1939

### First Open Leanings toward Buddhism

Between 1930 and 1935, he conducts intense studies in comparative religion, delving deeply into Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, and Marxism, broadening his intellectual and philosophical foundations.

## 1937 - 1939

### Intensive reading of:

He studies the Pali canon translations, the Ashokan edicts, and the works of scholars such as T.W. Rhys Davids, Caroline Rhys Davids, and Oldenberg, immersing himself deeply in Buddhist history and philosophy. During this period, he also creates dozens of handwritten Buddhist notes, many of which are now preserved in BAWS Vol. 11.

## 1940 - 1949

Ambedkar spends nearly a decade studying Buddhism academically, and by 1940 he begins writing draft chapters for **The Buddha and His Gospel** as well as developing the early structure of **The Buddha and His Dhamma**, reflecting the depth and maturity of his scholarship.



## 1946 - 1948

He produces large manuscripts spanning several hundred pages, in which he analyzes the Buddha's original teachings, critiques the distortions that emerged in later Buddhist schools, and examines Ashoka's role in shaping the historical trajectory of Buddhism.

## 1948

Ambedkar writes a **foreword—not a preface—for the second edition of *Essence of Buddhism*** by P. Lakshmi Narasu, and during this period he also begins the final systematic manuscript of **The Buddha and His Dhamma**. At the same time, he starts shaping **Navayana Buddhism**, envisioning it as a rational form of Buddhism grounded in social morality and offering a new ethical code suited to modern society.

# 1950 - 1956

## Final Phase — Action, Lectures, Institution Building, Conversion

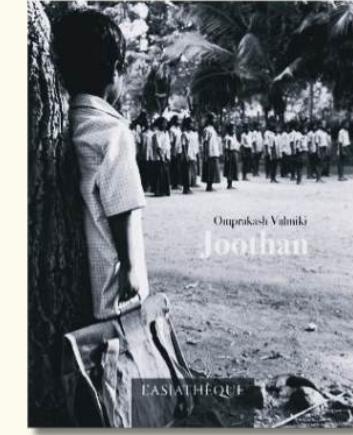
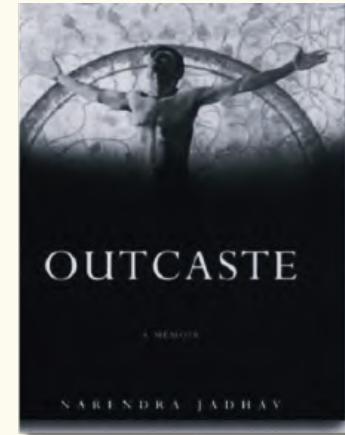
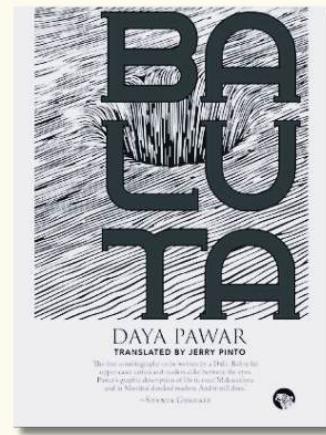
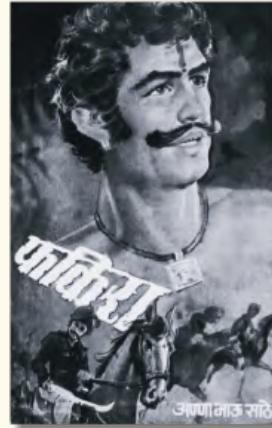
In 1950, during his visit to Sri Lanka and Burma, Ambedkar attends the World Fellowship of Buddhists Conference and delivers his notable lecture “**Rise and Fall of Buddhism in India**” at the Colombo YMBA. He engages in profound discussions with leading Buddhist scholars and practitioners such as Dr. G.P. Malalasekera, Ven. Hammalawa Saddhatissa Maha Thera, and Asoka Weeraratna, while also studying Pali texts preserved in Burmese monasteries. By 1951, he completes the first full draft of **The Buddha and His Gospel**, marking a major milestone in his Buddhist scholarship.

In 1953, even before his personal conversion to Buddhism, Ambedkar takes a decisive step in promoting the revival of the faith by inaugurating the Buddha Vihara at Chakkipata, Agra. This vihara is envisioned not merely as a religious center, but as a hub for Buddhist teaching, social reform, and the Ambedkarite movement for equality, aiming to empower marginalized communities through education and moral guidance. The following year, in 1954, during his visit to Pulgaon in Wardha, Maharashtra, he lays the foundation of another Buddha Vihara on 25 April, a symbolic act representing the institutional revival of Buddhism in India and the establishment of spaces for communal and spiritual development. In the same period, Ambedkar delivers a major international lecture in Rangoon at the Burmese Sasana Council, titled "What Buddhism Has to Offer to India." In this lecture, he articulates a vision of Buddhism that is rational, ethical, democratic, and socially transformative, emphasizing its potential to address social inequalities, foster moral responsibility, and guide India toward a modern, equitable society.

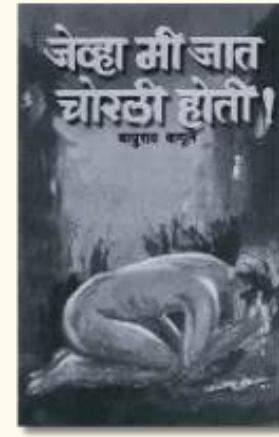
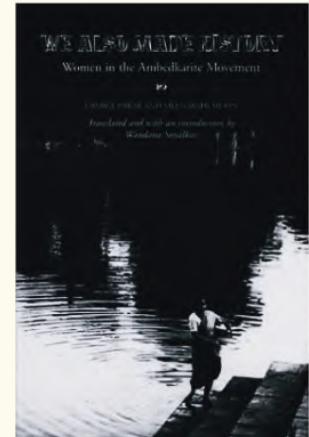
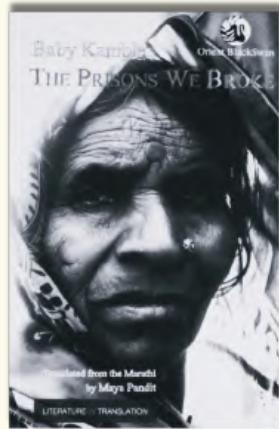
## SECTION - 5

AMBEDKAR AND BEYOND: A LEGACY THAT ECHOES  
ACROSS THE WORLD

# AMBEDKAR IN LITERATURE

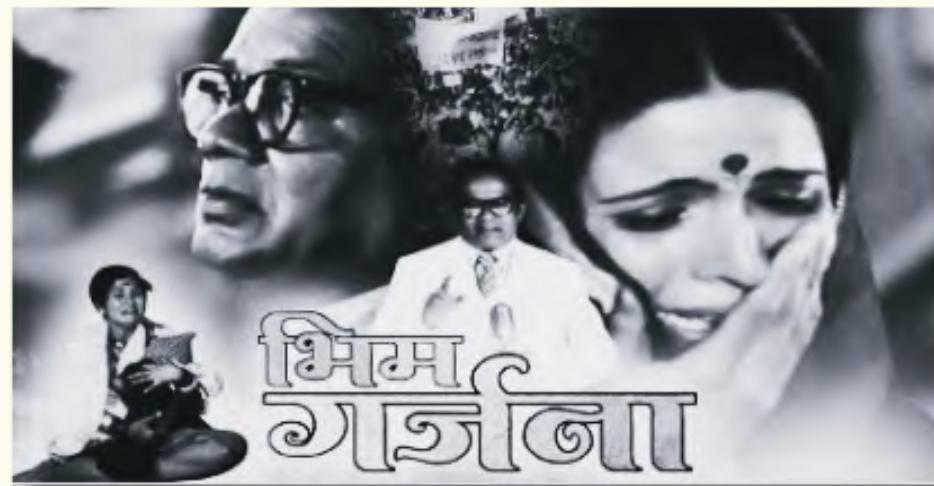
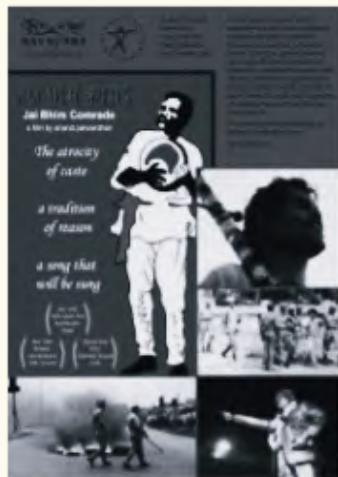


Anna Bhau Sathe's *Fakira* (1959) celebrates the heroism of a Mang community figure inspired by Ambedkar's ideals. Narendra Jadhav's *Outcaste: A Memoir* (2003), adapted from his 1993 Marathi memoir *Amcha Baap Aani Amhi*, traces his family's journey and Ambedkar-influenced transformation over generations. Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (1997/2003) and Daya Pawar's *Baluta* (1978) chronicle Dalit lives shaped by injustice and resistance, while Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon's *We Also Made History* (1989/2008) spotlights Dalit women's Ambedkarite.



Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon's *We Also Made History* (1989; English trans. 2008 by Wandana Sonalkar) documents the vital role of over forty Dalit women in the Ambedkarite movement, combining historical analysis with interviews. Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* (orig. Jina Amucha, 1986; Eng. 2008, trans. Maya Pandit) powerfully portrays the lives, rituals, and resistance of Mahar women in pre- and post-Ambedkar Maharashtra. Baburao Bagul's *Jevha Mi Jaat Chorli Hoti* (1963; English *When I Hid My Caste*, 2018, trans. Jerry Pinto) is a landmark collection of short stories heralded as "the epic of Dalit literature" for its raw, angry realism.

## AMBEDKAR IN CINEMA



The cinematic portrayals of B. R. Ambedkar's life and legacy span decades and languages. *Bhim Garjana* (1990), directed by Vijay Pawar, is the first Marathi film about Ambedkar, starring Krishnanand as Babasaheb and Prathama Devi as Ramabai. *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar* (2000), directed by Jabbar Patel, dramatizes Ambedkar's personal sacrifices, his fight for Dalit rights, and his role in drafting India's Constitution. In the Kannada-language *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* (2005), actor Vishnukanth B. J. plays Ambedkar, with Tara and Bhavya as his wives. Anand Patwardhan's documentary *Jai Bhim Comrade* (2011), made over 14 years, begins with the 1997 Ramabai Colony police firing and uses archival footage, interviews, and music to explore caste oppression and Dalit resistance in Mumbai.



Films reflecting Ambedkarite thought also include Ramabai Bhimrao (2011), highlighting Ramabai's unwavering support; Bal Bhimrao (2018), portraying Ambedkar's early struggle against caste; Origin (2023), with Gaurav J. Pathania as Ambedkar; Homebound (2025), exploring caste, friendship, and marginalisation; and Dhadak 2 (2025), which uses blue symbolism, reformer imagery, and campus-caste themes to express rising Ambedkarite politics and assertion.

# STAMPS ISSUED OF DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

- In 1966, on his 75 birth anniversary, and a decade following his death, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was honoured by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department with a commemorative stamp.
- In the 25 year of Independence, in 1973, the Posts and Telegraphs Department issued another commemorative stamp that addresses him as Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.
- The third commemorative stamp on Ambedkar was issued in 1991, on his birth centenary, and a year after he was honoured with the Bharat Ratna and a commemorative coin.



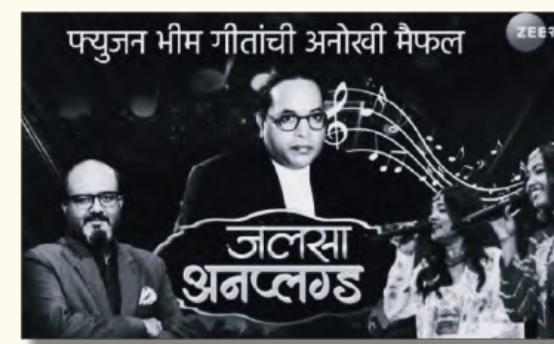
- In 2001, the government issued special definitives on Ambedkar along with Sardar Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose, the stamp issued today is not a commemorative, but a special definitive stamp.
- The next commemorative stamp, released in 2013, depicts a smiling Ambedkar with Chaitya Bhoomi, where his last rites were performed in Mumbai, in the background.
- A Commemorative Stamp on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was released on the 125 birth anniversary celebrations.



## AMBEDKAR AND MUSIC



Dalit musicians have turned to a rich variety of musical forms to propagate Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's message of social justice, and artists like Ginni Mahi, Sumeet Samos, and The Casteless Collective exemplify this struggle. In the arena of rap / pop, Ginni Mahi (also known as Gurkanwal Bharti) blends Punjabi folk, hip-hop, and devotional hymns to deliver powerful songs like Danger Chamar and Fan Baba Sahib Di, reclaiming caste slurs as expressions of pride and Ambedkarite resistance. Meanwhile, Sumeet Samos (aka "Da-Lit Boy") uses multilingual rap tracks such as Ladai Seekh Le and Jaati to critique caste hierarchies and promote Dalit youth activism.



In more traditional and communal spaces, jalsas (musical gatherings) feature Dalit shahirs who perform songs rooted in Ambedkarite philosophy, bringing his ideas to rural audiences. On the powada front, Dalit powadas evoke revolution and ancestral struggle, while Bhimgeet — Ambedkar-dedicated songs — are kept alive by singers like Adarsh Shinde, who celebrate his vision of justice and equality. Together, through pop, rap, powada, and Bhimgeet, these artists reclaim cultural spaces, rekindle Ambedkar's legacy, and mobilize social consciousness in their communities.

# AMBEDKAR AND GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE

Across the world, monuments, statues, and memorials dedicated to B. R. Ambedkar — the principal architect of the Constituent Assembly of India and champion of social justice — stand as testimonies to his enduring global legacy. From the towering Statue of Social Justice in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh currently the world's tallest Ambedkar statue at 206 ft — to the 125 ft sculpture in Hyderabad, India, his stature towers over towns and cities (Curly Tales, 2024; Wikipedia, 2023). Internationally, the Statue of Equality in Maryland, U.S. — unveiled in 2023 — is the largest tribute to Ambedkar overseas, symbolizing equality and social emancipation (NDTV, 2023; The Times of India, 2023). Memorials also abound in London (Ambedkar House and London School of Economics), Vancouver (Simon Fraser University), Tokyo (Koyasan University), Kingston, Sydney, Johannesburg, Leeds, Boston, Amherst and London's London School of Economics campus, among others (Global Ambedkarites, 2021; Deccan Chronicle, 2025). Even as Ambedkar's memorials continue to expand globally, from academia to public parks, they uniformly reflect his lifelong dedication to equality, human dignity, and democratic rights — principles that transcend borders and generations.



Location: 116th and Broadway, New York,  
NY 10027, United States

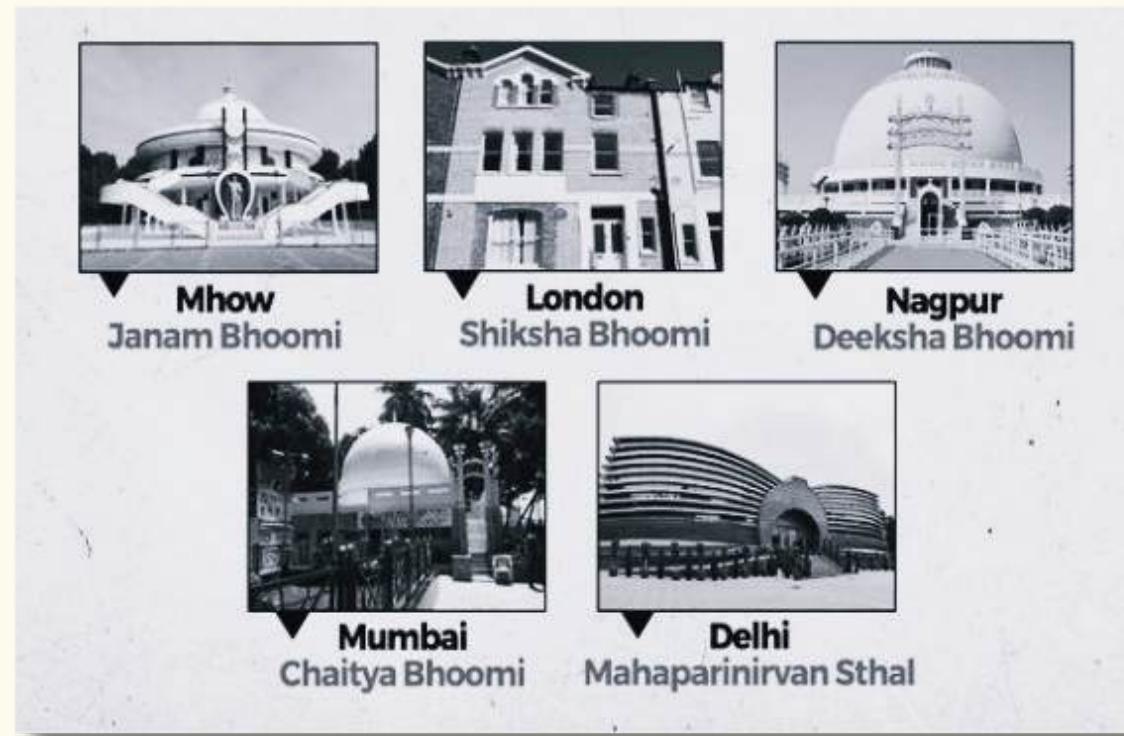


Location: Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in Downtown  
Kingston, Jamaica



Location: Broadway &, 61st St, Queens, NY  
10023, United States

# PANCHTEERTH



In an effort to memorialize Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's life and legacy, the Indian government inaugurated the Ambedkar Circuit, also called Panchteerth, in 2016 and has since developed five significant pilgrimage-tourist sites. These include Janma Bhoomi in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh (Ambedkar's birthplace), Shiksha Bhoomi in London (his place of study at LSE), Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur (where he embraced Buddhism on October 14, 1956), Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi in Delhi (where he passed away at 26 Alipur Road), and Chaitya Bhoomi in Mumbai (his cremation site). These sites are being developed not only as memorials but also as centers for education, tourism, and social reflection, aiming to draw people beyond just Dalit communities. The Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi complements the circuit, serving as a hub for research, learning, and policy advocacy on his ideals. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to honoring Ambedkar's role in shaping modern India and promoting his vision of equality.

# DR. AMBEDKAR INTERNATIONAL CENTRE (DIRECTOR'S TENURE)

The year 2025–26 was marked by significant growth, engagement, and impactful initiatives at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC), which continued its mission of promoting social justice and national development through celebrating Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 135th Birth Anniversary and hosting major educational, cultural, and strategic dialogues. A key highlight of the year was the conceptualization of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment's tableau for the Republic Day Parade 2025 by Director Aakash Patil. Among the major achievements in Constitutional & Educational Initiatives was a Special Lecture by Hon'ble Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai on Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti, complemented by Academic Dialogues including lectures on Life Philosophy and the Indigenous Knowledge Campaign at Gargi College and Ambedkar University, and "Our Constitution – Our Pride" programmes conducted at Kalindi College and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee College.

Book Launch Release of "The Voyage of Indian Constitution" in September 2025. International Engagement Successful convening of the International Conference of Young Buddhist Scholars. 2. Cultural & National Unity Initiatives Cultural Showcase Presentation of the dance drama "Chandalika" on the occasion of the Tagore Memorial. National Commemorations Tribute to the Indian Army during the Kargil Vijay Diwas ceremony. Celebration of the 11th International Yoga Day. Environmental awareness through "SNS MCWR Yamuna Manthan 2025" for Yamuna conservation. 3. Strategic & Security Dialogues National Security Focus Expert discussion on "India's National Security Challenges." Geopolitics & Modern Warfare Collaborative dialogue with the World Buddhist Foundation on "Geopolitical Churning and Modern Warfare." India Dialogues Participation in NAMO Bharat Dialogues under the themes: "India's Democratic Renaissance" "Leadership in an Age of Uncertainty" 4. Organisational Reforms & Institutional Strengthening Strengthened facility operation and maintenance across DAIC buildings. Introduction of the "No Flex Zone" through digital screens and standees. Signing of MoUs for outdoor catering and internet services. Recruitment of Research Associates and Young Professionals, along with a successful internship programme. GeM-based outsourcing for DEO/MTS services. 5. Impact Participation of students, scholars, and experts across various sessions. Enhanced awareness on social justice, education, constitutional values, and national security. Positive initiatives in environmental conservation and cultural heritage promotion

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE



- Dr. Aditi Narayani Paswan is a faculty member of Sociology at Lakshmibai College, University of Delhi. She's an active voice in national and international forums, advocating for social justice and representation. Her work focuses on caste, gender, and cultural studies. She's a columnist for leading publications and author of "She The King – Lokmata Ahilya Bai".



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- Nikita

**“Knowing Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar is a collective endeavor, and we are grateful to all those who helped us in our journey”**

