

Dr. B R Ambedkar and his contributions

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Manifest Pedagogy: Personalities are always an area of interest for UPSC and the personalities in news are always areas of focus. There were questions on personalities in news both in prelims and Mains. Personalities of the stature of B.R. Ambedkar and his role in pre and post-Independent India along with constitutional developments is a topic of importance for UPSC.

In news: Recent Birth celebrations

Placing it in the syllabus: Modern Indian history

Dimensions:

- Time period
- His contributions to Dalit empowerment
- His role in framing Constitution
- His role in the round table conferences

Content:

Time period

Birth and Education

- Bhimrao Ambedkar was born to Bhimabai and Ramji on 14 April 1891 in Mhow Army Cantonment, Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh).
- In 1906 Bhimrao married Ramabai.
- He cleared his matriculation in 1907-08 from Elphinstone High School.
- in the year 1912 Ambedkar obtained his graduate degree in Economics and Political Science from Bombay University.

- 1912 Bhimao's father Ramji Sakpal died in Bombay
- with the financial support of Gaekwad ruler of Baroda, Sahyaji Rao III he completed his Post Graduation (Economics) in 1915 by presenting a thesis titled 'Ancient Indian Commerce'.
- In 1916, he enrolled in the London School of Economics and started working on his doctoral thesis titled "The problem of the rupee: Its origin and its solution".
- In order to continue his further studies, he went to England in 1920 at his own expense. There he was received the D.Sc by the London University.
- In 1927, he received his Ph.D. degree in Economics. And in June 1927, he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Columbia.

His movement for Rights of Dalit and Marginalized community

- In 1919, in his testimony before the Southborough Committee in preparation of the Government of India Act Ambedkar opined that there should be a separate electoral system for the Untouchables and other marginalized communities.
- In 1920, Ambedkar launched a newspaper called "Mooknayaka" (leader of the silent) with the assistance of Shahaji II, the Maharaja of Kolhapur. (other periodicals- 'Bahishkrit Bharat' (1927), 'Samatha' (1929) and 'Janata' (1930))
- In 1923, he set up the 'Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (Outcastes Welfare Association)
- Ambedkar launched full-fledged movements for Dalit rights by 1927 and demanded public drinking water sources open to all and right for all castes to enter temples.
- In 1932, Ambedkar signed the Poona Pact.

His Political career

- Founded the Independent Labor Party in 1936 and his

party contested the 1937 elections to the Central Legislative Assembly.

- 1942 he founded Scheduled Castes Federation.
- In 1947 Dr. Ambedkar was appointed as the chairman of the constitution drafting committee.

Religion and Death

- Ambedkar traveled to Sri Lanka to attend a convention of Buddhist scholars and monks in 1950. After his return, he decided to write a book on Buddhism and soon, converted to Buddhism.
- In 1950 he founded the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha.
- In 1956 Ambedkar organized a public ceremony to convert around five lakh of his supporters to Buddhism.
- By December 2nd, 1956 he completed his final manuscript, "The Buddha or Karl Marx"
- On 6 December 1956, he died at his home in Delhi.

His contributions to Dalit empowerment

Along with forming many organizations for the empowerment of the Dalit Ambedkar also put emphasis on;

Education: He said that "It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom" In 1923 Baba Saheb founded 'Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha to spread education among marginalized and to improve their economic conditions. He gave the slogan: "Educate-Agitate-Organize".

Changing hierarchical structures of Indian society: Dr. Ambedkar devoted his whole life to fight for the annihilation of caste by proliferating a movement against the evils of the caste system. Being himself a Dalit, he made all his efforts to change the hierarchical structures of Indian society and restoration of equal rights/justice to the marginalized and

abolition of Untouchability. He stood for a complete reorganization and reconstruction of the Hindu society on the principle of equality free from castism. He advocated equality of opportunity. He opted for peaceful and constitutional methods for the sake of resolution of the social problems.

He advocated a society based on three fundamental principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity: Dr. Ambedkar was a remarkable liberal crusader who realized the ideological hollowness of the Dalit Movement and provided necessary ideology to it. He created awareness among depressed classes to have a graceful life.

Political party: He formed three political parties, viz. Independent Labor Party, the Republican Party of India and All India Scheduled Caste Federation which were instrumental in organizing Dalit community and raising voice in favour of Dalit community

Reservation in the election: He represented the untouchables in the Round Table Conference in 1930. Due to his consistent ceaseless efforts, the Harijans were granted reservation of seat in the elections.

Bringing Untouchables to the mainstream of Indian society: His programs were focused on mainstreaming the Untouchables into Indian society. He fought not only for equal status of Varna but for social, economic and political equality as well as equal opportunity to all. His ideas & programs set forth concrete proposals for the removal of untouchability and the empowerment of the downtrodden. Dr. Ambedkar demanded justice to untouchables and other weaker sections of the society via making provisions in the Indian Constitution.

His role in framing Constitution

- In framing the constitution of independent India, he played a leading role. He was appointed as the Chairman of the constitution drafting committee in 1947.

- Ambedkar was a wise constitutional expert, he had studied the constitutions of about 60 countries. Ambedkar is recognized as the “Father of the Constitution of India”
- The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections to individual citizens for a wide range of civil liberties, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability, and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination.
- Ambedkar advocated extensive economic and social rights for women and won the support of the Assembly to introduce a system of reservations for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and Other Backward Class in the civil services, schools, and colleges.
- He laid emphasis on religious, gender and caste equality. Even Ambedkar recommended the adoption of Uniform Civil code to bring reform in the Indian society.

His role in the round table conferences

1932. R Ambedkar participated in all three round table conferences in London and demanded separate electorate for untouchables which were opposed by Gandhiji and led to Poona pact in 1932.