



## Philosophical Perspectives of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

**For Prelims:** [Dr. B.R. Ambedkar](#), [Fundamental rights](#), [Fraternity](#)

**For Mains:** Ambedkar's philosophy of social justice, Compare Gandhi's Gram Swaraj with Ambedkar's vision of a strong centralized democracy.

[Source:TH](#)

### Why in News?

[Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's \(1891-1956\)](#) philosophy on social justice, equality, and freedom, especially in the context of caste and gender inequality, has gained renewed attention.

### What are the Philosophical Perspectives of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?

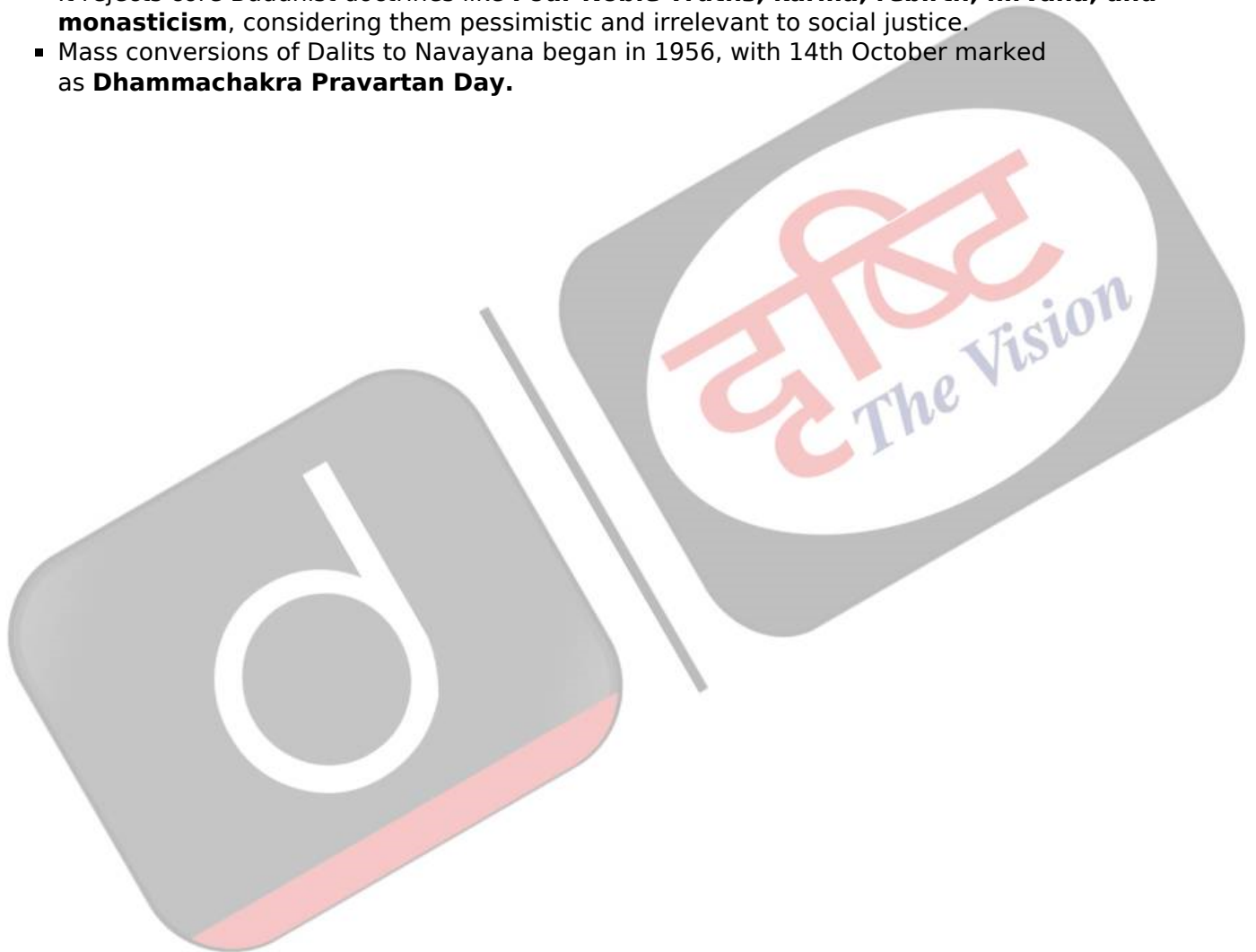
- **Pragmatism:** Influenced by **John Dewey** (an American philosopher), Ambedkar applied pragmatism (solving problems in a practical way) to address real-world issues, such as the [caste system](#), [social injustice](#), and [economic inequality](#).
  - His approach emphasized action-oriented solutions rather than abstract or theoretical frameworks.
- **Critique of the Caste System:** Ambedkar strongly criticized the **Hindu caste system** as oppressive and unjust, advocating for a society based on **reason and equality**.
  - He saw **Dalits as victims of systemic oppression**, denied basic rights and dignity.
  - Ambedkar reconstructed **Buddhism as Navayana Buddhism**, focusing on **social equality and ethical living** over rituals which is reflected in his work "*The Buddha and His Dhamma*."
  - In, *The Annihilation of Caste (1936)* he argued that caste is not **just a division of labor but a division of laborers** that perpetuates social and economic inequality.
- **Legal and Constitutional:** As the chief architect of the [Indian Constitution](#), Ambedkar believed India's foundation should rest on **liberty, equality, and fraternity**, inspired by the **French Revolution (1789-1799)**.
  - He stated that "**liberty without equality leads to domination leads to domination by a few, and equality without liberty leads to oppression**", and emphasized [constitutional morality](#), stating that laws should evolve to reflect the values of justice and human dignity.
  - He championed [rule of law](#), [fundamental rights](#), and **affirmative action** to uplift the oppressed. To him [fraternity](#) is the missing element in Indian society, which was divided by caste and hierarchy.
- **Political Philosophy:** Ambedkar saw democracy not just as a political system but as a **way of life, emphasizing liberty, equality, and fraternity**.
- **Economic Philosophy:** Ambedkar rejected both **unregulated capitalism and extreme socialism**, advocating a middle path where the **state played a key role in economic planning**.

- His ideas on **land reforms, labor rights, and economic planning** were aimed at uplifting marginalized communities.
- **Gender Justice:** Ambedkar was a strong advocate for gender equality, recognizing the intersection of **caste and patriarchy**.
  - He played a key role in drafting the **Hindu Code Bill**, which sought to reform personal laws related to marriage, inheritance, and divorce.
  - He emphasized the importance of women's education and empowerment in creating an egalitarian society.
- **Views on Gandhism:** Ambedkar was a **strong critic of Gandhism**, calling its caste reforms inadequate and advocating legal abolition. Despite differences in caste, religion, and Dalit representation, both sought **social justice and nation-building**.

**Note: Navayana (New Vehicle) Buddhism**, founded by B.R. Ambedkar in 1956, is a reinterpretation of Buddhism that emphasizes **social equality and class struggle over traditional spiritual doctrines**.

- It rejects core Buddhist doctrines like **Four Noble Truths, karma, rebirth, nirvana, and monasticism**, considering them pessimistic and irrelevant to social justice.
- Mass conversions of Dalits to Navayana began in 1956, with 14th October marked as **Dharmachakra Pravartan Day**.

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Drishti IAS

# Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar



**Babasaheb Ambedkar-**  
The Father of Indian Constitution

**14 April 1891 - 06 December 1956**

## 1. Brief Profile

- A social reformer, jurist, economist, author and thinker of comparative religions
- Labour member in the **Executive Council of Viceroy (1942)**
- **Chairman** of the **Drafting Committee** for the new Constitution
- **First Law Minister** of India
- Posthumously awarded **Bharat Ratna (1990)**

## 2. Contributions

- Led the **Mahad Satyagraha in 1927** against Hindus
- Participated in **all three Round Table Conferences**
- Signed the **1932 Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi** to abandon the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes

*The reserved seats for depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% in the Central Legislature.*

- **Opposed the special status of J&K (Article 370)**
- Supported **Uniform Civil Code**
- Referred **Article 32** as "**soul of the Constitution and very heart of it**"

## 3. Resignation and Buddhism

- Differences over **Hindu Code Bill** led to his resignation from Cabinet in **1951**
- Converted to Buddhism; his death is observed as **Mahaparinirvan Diwas**

## 4. Important Journals

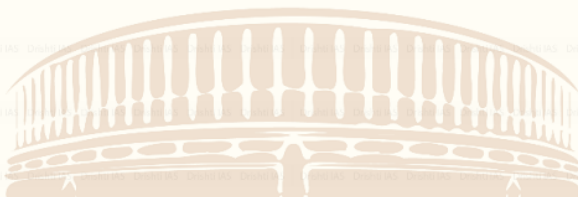
- Mooknayak (**1920**)
- Bahishkrit Bharat (**1927**)
- Samatha (**1929**)
- Janata (**1930**)

## 5. Books

- Annihilation of Caste
- Buddha or Karl Marx
- **The Untouchable: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables**
- The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women

## 6. Organisations

- Estd. '**Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha**' (**1923**)
- Founded **Independent Labour Party (1936)**
- Founded **Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)**



## Comparison of Gandhi and Ambedkar's Philosophies

Aspect	Mahatma Gandhi	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
<b>Caste System</b>	Believed in the <b>Varna system</b> but opposed untouchability, and called Dalits " <b>Harijans</b> " (children of God) to uplift their status in society.	Viewed caste and untouchability as inseparable, advocating for the complete abolition of caste. He preferred the term " <b>Dalit</b> ," <b>symbolizing self-respect and resistance.</b>
<b>Democracy &amp; Governance</b>	Sought gradual <b>reform through moral persuasion and non-violence.</b>	Advocated <b>legal and institutional reforms</b> to dismantle oppressive structures.
<b>Method of Upliftment</b>	Appealed to the upper castes to <b>uplift Dalits and integrate them into Hinduism</b>	Empowered Dalits through education, reservations, and self-reliance
<b>Economic Views</b>	<b>Favored village economy (Gramraj)</b> , self-sufficiency, and simple living	<b>Advocated industrialization</b> and modernization for economic progress
<b>Religion</b>	Gandhi remained a Hindu reformist, believing in <b>interfaith harmony.</b>	Rejected Hinduism, <b>converted to Buddhism for equality</b>
<a href="#"><u>Poona Pact (1932)</u></a>	Opposed separate electorates, fearing division.	Advocated separate electorates to secure Dalits' political rights.
<b>Legacy</b>	Remembered as Father of the Nation, known for non-violence and moral leadership	Referred to as the <b>Architect of the Indian Constitution and the "Father of the Indian Constitution,"</b> he was a champion of Dalit rights and social justice.

## What is the Relevance of Ambedkar's Philosophy in the Contemporary World?

- **Social Justice:** Reservation policies (**affirmative actions**) for **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC)** are inspired by his vision for social upliftment.
  - Movements against **caste-based violence and discrimination** still draw from his advocacy of social justice.
- **Constitutional Democracy:** Rising challenges like **majoritarianism, attacks on minorities, and erosion of civil liberties** make his call for **constitutional morality** more relevant than ever.
- **Education for Empowerment:** Ambedkar's quote "**Educate, Agitate, Organize,**" emphasizes education for empowerment, and resistance against injustice.
  - Encouraging policies like **scholarships for marginalized students, skill development programs, and free education for the underprivileged.**
- **Gender Equality:** Ambedkar was a strong advocate for **women's empowerment**, his work remains relevant in ongoing debates on women's rights, **including equal pay and personal law reforms.**
- **Economic Equality and Labor Rights:** Ambedkar saw economic justice as essential to **ending social inequality.**
  - His advocacy for state-led industrialization, land reforms, and labor rights remains relevant amid **rising unemployment, wealth inequality, and labor exploitation.**

## Conclusion

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy remains deeply relevant in addressing social justice, caste abolition, and gender equality. As challenges like discrimination, economic disparity, and political majoritarianism persist, Ambedkar's ideas serve as a blueprint for an inclusive and just society.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Ambedkar's philosophy of social democracy, economic justice, and constitutional morality remains crucial in addressing contemporary challenges. Discuss.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

### **Prelims**

**Q. Which of the following parties were established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar? (2012)**

1. The Peasants and Workers Party of India
2. All India Scheduled Castes Federation
3. The Independent Labour Party

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

- (a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

### **Mains**

**Q. Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, despite having divergent approaches and strategies, had a common goal of amelioration of the downtrodden. Elucidate. (2015)**