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## Dr. Ambedkar's Ideas on Social, Economic and Political Justice as the Foundation for the Viksit Bharat Mission 2047

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*As India takes the path towards development to the centenary year of independence in the Viksit Bharat Mission 2047, ideational concepts enunciated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the Constitution of India gain new significance. In this article, an attempt is made to critically examine how Ambedkar's vision, conjured in terms of social, economic, and political justice, shapes, tests, and directs contemporary legal and policy paradigms till now. Underlying Ambedkarite jurisprudence is constitutional morality, substantive equality, and reconstructing the social institutions to which marginalisation is systemic, especially of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, and minorities. Against the background of recent legislative changes, i.e., revocation of colonial criminal statutes and enactment of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023), Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (2023), and Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (2023),<sup>1</sup> this article analyzes their compliance—or deviance—from ideals enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 39, 41, and 46<sup>2</sup> of the Constitution. In addition, the analysis further considers the public policy actions until 2025, such as the Union Budget outlays, the Women's Reservation Act, 2023,<sup>3</sup> and upgradation of e-governance, in terms of whether they could*

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<sup>1</sup> Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023; Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023; Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023

<sup>2</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 39, 41 & 46

<sup>3</sup> Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act 2023

*facilitate or derail Ambedkar's revolutionary objectives. Finally, the paper contends that Ambedkarite justice is no nostalgic relic of the constitution but rather a necessary guide to the building of a rights-based, inclusive, and egalitarian India by 2047.*

**Keywords:** *jurisprudence, constitutional morality, social justice, viksit bharat 2047.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), a Renaissance man, juridical giant, economist, and social thinker, is India's finest intellectual institution builder. His most famous incarnation as Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution hardly begins to do justice to his accomplishment. He envisioned an Indian society in which social hierarchies were broken, economic disparities erased, and political participation meaningful and inclusive. Justice, in Ambedkar's view, was not a matter of philosophical morality but of material life.

In his final speech to the Constituent Assembly on 25 November 1949,<sup>4</sup> Dr. Ambedkar warned the nation about the “contradictions” of Indian democracy—political equality being constitutionally enshrined, but social and economic inequalities being embedded in the society. His observation, “We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy,”<sup>5</sup> is a cherished reminder of the holistic nature of democracy. As India strives to achieve a “Viksit Bharat” (Developed India) by 2047,<sup>6</sup> a term espoused by the Government of India to commemorate 100 years of independence, it is essential to situate this endeavour within the Ambedkarian vision of justice. Viksit Bharat Mission is neither an economic nor a technological mission but a moral and a constitutional mission requiring inclusive participation, distributive justice, and democratic empowerment.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Constituent Assembly Draft Making Debates’ (*Lok Sabha Digital Library*)  
<<https://eparlib.nic.in/handle/123456789/760448>> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>5</sup> ‘B R Ambedkar Building Light of India’s Constitution’ (*Press Information Bureau*)  
<<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2024/nov/doc20241121439801.pdf>>  
accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>6</sup> ‘India on Track to Become a Developed Nation by 2047’ (*Press Information Bureau*, 19 December 2024)  
<<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2085956>> accessed 25 April 2025

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMING OF TRIUNE JUSTICE

Ambedkar's theory of justice is framed in the very fabric of the Indian Constitution—the Preamble. The promise of “Justice—Social, Economic and Political” therein was no figure of speech but a purposeful framing of Ambedkar's theory of democracy. Each type of justice is connected with some constitutional pledges, and taken together, they form an integrated regime of democratic rule. As for Social Justice, Article 15 and Article 17<sup>7</sup> abolish untouchability and prohibit discrimination. Article 21A<sup>8</sup> ensures free elementary education, while Article 46<sup>9</sup> puts the obligation of educational and economic advancement upon Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker segments. Ambedkar was convinced that caste represented a social, legal, and economic machinery and must be overthrown by potent constitutional machinery. Employment, education, and political reservation policy prove Ambedkar's dedication towards social justice.

Furthermore, for Economic Justice, Part IV of the Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy<sup>10</sup> was heavily shaped by Ambedkar's socio-economic vision. Articles 38, 39, 41, 43, and 47<sup>11</sup> stress the de-concentration of wealth, providing the right to work, education, public relief, and nutrition. These are not goals but a directive to policy planning. Political justice is ensured under the right to vote (Article 326), equality before law (Article 14), and positive discrimination in political representation (Articles 330 to 342).<sup>12</sup> Ambedkar sensed that real democracy did not just entail the experience of frequent elections but also empowerment, participation, and representation of the downtrodden. The triune paradigm of justice thus provides the constitutional base of Indian law and is at the very centre of Viksit Bharat's vision.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE: STRUGGLE AGAINST CASTE AND EXCLUSION

Ambedkar's reform scheme had social justice at its core. His classic work, *Annihilation of Caste* (1936)<sup>13</sup>, was one against caste as “anti-national” and “anti-democratic.” Not only was caste, according to Ambedkar, a threat to equality, but it was an intellectual and moral poison that

<sup>7</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 15 and 17

<sup>8</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 21A

<sup>9</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 46

<sup>10</sup> Constitution of India 1950, pt IV

<sup>11</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 38, 39, 41, 43 and 47

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 14, 326 and 330–342

<sup>13</sup> B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste* (1936)

killed fraternity. When India embraced a democratic polity, Ambedkar cautioned that the perpetuation of the institution of caste hierarchy would kill the cornerstones of democracy. They still encounter atrocities and caste discrimination despite constitutional guarantees. Atrocities against Scheduled Castes have been increasing with leaps and pace in the past decades, as per the National Crime Records Bureau 2022 report.<sup>14</sup> Institutionalised discrimination of Dalit students also occurs in schools and other educational establishments, which can be witnessed during the suicide of Rohith Vemula in 2016.<sup>15</sup>

For Viksit Bharat Mission to be a possibility, caste equality must be ensured not only through legislation but through social behaviour too. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989<sup>16</sup> must be enforced more strongly, positive action through effective implementation of employment in the private sector has to be facilitated, and the number of scholarships in education should be increased, among other things. Social movements towards a change in the attitude of the people in terms of caste must be added on top of law reforms, too.

Dr. Ambedkar had most beautifully quoted: “Caste is not a division of labour; it is a division of labourers.”<sup>17</sup> The vision for a developed India must have mending and remoulding this ancient injustice.

## **ECONOMIC JUSTICE: BEYOND GROWTH TOWARDS REDISTRIBUTION**

Ambedkar's vision of economic justice was progressive for his times. On Fabian socialist lines, he desired the state to acquire big industries, rationalise land and farm techniques so that cooperative cultivation would be possible. Though making headway in the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1938, he had moved a Bill proposing nationalisation of insurance. He was certain in his mind that economic inequality was as bad as social inequality—and worse, the way it mastered over lives by conditioning them through dependence. The current economic condition in India is one of glacial inequality. Oxfam Report 2023 reveals how the richest 1% Indians own

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, *Crime in India 2022: Statistics* NCRB (2022)

<sup>15</sup> Serish Naniseti, ‘One Life and the Many Deaths of Rohith Vemula’ The Hindu (10 May 2024) <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/one-life-and-the-many-deaths-of-rohith-vemula/article68157941.ece>> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>16</sup> The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989

<sup>17</sup> Ambedkar (n 13)

over 40% of India's wealth. The poorest 50% possess just 3% of wealth. This level of inequality is contrary to Ambedkarite economics and can never be sustainable for any just society.

Legislation such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)<sup>18</sup>, Right to Food Act,<sup>19</sup> and Code on Social Security<sup>20</sup> have to be enforced rigorously with responsibility. Universal Basic Income, which is emerging as an international subject, has to be taken very seriously from an Ambedkarite lens of analysis. Secondly, capital access needs to be democratised. Even after schemes such as Stand-Up India<sup>21</sup> and Mudra Loans, Dalit entrepreneurs remain outside the credit purview. A Viksit Bharat that is real needs to create jobs, but also ownership and entrepreneurship among the oppressed.

As Ambedkar explained: *“The progress of any society is measured by the progress of the weakest.”* Thus, growth with no distributive justice is not development; it is exclusion.

### **POLITICAL JUSTICE: DEMOCRATIZING POWER AND REPRESENTATION**

Dr. Ambedkar believed that democracy was all “one person, one vote, one value”, but that the realisation of social hierarchies would intrude on electoral equality. He opted for Dalit separate electorates sometime during the early 1930s, which evolved later into the policy of reserved seats under Article 330.<sup>22</sup> Now, there is greater political participation but symbolic representation. The marginalised are weakly represented in the high bureaucratic, judicial, and political echelons. A Trivedi Centre for Political Data analysis (2023) discovered that only 12% of the MPs of reserved constituencies held cabinet posts.

Current efforts like the Women's Reservation Act, 2023,<sup>23</sup> (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) are in the right direction and a response to Ambedkar's call for rule by all. It must be provided to SC/ST and OBC women to democratize democracy and render it intersectional. Ambedkar also cautioned against the “grammar of anarchy” if institutions are denatured. Electoral system reforms like state funding of elections, stricter regulation of political finance, and transparency in electoral bonds are needed to revive constitutional morality. Panchayati Raj and Urban Local

<sup>18</sup> The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005

<sup>19</sup> The National Food Security Act 2013

<sup>20</sup> The Code on Social Security 2020

<sup>21</sup> ‘Stand-Up India Scheme Guidelines’ (Ministry of Finance, 2020)

<<https://www.standupmitra.in/Home/SUISchemes>.> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>22</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 330

<sup>23</sup> Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Act 2023

Bodies' participative institutions must be invested with fiscal autonomy and accountability. Gram Sabhas and Mohalla Sabhas can also function as grassroots platforms of actual political justice.

## CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY AND VIKSIT BHARAT'S ETHOS

The greatest contribution that Ambedkar made to Indian jurisprudence as a philosopher was perhaps his theory of “constitutional morality.”<sup>24</sup> He took the term from Greek political philosophy but used it to imply obedience to the spirit, not the letter, of the Constitution.

In *Government of NCT of Delhi v Union of India* (2018)<sup>25</sup>, (five-judge Constitutional Bench), the Supreme Court reaffirmed the significance of constitutional morality in protecting the pillars of democracy and accountability. The court quoted Ambedkar that the pillars of democracy in this country should be rooted in the constitutional ethos, and not in the majority forces. This has vital implications for the Viksit Bharat Mission. Without constitutional morality, economic or technological progress can lapse into authoritarianism or injustice. Thus, protection of freedom of expression, independence of the judiciary, federalism, and minority rights is paramount for a progressive India. Ambedkar's vision amidst growing social polarisation and abuse of law to stifle dissent is as relevant as ever. His strategy was not confrontation but constitutional reconstruction and moral awareness.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's idea of justice is not history; it is blueprints for the future. Viksit Bharat Mission 2047 cannot be measured in GDP and infrastructural numbers—it has to be a mission of civilisation on the ideals of dignity, equality, and justice. Achieving Ambedkar's vision requires more than gestures of tokenism. It means abolishing caste not merely from law but from hearts as well; economic progress touches all, and not merely the favoured few; and democracy becomes a reality lived by all Indians, and not a constitutional fiction.

*The Constitution isn't paper, it's a social contract. And its chief author, Dr. Ambedkar himself, had gone on record as going to the extent of saying that democracy would be dangerous unless justice seeps into all corners of our common life.*

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<sup>24</sup> 7 Constituent Assembly Debates 38 1948

<sup>25</sup> *Government of NCT of Delhi v Union of India* (2018) 8 SCC 501

The path to Viksit Bharat has to go through the avenues of Ambedkarite justice. Only then, and then only, can we, in good faith, assert that India, on the eve of its hundredth year of independence, has kept the promise of its founding fathers.

### **ECONOMIC JUSTICE: PRESERVING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN POOR AND RICH**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's theory of economic justice is one of the strongest components of his theory of democracy. Being an economist educated at Columbia University and the London School of Economics, Ambedkar was well prepared with the knowledge of how economics and law interact. His economic imagination had its solid foundation in liberal humanism and Marxist critiques of capitalism, but without promoting a state economy under totalitarianism. Instead, he proposed state-controlled capitalism under which the commanding heights of the economy, land, industry, and banking would be nationally owned to ensure fair distribution.

He argued during the Draft Constitution Debates that economic democracy would have to be cultivated to ensure that political democracy would not lose the gains it had made: *“Political democracy cannot survive unless, at the base of the pyramid, there is social democracy. And what is social democracy? It is a way of life which makes liberty, equality, and fraternity the principles of life.”*

Ambedkar described a constitutional structure of an equal economy in his 1947 plan for States and Minorities. He advocated for nationalising agriculture, state control over basic industries, and protection of the working class, insisting that the state has to take a leading role in stopping the concentration of the country's wealth in the hands of a minority. Economic inequality was social injustice in his vision, and he insisted that real democracy cannot take hold in an environment of widespread economic disparities.

### **RELEVANCE TO CURRENT TIMES**

Currently in policy-making and governance, India is at the juncture where its very pillars of the constitution are being re-spoke and experimented with. While the country is going to embark on the path of growth under the visionary Viksit Bharat Mission 2047, the vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the creator of the Indian Constitution, assumes an added significance. Ambedkar's vision of society on the lines of liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice was not a dream but rooted in the legal and administrative machinery of the Indian State. His social democratic and legal

egalitarian philosophy finds its place in the Preamble, Part III (Fundamental Rights), and Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution.

This is a review of the intersectionality and convergence of the new criminal justice reforms, welfare administration, cyber rights, and judicial rulings with the constitutional imagination bequeathed to India by Ambedkar Ideology.

From the perspective of Criminal Law Reforms and Constitutional Morality Challenges Enactment of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA)<sup>26</sup> in 2024 marked a milestone in the administration of Indian criminal justice. These laws substituted the colonial law Indian Penal Code (1860), Criminal Procedure Code (1973), and Indian Evidence Act (1872),<sup>27</sup> respectively. Although these have been accepted by the government as good-faith attempts at decolonisation of Indian law, they have been received with scepticism by legal experts, human rights activists, and civil society.

Ambedkar was most concerned about matters of state encroachment, and chiefly on matters of liberty and due process. His wisdom in Constituent Assembly Debates on police excesses of power and arbitrary detentions, and arrests remains the test of time even now. Section 69 of the BNSS,<sup>28</sup> enlarged as an expanded provision under amendment of sedition, has been faulted on vagueness and for endangering freedom from use as a tool to suppress dissents, thereby offending Article 19(1)(a) and Article 21.<sup>29</sup>

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and Human Rights Law Network (HRLN) have published policy briefs acknowledging that provisions under extended police custody in BNSS are violative of the right to a fair trial and deviate from Ambedkarite jurisprudence.

Secondly, for Economic Justice and Ongoing Inequality, the 2024 Interim Budget was centred on building inclusive growth by expanding the coverage of various social sector schemes, including: Awas Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Skill India Mission, PM Vishwakarma Yojana, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. All of the above are by Directive Principles like Article 39 (economic

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<sup>26</sup> The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023; The Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023; The Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023

<sup>27</sup> Indian Penal Code 1860; Code of Criminal Procedure 1973; Indian Evidence Act 1872

<sup>28</sup> Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 69

<sup>29</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 19(1)(a) and 21



justice), Article 41 (right to work), and Article 46 (economic and educational advancement of SC/ST).<sup>30</sup> Budgetary expenditures do not necessarily determine whether they have been made or not. India Discrimination Report 2022 by Oxfam India revealed that the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) are over-represented in low-paid and informal employment and under-represented in formal and higher-paying jobs.

In spite of constitutional assurances such as Article 15(4) (SC/ST special provisions) and Article 17<sup>31</sup> (untouchability is not to be practised), economic indicators continue to point towards structural imbalances. A ground report conducted by the Centre for Equity Studies (CES) indicated that in urban metropolitan towns, 74% sanitation workers are still Dalits, rendering caste-based occupational segregation the order of the day.

For Gender Justice and Intersectionality in Representation, Women's Reservation Bill, 2023,<sup>32</sup> 33% reservation to women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies (after delimitation in 2029) is a milestone in the debate on representation. But feminist thinkers such as Dr. Ruth Manorama, Dalit activist and founder of the National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW), and Prof. Kancha Ilaiah, scholar and activist, have warned that without intersectional sub-reservations for Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslim women, the change will be symbolic and cosmetic.

Ambedkar had already perpetrated double marginalisation of Dalit women on caste and gender. His contribution during the Women's Conference at Nagpur in 1942,<sup>33</sup> as well as in his essay "The Rise and Fall of the Hindu Woman,"<sup>34</sup> reveals his ground-breaking thoughts about intersectional justice.

Freedom of expression is a constitutional basic principle, ensured through *Article 19(1)(a)*.<sup>35</sup> Yet, with algorithmic media and surveillance regimes, freedom of expression increasingly is coming into collision course with executive power. Ambedkar's argument that "democracy in India is

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<sup>30</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 39, 41 and 46

Constitution of India 1950, arts 15(4) and 17

<sup>32</sup> The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Act 2023

<sup>33</sup> Hari Narake et al., 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol. 17 pt. 3' (*Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment*) <[https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/Volume17\\_Part\\_III.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/Volume17_Part_III.pdf)> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>34</sup> Hari Narake et al., 'DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR WRITINGS AND SPEECHES VOL. 17 PART TWO' (MEA, 21 November 2013) 102 <[https://www.mea.gov.in/images/attach/amb/volume\\_17\\_02.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/images/attach/amb/volume_17_02.pdf)> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>35</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 191(a)

only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic" becomes paradigmatically applicable in the situation.

In *Raphael Satter*, a U.S. journalist with Reuters, who filed a petition in contradiction of the Indian government subsequent the cancellation of his Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) status. The Delhi High Court delayed the cancellation of the Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) status of an overseas journalist who had written investigative pieces adverse to a massive Indian conglomerate close to the ruling class. The Court determined that freedom of speech should not be penalised in the name of national interest and was cautious of creeping authoritarianism.

In suo moto PIL on "*Media Trials and Police Briefings*"<sup>36</sup> in 2024, the Supreme Court of India ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs to draft binding guidelines to control prejudicial media reportage at the pre-trial stage. This was after a series of celebrity arrests where accused persons were declared guilty by the media, tainting judicial impartiality and upsetting the doctrine of presumption of innocence, the keystone of Ambedkarite theory of law.

Additionally, the Bhartiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 has transformed the law of evidence by admitting legally electronic records, metadata, chat records, and video recordings as prime admissible evidence (Section 57). While it is new age, it does have fantastically serious implications involving deepfake technology, digital tampering, and the digital divide.

Apart from this, cyber justice should also be impartial. In its 2025 report, *PRS Legislative Research*<sup>37</sup> reported that while 80% of police stations in urban areas are computerised, only 32% of the tribal and rural regions have real-time databases and forensic centres. Disconnect from connectivity puts the marginalised community at risk of losing access to a fair trial in contravention of Ambedkar's vision of equal access to justice.

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<sup>36</sup> Padmakshi Sharma, 'Police Briefing Should Not Result In Media Trial': Supreme Court Directs MHA To Frame Guidelines; Asks DGPs To Give Suggestions' *Live Law* (13 September 2023) <<https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/police-briefing-should-not-result-in-media-trial-supreme-court-directs-mha-to-frame-police-briefing-guidelines-237700>> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>37</sup> 'Union Budget 2025-26 Analysis' (PRS Legislative Research, 01 February 2025) <[https://prsindia.org/files/budget/budget\\_parliament/2025/Union\\_Budget\\_Analysis\\_2025-26.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/budget/budget_parliament/2025/Union_Budget_Analysis_2025-26.pdf)> accessed 25 April 2025

Institutional measures such as the National Green Hydrogen Mission Act (2024)<sup>38</sup> and Amendment to the Forest Rights Act need to avoid institutionalising environmental injustice. In *Orissa Mining Corporation v Ministry of Environment and Forest & Ors*,<sup>39</sup> the Supreme Court suspended on the strength of the PESA Act (1996)<sup>40</sup> and the Forest Rights Act (2006)<sup>41</sup> a mining project which never saw the light in reaching the Gram Sabha. The Court invoked Article 21 on general, environment-related terms, and that's in line with the Ambedkar vision of good living for all. Flash forward to today in India: economic inequality has only increased. The Oxfam India Report (2023) shows that the richest 1% of Indians possess over 40.5% of India's wealth, while the poorest 50% possess a paltry 3%. This humiliating accumulation of wealth violates the constitutional goal of economic justice according to Article 38(2)<sup>42</sup> of the Directive Principles of State Policy, whereby the state must make a sincere effort to minimise inequalities in income and to remove distinctions in status, facilities, and opportunities.

Ambedkar also espoused economic empowerment, not anti-poverty. That is, productive assets for the poor, as opposed to access to state transfers. His solution would include redistributive land reform, cooperative consolidation, and integrating the SC/ST/OBC groups into the formal and digital economies. Ambedkar's conception of “economic safeguards” for the Scheduled Castes, as articulated in the Round Table Conferences, emphasised ownership and control, yet unfulfilled agenda.

## LEGAL AND POLICY IMPERATIVES

Progressive taxation, universal basic services, minimum wages, and workers' rights should be considered not just economically but also as constitutional imperatives under Article 39(b) and (c), that obligate the state to ban the concentration of wealth and to secure the material resources of the community for the common good.

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<sup>38</sup> ‘National Green Hydrogen Mission’ (*Ministry of New & Renewable Energy*, 2023) <<https://mnre.gov.in/en/national-green-hydrogen-mission/>> accessed 25 April 2025

<sup>39</sup> *Orissa Mining Corp. Ltd. v Ministry of Env't & Forests*, (2013) 6 SCC 476

<sup>40</sup> The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act 1996

<sup>41</sup> The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2007

<sup>42</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 38(2)

In the landmark case of *Sanjit Roy v State of Rajasthan* (1983),<sup>43</sup> the Supreme Court held that payment below minimum wage under MGNREGA amounts to a denial of the right to life under Article 21,<sup>44</sup> reiterating Ambedkar's thesis that economic justice is an aspect of human dignity.

Thus, economic justice in the Ambedkarite imagination is not charity but a constitutional principle, and should guide all economic and fiscal policy in the Viksit Bharat imagination.

## **POLITICAL JUSTICE: DEMOCRACY BEYOND THE BALLOT**

Political contributions of Dr. Ambedkar to the organisation of India are far deeper than the establishment of a legal system; he envisioned a participatory, inclusive democracy that mirrors the social contours of India's multifaceted diversity. His call for universal adult franchise, as incorporated in Article 326<sup>45</sup>, was a revolution for a nation seeking to break free from centuries of colonial and feudal rule. Radical departure from franchise based on property, it guaranteed that all Indians, irrespective of class, caste, or gender, would have an equal opportunity to be a part of the democratic process.

Dr. Ambedkar, however, put a rider, which was of utmost significance: A democratic type of government portrays a democratic type of society. This is his distillation of his concern that political equality at the technical level, but not at a substantive level of social equality, can become meaningless. One cannot assure meaningful political participation with voting rights alone. He feared electoral autocracy, a description which is all the more becoming to the context today, where elections are being made into a populist farce and governance by erosion of democratic institutions and norms.

Expanding the Political Justice Horizon, as Political justice in the Ambedkarite imagination is not merely voting once in five years. It is participatory citizenship, actual representation, involvement in decision-making, and responsibility of institutions. It is citizens, particularly from the oppressed sections, not merely electing representatives but also having a seat at the table where their voice matters in policymaking.

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<sup>43</sup> *Sanjit Roy v State of Rajasthan* (1983) 1 SCC 525

<sup>44</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 21

<sup>45</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art 326

The Constitution, in articles such as Articles 330–342<sup>46</sup>, provides for legislatures, public service, and education reservation to Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Political representation is then tokenistic when structural imbalances do not allow for actual inclusion. Dalit and Adivasi leaders are not autonomized in party decision-making within structures or instrumentalised into symbolic roles. Hence, Viksit Bharat's vision will have to focus its greatest energies on electoral reforms that check the role of money and muscle power, give effect to the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, in substance, and push political funding into the open. Ambedkar's blueprint also necessitates proportional representation, more accurately capturing India's diverse society and one that protects the voice of the weak from getting swamped by the majoritarian wave.

Strengthening Grassroots Democracy, its decentralised rule is what Dr. Ambedkar believed in as per his affirmation of the Panchayati Raj system with checks against domination by caste. Today, institutions such as the Gram Sabhas and the Urban Local Bodies hold promise of ushering hope towards local self-rule, but are lost through bureaucracy and financial dependence. Strengthening these institutions, as per the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments,<sup>47</sup> is central to building Ambedkar's vision of democracy from below. Utilising digital platforms for grievance redress, people's budgets, and social audits can again improve democratic accountability and transparency.

## **DR. AMBEDKAR AND CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY: THE SOUL OF VIKSIT BHARAT**

The most precious contribution that Dr. Ambedkar made to Indian political imagination, perhaps, is his constitutional morality theory. Explaining it in his address to the Constituent Assembly, he asserted that it is adherence to principles of the Constitution, liberty, equality, fraternity, higher than whimsical majority or individual whims. He drew this idea from George Grote, a Greek historian, who emphasised that constitutional morality is about habituating oneself to the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

Ambedkar cautioned that Indian democracy would be transformed into the tyranny of the majority if rigorous compliance with constitutional principles was not ensured. He is reputed to

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<sup>46</sup> Constitution of India 1950, arts 330–342

<sup>47</sup> The Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act 1992; The Constitution (Seventy-Fourth Amendment) Act 1992

have asserted: “Indian democracy is at best a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is inherently undemocratic.”

This observation is relevant even today, as India is struggling with rising religious intolerance, censorship, state surveillance, and stifling dissent. Misuse of sedition laws, arbitrary detention in the guise of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) 1967<sup>48</sup>, and eroding institutions like the Election Commission, Information Commission, and even the Judiciary, all indicate how constitutional morality is on the wane.

### **THE NEED FOR A MORALLY GROUNDED VIKSIT BHARAT**

Realised India cannot be measured in GDP terms. Growth without justice, development without freedom, and progress without fraternity cannot be achieved. The Viksit Bharat Mission 2047, to be revolutionary in the real sense, must be constitutionally and morally based. This would involve:

- Ensuring that civil rights assured by Articles 14, 19, and 21 are the foundation of the basic structure doctrine expounded in *Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala* (1973).<sup>49</sup>
- Press freedom, judiciary, and academia — cornerstones of a robust democracy.
- Encouraging deliberation, discussion, and reason in public life rather than majoritarian myopia or cultural nationalism.

Because, as aptly cautioned by Dr. Ambedkar, democracy prevails not in the machinery of the state but in the culture in which the Constitution is put into practice, the notion of constitutional patriotism, wherein allegiance to the Constitution outstrips allegiance to caste, religion, or party, must be nurtured through education, public discourse, and civil society institutions.

### **CONCLUSION**

The path to Viksit Bharat 2047 cannot be rightfully undertaken without paying homage to the excellent work of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the making of the Indian Constitution. Being the master architect of our constitutional system, Dr. Ambedkar not only decided the shape of governance but also filled it with the moral and philosophical content that has to be drawn upon while

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<sup>48</sup> The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967

<sup>49</sup> *Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala* (1973) 4 SCC 225

shaping an egalitarian, inclusive, and just society. His stress on justice, equality, fraternity, and liberty was not idealism; it was to be the dynamic power of the new India. And in this regard, the Constitution is not a static document but a living one that can change as per the people's needs, and Ambedkar's vision remains unmatched in conceptualising the issues that would plague modern India.

The Constitution was tempered in the fire of India's freedom movement, and the ideals enshrined therein, i.e., the Preamble and the Directive Principles of State Policy, were tempered in opposition to colonial rule and social injustice. Dr. Ambedkar, despite his resistance to being included in the Constituent Assembly, proved to be the most able and visionary contributor. His commitment to the attainment of social justice, particularly to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and weaker sections, manifests in the constitutional protection under Articles 14, 15, 17, 21, and 46. His firm belief that until a nation progresses, justice must trickle right down to the last person is perhaps the greatest justification for Viksit Bharat Mission 2047.

Ambedkar's writing goes far beyond legal drafting; they are a socio-economic philosophy based on inclusiveness, human dignity, and equal opportunity. He was a defender of the cause of workers' rights, minimum wage, and fair working conditions, concepts that remain at the centre of India's economic development agenda. Therefore, in 2047, we need to remember Ambedkar's vision not as religious deference but as an operational blueprint. His constitution-making from democratic morality and egalitarianism is still teaching us things that remain universally relevant. To be Viksit Bharat is not to be prosperous so much as to be just to all. This is what Ambedkar began to do, and this is what India has to do today.