

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as an Administrative Thinker: Ideas and Opinions

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Abstract:

Today, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is considered one of the most influential figures in the annals of modern India. He was a multifaceted genius and a reputed scholar of Anthropology, Sociology, Law, Public Administration, Comparative religions, Education, Economics, and political science. Many fields bear witness to Babasaheb Ambedkar's legacy and contributions to India. His writings and ideas have significantly influenced the country's development, economy, politics, governance, and public administration system. He is a prominent leader in the struggle for independence and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution and shall always be remembered for his role in painstakingly draughting our founding document-the longest written constitution in the world. The primary purpose of this article is to explore Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's ideas and opinions on Indian public administration and governance, including a discussion of the obstacles encountered by the nation and potential resolutions to these problems. In accordance with the objectives of the study, this article is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data.

Keywords: Governance, Public administration, Democracy, Drafting committee, Public finance, and Constitution of India.

Introduction

Public administration is an integral component and outcome of a social system. Theories and practices related to social systems exert a significant impact on theories and practices in administration. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji

Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, is a highly esteemed intellectual in India known for his profound contributions to social systems. His social system theories have a significant impact on the country's

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development, politics, economy, governance, and administration. His views on public administration as an agent of the state, inferred from many of his writings, are very relevant to understanding the theoretical meanings of governance and administration in India. In a democratic polity of Indian variety, Ambedkar's broad framework for understanding Indian governance and administration in the context of its history, culture, and contradictions is very useful and provides a systematic explanation of causal factors in administrative structures and practices.

Babasaheb Ambedkar is a crusader for social justice and a champion of constitutional democracy. His ideas on democracy and governance have had a great influence on Indian society and its form of government. He underscored the necessity of a proficient and productive administration in his treatises on public administration while simultaneously ensuring that it was capable of meeting the diverse requirements of all segments of society. He stated that "equality in public policy making" is crucial for efficient public administration in India. He promised to restructure the policy-making process to enhance its effectiveness. The principal objective of examining Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as an administrative thinker is to expand our comprehension of his thoughts and perspectives on state, governance, and administration, which have significantly influenced post-independence public administration in India.

The Principal Architect of the Indian Constitution

The Indian constitution holds significant importance globally. The constitution delineates the rules and regulations that govern the nation and its administration while also defining the fundamental rights and duties of its citizens. The constitution incorporates a number of Directive Principles of State Policy, aimed at aiding the government in its efforts to improve the socio-economic standing of the people. Furthermore, the constitution has instituted several principles aimed at promoting good governance and appropriate government administration. This encompasses integrity, resolve, openness, accountability, and responsibility from leaders in their service to the common people.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a key figure in the design and development of the Indian constitution. His legal expertise and understanding of several countries' constitutions considerably contributed to its formulation and influenced its core values and principles. He won an election to the Constituent Assembly of India in 1946. He then became the first law minister of independent India. On August 29, 1947, he assumed the role of chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and steered the entire process of drafting India's Constitution. Hence, the Indian Constitution and its drafting process are frequently regarded as synonymous

with B.R. Ambedkar. He is frequently acknowledged as *the father of the Indian Constitution*.

He adeptly addressed a significant amount of discussion and controversy regarding various provisions of the draft constitution. Despite the formidable challenge of persuading all parties while considering the diverse interests of society, Dr. Ambedkar emerged triumphant. His interventions and orations about numerous facets of the Constitution were perceptive, logically constructed, and meticulously studied. This garnered him the admiration and esteem of fellow Assembly members, who valued his leadership in the constitution-making endeavour. Consequently, our Constitution, the largest written constitution in the world, was enacted on November 26, 1949, by the universal acclaim of the Constituent Assembly and the entire nation.

Constitutional Morality

From Babasaheb Ambedkar's viewpoint, constitutional morality entails the efficient reconciliation of divergent interests among various individuals and the facilitation of administrative collaboration. It will facilitate the amicable resolution of the problem without confrontation among the numerous parties pursuing their objectives at whatever cost. He asserts that in India, where society is fragmented by caste, religion, language, and other issues, a unified moral compass is essential, and

the Constitution may provide that role. Ambedkar's idea of constitutional morality must prevail above religious morality to prevent irreversible harm to the Indian Constitution.

Constitutional Democracy

He has unwavering confidence in democracy. His thoughts on democracy significantly impacted Indian society and its government structure. He possesses a profound comprehension of the intricate and varied Indian social order and a steadfast belief in the socially transformative function of constitutional democracy. He believes that democracy must effectuate a significant transformation in societal conditions; else, the essence of political democracy will be absent. A democratic government can only emerge from a democratic society; therefore, as long as caste barriers persist in Indian society, genuine democracy cannot function. He emphasized the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity as the foundation of democracy, with the aim of promoting constitutional democracy. He underscored "democracy as a way of life," meaning democracy extends beyond the political realm to encompass personal, social, and economic dimensions.

Public Financial Administration

B.R. Ambedkar was an exceptional economist. His concepts regarding economy continue to hold significance in contemporary discourse. His significant economic concepts encompassed the

promotion of a gold standard, the decentralisation of government finance, and the consolidation of agricultural land, and other. He wrote three scholarly books on economics and public finance. They are;

- Administration and Finance of the East India Company
- The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, and
- The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution.

Ambedkar examined the colonial financial system and central-state financial relations. He explained the problems with the centralisation of government finance and unproductive expenditure by the government. He argued that each level of government should raise its own revenue for its expenditure. He provided an intellectual foundation for the Finance Commission of India, formed by Article 280 of the Constitution to resolve vertical and horizontal financial inequalities. Similarly, Dr. Ambedkar's recommendations to the Hilton Young Commission (the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance) in 1925 guided the conceptualization of the Reserve Bank of India. The commission members regarded Ambedkar's book "The Problem of the Rupee-Its Problems and Its Solution" as a crucial reference, leading the Central Legislative Assembly to ultimately enact these instructions as the RBI Act 1934.

Ambedkar delineated a standard for public expenditure, referred to as

Ambedkar's Canon of Public Expenditure. He advocated for a qualitative assessment of public expenditure rather than a mere quantitative evaluation that permits the allocation of public funds to useless expenditures. He contended that public expenditure ought to adhere to the principles of fidelity, prudence, and frugality. He preferred a gold standard over the gold exchange standard since the government had unchecked monetary manipulation. He suggested minting gold coins to stabilise prices and currency rates.

Babasaheb Ambedkar provided remedies for India's agricultural challenges. His perspectives on India's agricultural sector continue to be significant. He believed that limited landholdings caused India's low agricultural productivity. Therefore, he suggested merging land ownership into bigger groupings run by the state or farmer cooperatives to enhance production efficiency, reduce costs, and achieve economies of scale. He proposed employing agricultural unemployed labour in industry. He introduced a bill in the State Assembly designed to curtail the exploitative activities of moneylenders that adversely affect the impoverished.

Social Welfare Administration

The most fundamental and intricate challenge faced by independent India was the political, social, and economic isolation of a substantial portion of its population. A distinctive and thorough

affirmative action program was instituted via the Constitution to empower socially marginalised communities and integrate them into the national mainstream. India is currently acknowledged globally for its democratic and secular principles, as well as for creating an inclusive and contemporary social structure.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a champion of civil rights, advocating political and social emancipation for dalits, women, the downtrodden, backward sections, and other marginalized communities in our society. He argued that achieving national growth requires the eradication of inequality and the complete abolition of all forms of discrimination. He argued that we should only address economic and political issues after achieving social justice. He was resolute in his desire to witness a socio-economic and political transition in India. He desired the extensive population of India to experience freedom and equal opportunity. He aspired to see India evolve into a modern state, characterized by the flourishing of liberty, equality, and fraternity while eradicating backwardness. He advocated for dramatic transformation; however, he opposed the attainment of such change through violence. He sought transformation via constitutional means, specifically parliamentary democracy and the rule of law.

Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged the significant potential of the Indian Constitution as a formidable tool for

socio-economic transformation. To this end, he incorporated various provisions into the draft Constitution, including government transparency and accountability; checks and balances; safeguarding fundamental rights; a robust central government; independent institutions; directive principles of state policy; strong constitutional protections for marginalized communities and minorities; and a continuous progression toward social democracy. He also emphasized the importance of decentralization and delegating authority to ensure greater public participation in government and the policymaking process.

He championed a strong central government. He apprehended that casteism is more deeply rooted at the local and provincial levels, and that the government at these tiers may not protect the interests of lower castes due to influence from upper castes. He described villages as “*a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, and communalism.*” The national government, being less susceptible to these forces, will safeguard the interests of lower castes. He was also apprehensive that the minority, the most susceptible part of the nation, might also become political minorities. Thus, the democratic principle of ‘one man, one vote’ is insufficient, necessitating the assurance of power allocation for the minority. He challenged the ‘*Majoritarianism syndrome*’ and incorporated many safeguards for

minorities into the Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar urged the socially and economically marginalized to '*educate, agitate, and organize.*' Nonetheless, his dedication to constitutional processes remained steadfast, and he promoted a course of informed and rational public engagement.

Babasaheb Ambedkar pioneered labor welfare solutions. Ambedkar, a Labour Member of the Viceroy's Council, developed programs to boost worker productivity by offering education; job-related skills, health care, and maternity leave for women. In 1942, he established the Tripartite Labor Council to protect workers' social security, give workers and employers equal participation in labor policymaking, and strengthen the labor movement by mandating trade union and worker organization recognition. He actively promotes women's empowerment. He discussed Indian women's issues and sought answers. He advised women to participate in social causes and form female organizations as a means of self-protection. His maternity benefit bill and birth control arguments were important for women's dignity. He strongly supported the Maternity Bill and reproductive choice, control, freedom, and rights. As India's first law minister, Dr. Ambedkar presented the Hindu Code Bill to the Constituent Assembly on April 9, 1948, to reform Hindu personal laws like marriage, divorce, succession, and adoption. The measure sought to remove legislative barriers to women's social

advancement. Parliament and the public have heavily criticized this bill. After the government withdrew the bill, Ambedkar resigned in 1951, frustrated.

The Building of Strong Institutions and Constitutional Methods

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was of the opinion that strong and autonomous institutions were the fundamental pillars of democracy and that these institutions would ensure the sustainability of the democratic system. He advocated for the parliamentary system of democracy. Ambedkar elucidated to the Constituent Assembly in a speech presenting the draft Constitution the advantages and disadvantages of the Parliamentary system compared to the Presidential system. He elucidated the rationale for the Draft Constitution's preference for a Parliamentary Executive, prioritising 'responsibility' over 'stability.' He further articulated that the President, under the Constitution, will assume a role analogous to that of the King under the English Constitution.

He meticulously underscored that the new republic would constitute a 'Union' of States, rather than a 'Federation' of States. The States have no authority to secede. Dr. Ambedkar elucidated the distinctive characteristics of the federation outlined in the draft Constitution, emphasizing the necessity for a federal governance model adapted to the specific requirements of the Indian context. Furthermore, Ambedkar advocated for

separation of power between government organs: legislature, executive, and judiciary. He firmly believed that the judiciary must be independent of the legislative and executive and simultaneously proficient in its functions. He acknowledged, however, that conflicts between the legislature, executive, and the judiciary were unavoidable and, in fact, essential for maintaining mutual checks and balances in their operations. In addition, he advocated for autonomous institutions like the Election Commission, CAG, finance commission, central recruiting body, and tribunals to play a key role in the country's democratic system.

The obstacles encountered by the nation and potential resolutions to these problems

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's writings offer a meticulous examination of the Indian public administration system and its governance, along with suggested remedies for the difficulties it encounters. He notes that the Indian administration system is afflicted with a multitude of issues, including low literacy rates among the population, insufficient implementation in certain instances, gender disparity in people participation, obstacles in mitigating economic disparity, corruption, incompetence, bureaucratic obstacles, red tapism and a lack of accountability. Nevertheless, he holds the belief that there exists significant possibility for reform and enhancement.

Within the framework of the Indian public administration system, Dr. Ambedkar advocates for the implementation of numerous institutional reforms. The delegation of authority to lower tiers of government, enhanced openness and accountability, creating awareness about governance and its policies, enhancing people participation, appointments that are determined by merit, and decentralization of the decision-making process are some of the reforms that are included in this movement. Additionally, he highlights the importance of civil officials being more receptive to the demands of residents and collaborating in a more synchronized fashion. He stated that these reforms have the potential to enhance the economy, efficiency and effectiveness (3E's of public administration) of the Indian public administration system and increase its responsiveness to the requirements of citizens if they are implemented effectively.

Conclusion

Even today, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's perspectives on public administration remain pertinent. The constitution of India was a clear reflection of his ideas and views on governance and administration. He was clear that no Constitution is perfect and ultimately the working of the Constitution will depend upon the people, the political parties and their politics. His commitment to the building of strong institutions and constitutional methods has resulted in many interesting modern day

manifestations. In addition to India, his theories regarding governance and public administration are pertinent to other developing nations that are currently confronted with comparable obstacles.

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