

DR. AMBEDKAR'S CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: 75 YEARS OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, played a crucial role in establishing a democratic framework that emphasizes ***“justice, equality, and fraternity”***. His vision extended beyond legal structures to foster an inclusive society where marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, could achieve social and political equity. The Constitution, drafted under his leadership from 1947 to 1949 and enacted in 1950, enshrined fundamental rights aimed at eradicating caste-based discrimination and ensuring representation for historically oppressed groups. As India commemorates 75 years of constitutional democracy, it is essential to analyze the complexities of Ambedkar's contributions. His advocacy for ***“social democracy”***, articulated in his speeches during the Constituent Assembly debates, highlights the necessity of addressing socio-economic inequalities alongside political rights. Despite the robust framework he provided, challenges in implementation persist, raising questions about the effectiveness of constitutional guarantees in achieving true equality. Ambedkar's legacy remains particularly relevant today as India grapples with ongoing issues of caste discrimination and social injustice. Understanding his constitutional vision enriches our appreciation of the Indian legal system and informs contemporary discussions on inclusivity and representation in governance. Reflecting on Ambedkar's work provides critical insights into both the achievements and shortcomings of India's

democratic journey over the last seven decades, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to fulfill his vision of a just and equitable society.

I. “DR. AMBEDKAR’S CONSTITUTIONAL VISION”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's approach to the Indian Constitution was groundbreaking, primarily due to his unwavering commitment to “*social justice*”, the protection of marginalized communities, and the establishment of “*fundamental rights*” for all citizens. His vision was deeply rooted in the principles of “*liberty, equality, and fraternity*”, which he deemed essential for a just society.

KEY PRINCIPLES EMBEDDED IN THE CONSTITUTION

1. “***Social Justice***”: Ambedkar viewed social justice as a fundamental prerequisite for true democracy. He believed that a just society must eradicate caste-based discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background. This emphasis on social justice is reflected in various provisions of the Constitution aimed at uplifting marginalized communities, particularly Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
2. “***Equality***”: Ambedkar's commitment to equality was not merely theoretical; it was operationalized through constitutional guarantees that prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 14 of the Constitution enshrines the right to equality before the law, ensuring that all individuals are treated equally and have equal access to justice.
3. “***Liberty***”: The concept of liberty for Ambedkar encompassed not only political freedom but also social and economic rights. He argued that true liberty could only be achieved when individuals are free from socio-economic constraints that limit their potential. This holistic understanding of liberty is crucial for fostering an environment where every citizen can thrive.
4. “***Fraternity***”: Ambedkar emphasized fraternity as a vital component of social cohesion and national unity. He believed that fraternity fosters mutual respect and understanding among diverse groups within society, countering the divisive forces of

caste and communalism. This principle is integral to maintaining a harmonious social order where every individual feels valued.

5. **“Reservation Policies”**: To address historical injustices and provide equitable opportunities, Ambedkar championed reservation policies in education and government jobs. These provisions were designed to ensure representation for historically marginalized groups and facilitate their social mobility.

6. **“Universal Adult Suffrage”**: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's advocacy for ****universal adult suffrage**** was a transformative element in the Indian Constitution, marking a significant shift from colonial policies that had systematically disenfranchised vast segments of the population. This principle ensured that every Indian citizen, regardless of caste, religion, or gender, had the right to vote, thereby laying the groundwork for a truly democratic society.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Under British colonial rule, voting rights were restricted primarily to property owners and those belonging to certain social classes, effectively excluding the majority of Indians from participating in the political process. Ambedkar recognized that such disenfranchisement perpetuated social inequalities and hindered the formation of a representative government. He argued that political power was essential for marginalized communities, particularly the *“depressed classes”*, to secure their rights and improve their socio-economic conditions.

REVOLUTIONARY IMPACT

Ambedkar's insistence on universal adult suffrage was revolutionary for several reasons:

1. **“Inclusivity”**: By advocating for voting rights for all adults, Ambedkar aimed to dismantle the hierarchical structures of caste and class that had long governed Indian society. This inclusivity was critical in empowering those who had been historically marginalized and ensuring their voices were heard in governance.

2. **“Political Representation”**: For Ambedkar, universal suffrage was not just about voting; it was about ensuring that marginalized groups could elect their representatives. He believed that true democracy could only be achieved if all sections of society were actively involved in the electoral process. This perspective was rooted in his view that caste issues were fundamentally political and needed to be addressed through representation rather than mere social reforms.

3. **“Gender Equality”**: Ambedkar's support for universal suffrage also included women, recognizing their right to participate equally in the political sphere. This was a significant advancement at a time when women's rights were often overlooked in many parts of the world.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

The inclusion of universal adult suffrage in the Constitution was a landmark achievement during its drafting from 1947 to 1949. Article 326 of the Indian Constitution explicitly states that elections to the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and State Legislative Assemblies shall be on the basis of universal adult franchise. This provision not only established voting as a fundamental right but also reinforced the notion that every citizen's vote carries equal weight, thereby promoting political equality.

CHALLENGES AND LEGACY

While universal adult suffrage was enshrined in the Constitution, challenges remain regarding its implementation. Socio-economic disparities continue to affect voter participation and representation in India. Ambedkar himself acknowledged that political democracy would be hollow without addressing underlying social inequalities. His vision extended beyond mere electoral participation; he sought a society where economic and social conditions would allow all citizens to exercise their rights fully.

Ambedkar's legacy as a proponent of universal adult suffrage continues to inspire movements for social justice and equality in India today. His belief that democracy must encompass not just political rights but also social justice remains relevant as

contemporary India grapples with issues of caste discrimination, gender inequality, and economic disparity.

7. “Empowerment of the Judiciary”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's constitutional framework established a robust and “*independent judiciary*” in India, which plays a crucial role in safeguarding individual rights and ensuring the proper functioning of the state. His vision was rooted in the belief that an independent judiciary is essential for maintaining the rule of law and protecting citizens from arbitrary governance. This independence is manifested through two key aspects: “*judicial review*” and the “*doctrine of basic structure*”.

EMPOWERMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY

1. “*Judicial Independence*”: Ambedkar emphasized that the judiciary must operate free from interference by the executive and legislative branches. He argued that for the judiciary to be effective, it should not only be independent but also competent in itself. This independence is crucial for upholding justice and ensuring that judges can make decisions based solely on the law and facts, without succumbing to political pressures or external influences.

2. “*Judicial Review*”: The power of judicial review allows courts to assess the constitutionality of laws passed by the legislature. This mechanism serves as a check on legislative authority, ensuring that laws do not infringe upon fundamental rights or violate constitutional provisions. Judicial review empowers the judiciary to invalidate laws that are inconsistent with the Constitution, thus reinforcing the supremacy of constitutional law over ordinary legislation.

THE DOCTRINE OF BASIC STRUCTURE

The “*doctrine of basic structure*”, which emerged from the landmark case “*Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*” (1973), is a significant legacy of Ambedkar's vision for constitutional governance. This doctrine asserts that while Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its basic structure or fundamental features.

1. *“Core Constitutional Values”*: The doctrine identifies essential elements of the Constitution—such as “*democracy, secularism, rule of law, separation of powers*”, and protection of fundamental rights—that are inviolable. Any amendment that seeks to undermine these principles is deemed unconstitutional, thereby preserving the foundational values upon which the nation is built.
2. *“Limitations on Legislative Power”*: By establishing this doctrine, the Supreme Court effectively placed limits on Parliament's amending power under Article 368. This ensures that even though Parliament can enact amendments, it cannot do so in a manner that would compromise or alter the Constitution's core values. The doctrine thus acts as a safeguard against potential abuses of power by the legislature.
3. *“Judicial Oversight and Accountability”*: The doctrine reinforces judicial oversight over legislative actions and ensures accountability within governance structures. It empowers courts to intervene when laws threaten to erode essential constitutional principles, thereby maintaining a balance between legislative authority and judicial scrutiny.

II. “KEY CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS DERIVED FROM AMBEDKAR’S VISION”

1. “FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (PART III OF THE CONSTITUTION)”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for the Indian Constitution significantly influenced the establishment of “*Fundamental Rights*”, enshrined in “*Part III*” of the Constitution. These rights are designed to protect individual freedom and dignity, ensuring that all citizens enjoy equality and various freedoms, including those of speech, expression, and religion. Ambedkar's commitment to social justice and equality is reflected in several key provisions that aim to eradicate discrimination and promote the welfare of marginalized communities.

KEY PROVISIONS INFLUENCED BY AMBEDKAR

1. “Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination”

Article 15 is a cornerstone of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution. It prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. This article embodies Ambedkar's vision for an egalitarian society by ensuring that no citizen faces unfair treatment based on these characteristics.

- “Article 15(1)” states: "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them." This clause establishes a clear legal framework against state-sponsored discrimination, reinforcing the principle of equality before the law.
- “Article 15(2)” extends this protection by prohibiting discrimination in access to public places such as shops, restaurants, hotels, and other facilities maintained by the state. It ensures that all citizens can enjoy public resources without facing restrictions based on their identity.
- The article also allows for special provisions to be made for women and children (Article 15(3)), and for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes (Article 15(4)). This provision acknowledges historical injustices faced by these groups and allows the state to implement affirmative action policies aimed at promoting their welfare.

2. “Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability”

Article 17 explicitly abolishes untouchability, a practice that has historically marginalized certain communities in India. This provision reflects Ambedkar's deep commitment to eradicating caste-based discrimination and ensuring social justice for all citizens. By declaring untouchability as illegal, this article aims to dismantle societal hierarchies rooted in caste and promote equality.

3. “Article 46: Promotion of Educational and Economic Interests”

Article 46 focuses on promoting the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other socially and educationally backward classes. This provision aligns with Ambedkar's belief that education is a powerful tool for empowerment and social mobility. By mandating the state to take special care of these

communities, Article 46 seeks to address historical disadvantages and foster an inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunities for advancement.

2. “DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY (PART IV)”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for the Indian Constitution is profoundly reflected in the “*Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)*”, enshrined in “*Part IV*” of the Constitution (Articles 36-51). These principles articulate a framework aimed at achieving “*economic and social justice*”, guiding the state in its policies and legislative actions toward the establishment of a just society. Although these principles are not legally enforceable, they serve as fundamental guidelines for governance, emphasizing the state's responsibility to foster welfare and equality among its citizens.

KEY FOCUS AREAS OF DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES

1. “Adequate Livelihood and Decent Living Standards”

One of the primary objectives of the DPSP is to ensure that every citizen has access to an adequate means of livelihood and decent living standards. This is articulated in Article 39, which mandates that the state shall direct its policy towards securing:

- The right to work, education, and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement.
- Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- A living wage for workers ensuring a decent standard of life.

These provisions reflect Ambedkar's commitment to creating a welfare state where economic security is guaranteed for all citizens, thereby addressing historical inequalities and promoting social stability.

2. “Promotion of Social Welfare and Economic Equality”

The DPSP emphasizes the importance of social welfare and economic equality as essential components of a just society. Article 38 directs the state to secure a social order that promotes the welfare of the people by providing justice—*social, economic,*

and political. This directive underscores the state's obligation to address disparities in wealth and opportunities among different sections of society.

Additionally, Article 46 specifically promotes the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections. This provision aligns with Ambedkar's vision of uplifting marginalized communities through targeted policies aimed at enhancing their socio-economic status.

3. *“Education, Health, and Justice for the Marginalized”*

The DPSP also prioritizes education, health care, and access to justice for marginalized groups. Articles such as Article 41 ensure that the state makes provisions for securing the right to work and education. Article 47 obligates the state to raise nutritional levels and improve public health standards. These principles highlight Ambedkar's understanding that education is vital for empowerment and social mobility. By promoting health and education as fundamental rights, the DPSP aims to create an environment where all citizens can thrive, thereby contributing to national development.

Non-Justiciability and Implementation

While the DPSPs are non-justiciable—meaning they cannot be enforced by courts—they are considered fundamental in governance. Article 37 explicitly states that these principles are essential for governance but are not enforceable by law. This non-justiciability was intentional; it allows flexibility in implementation based on available resources and changing societal needs.

The framers recognized that at the time of independence, India faced significant socio-economic challenges that would require gradual progress toward achieving these ideals. Therefore, while they serve as guiding principles for policy formulation, their implementation relies on political will and societal commitment.

3. ***“AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND RESERVATION”***

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for reservation policies in India was a comprehensive approach to address centuries of social and economic discrimination faced by

marginalized communities. His drafting of these policies was aimed at creating a more equitable society by ensuring representation and opportunities for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in various spheres of public life.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

1. **“Article 15(4)”**: This provision empowers the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, SCs, and STs. It specifically allows for reservations in educational institutions, including private educational institutions (except minority institutions).
2. **“Article 16(4)”**: This article allows the state to make provisions for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens that is not adequately represented in the services under the state.

KEY ASPECTS OF AMBEDKAR'S RESERVATION POLICY

1. **“Education”**: Reservations in educational institutions were designed to increase access to higher education for marginalized communities. This was seen as crucial for social mobility and economic empowerment.
2. **“Government Jobs”**: Reservations in public sector employment aimed to ensure representation of SCs, STs, and OBCs in the government machinery. This was intended to bring diverse perspectives into governance and decision-making processes.
3. **“Political Offices”**: Reservation of seats in legislative bodies was implemented to ensure political representation of marginalized communities. This was crucial for giving these communities a voice in policy-making and governance.

IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

“Quota System”:

- The reservation policy introduced a quota system in educational institutions and government jobs.

- Initially, 22.5% of seats were reserved for SCs and STs (15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs).
- Later, 27% reservation was introduced for OBCs following the Mandal Commission recommendations.

“Socio-Economic Upliftment”:

- The policy aimed to address historical injustices and provide a level playing field for disadvantaged communities.
- It was designed to break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion by providing opportunities for education and employment.

“Representation in Governance”:

- Reservation in political offices ensured that the concerns of marginalized communities were represented in the legislative process.
- This has led to increased political participation and empowerment of these communities.

CHALLENGES AND DEBATES

1. *“Creamy Layer”*: The concept of the "creamy layer" was introduced to exclude the relatively well-off members of backward classes from the reservation benefits. This was aimed at ensuring that the benefits reach the most disadvantaged within these communities.
2. *“Efficiency vs. Social Justice”*: There has been ongoing debate about balancing merit and social justice in the implementation of reservation policies.
3. *“Time Limit”*: The original intent was to have reservations for a limited period, but they have been continually extended due to persistent socio-economic disparities.

4. “SECULARISM”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of “*secularism*” is a fundamental aspect of the Indian Constitution, ensuring that the state maintains neutrality in religious matters while

guaranteeing ****freedom of conscience**** and the right to practice religion. This secular framework is articulated primarily through Articles 25 to 28, which collectively safeguard individual religious rights while delineating the boundaries within which these rights operate.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SECULARISM IN THE CONSTITUTION

1. *“Neutrality of the State”*: Ambedkar envisioned a secular state that does not favor any religion over another. This neutrality is critical in a diverse nation like India, where multiple religions coexist. The Constitution mandates that all religions are treated equally, preventing any single religion from dominating public policy or state functions. This principle is vital for maintaining communal harmony and ensuring that all citizens can practice their faith freely without fear of discrimination or persecution.

2. *“Freedom of Conscience (Article 25)”*: Article 25 guarantees every individual the right to freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate their religion. This provision affirms that:

- Every person is entitled to entertain beliefs and doctrines according to their conscience.
- Individuals can express their beliefs through overt acts and practices that are integral to their religion.

However, this freedom is subject to reasonable restrictions concerning public order, morality, and health, ensuring that individual religious practices do not infringe on the rights of others or disturb societal peace.

3. *“Regulation of Religious Practices”*: Article 25(2) allows the state to regulate or restrict economic, financial, political, or other secular activities associated with religious practices. This provision empowers the government to intervene when religious practices conflict with social welfare or public interest. For example, laws can be enacted to promote social reform by opening Hindu religious institutions to all classes and sections of society, thereby dismantling caste-based exclusions.

4. “Religious Freedom (Articles 26-28)”:

- “Article 26” grants every religious denomination the right to manage its own affairs in matters of religion, establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, and own property.
- “Article 27” prohibits the state from compelling any individual to pay taxes for promoting any particular religion.
- “Article 28” ensures that no religious instruction is provided in educational institutions wholly maintained out of state funds.

Together, these articles reinforce the principle of secularism by protecting individuals' rights to practice their religion while preventing the state from endorsing or funding any specific faith.

III. “AMBEDKAR’S INFLUENCE IN JUDICIAL INTERPRETATIONS”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's influence on the Indian judiciary has been profound, particularly in the interpretation and enforcement of principles enshrined in the Constitution. His vision for social justice, individual rights, and equality has been reflected in several landmark Supreme Court cases over the past 75 years. Below are key cases that illustrate how Ambedkar's ideals have been upheld and expanded through judicial interpretations.

1. “*Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)*”

In this landmark case, the Supreme Court established the “*Basic Structure Doctrine*”, which asserts that certain fundamental features of the Constitution cannot be altered or destroyed by amendments. This doctrine is crucial because it protects core principles such as democracy, justice, and secularism—values that were central to Ambedkar's constitutional framework. The court's ruling emphasized that while Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, it cannot infringe upon its basic structure, thereby safeguarding the foundational ideals that Ambedkar envisioned for a just society.

2. “*Indira Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)*”

This case upheld the constitutional validity of reservations for “*Other Backward Classes (OBCs)*” in public employment and education, aligning with Ambedkar’s commitment to affirmative action for socially disadvantaged groups. The Supreme Court recognized that reservations are essential for achieving social justice and ensuring representation for marginalized communities in governance. The ruling reaffirmed that while equality of opportunity is important, it must be complemented by measures that uplift historically oppressed groups, reflecting Ambedkar’s belief in proactive steps toward social equity.

3. “*Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)*”

In this case, the Supreme Court expanded the interpretation of “*Article 21*”, which guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. The court ruled that this right includes not only the right to live but also the right to live with dignity and personal freedom. This broad interpretation aligns with Ambedkar’s advocacy for protecting individual rights and liberties against arbitrary state action. The judgment underscored that any law or procedure affecting personal liberty must be just, fair, and reasonable, reinforcing Ambedkar’s vision of a society where individual dignity is paramount.

4. “*Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997)*”

This case led to the establishment of guidelines aimed at preventing “*sexual harassment*” in the workplace, marking a significant advancement in gender justice and equality. The Supreme Court recognized that sexual harassment constitutes a violation of women’s rights to equality and dignity under Articles 14 and 21. This decision reflects Ambedkar’s commitment to gender justice, as he believed that true equality cannot be achieved without addressing issues of gender-based discrimination and violence.

5. “*Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)*”

In this landmark judgment, the Supreme Court declared the “*Right to Privacy*” as a fundamental right under Article 21, emphasizing that privacy is intrinsic to personal liberty and dignity. This ruling aligns with Ambedkar’s vision of protecting individual

rights against state intrusion. The court acknowledged that privacy is essential for individuals to exercise their freedoms fully, thereby reinforcing Ambedkar's commitment to ensuring that citizens can lead lives free from unwarranted surveillance and interference.

IV. **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING AMBEDKAR'S VISION**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for India, as enshrined in the Constitution, aimed to create a society based on equality, justice, and fraternity. However, the implementation of this vision over the past 75 years has encountered significant challenges. These challenges stem from deeply ingrained social structures, political resistance, and the complex task of transforming a historically unequal society into one that upholds constitutional values.

1. Persistence of Caste-Based Discrimination

Despite constitutional provisions abolishing untouchability and promoting equality, caste-based discrimination remains a pervasive issue in India:

- “Rural Areas”: Caste discrimination is particularly entrenched in rural India, where traditional social hierarchies often resist change. This manifests in various forms, from segregated housing to restricted access to public resources.
- “Untouchability”: While legally abolished, practices of untouchability persist in subtle and overt forms. This includes social ostracism, denial of services, and even violence against Dalits and other marginalized communities.
- “Caste-Based Violence”: Incidents of violence against Dalits, including honor killings and atrocities, continue to be reported, highlighting the gap between constitutional ideals and social realities.

2. Social and Economic Inequality

Ambedkar's vision of social and economic justice faces significant hurdles:

- “Resistance to Affirmative Action”: Reservation policies, designed to provide representation and opportunities to marginalized communities, often face

opposition from dominant groups who perceive them as unfair or as reverse discrimination.

- “Economic Disparities”: Despite progress, economic inequalities along caste lines persist. Dalits and other backward classes continue to face barriers in education, employment, and economic advancement.
- “Political Challenges”: The implementation of policies aimed at uplifting marginalized communities often faces political resistance, with some parties using caste-based politics for electoral gains rather than genuine social reform.

3. Judicial Interpretations and Constitutional Amendments

The judiciary's role in interpreting and implementing Ambedkar's vision has been complex:

- “Reservation Debates”: The extent, duration, and implementation of reservations have been subjects of ongoing legal and political debates. Courts have had to balance the principles of equality and affirmative action, sometimes leading to controversial decisions.
- “Basic Structure Doctrine”: While not explicitly part of Ambedkar's original draft, the Supreme Court's development of the Basic Structure Doctrine in cases like *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)* has been crucial in preserving the core principles of the Constitution.
- “Expanding Rights”: The judiciary has often played a positive role in expanding the scope of fundamental rights and reinforcing principles of equality and justice. For instance, the recognition of the right to privacy as a fundamental right in the *Puttaswamy case (2017)* aligns with Ambedkar's vision of individual liberty.

4. Challenges in Education and Employment

Ambedkar viewed education as a key tool for social emancipation, but challenges remain:

- “Access to Quality Education”: While enrollment rates have improved, the quality of education, especially in rural and marginalized communities, remains a concern.
- “Employment Disparities”: Despite reservations in public sector jobs, representation of Dalits and other backward classes in higher positions and the private sector remains low.

5. Political Representation

While the Constitution provides for political representation of marginalized communities, challenges persist:

- “Tokenism”: There are concerns that political representation of Dalits and other backward classes sometimes amounts to tokenism rather than genuine empowerment.
- “Leadership in Decision-Making”: The representation of marginalized communities in key decision-making roles in politics and governance remains limited.

V. “RELEVANCE TODAY: 75 YEARS OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY”

The 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution presents a significant opportunity to reflect on its relevance in contemporary India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision for a democratic and inclusive society remains crucial as the nation navigates various social, political, and economic challenges.

KEY ASPECTS OF RELEVANCE TODAY

1. “*Upholding Democratic Values*”: The Constitution serves as the bedrock of India's democracy, enshrining principles such as “*justice, liberty, equality*”, and “*fraternity*”. As India faces political polarization and challenges to democratic norms, the Constitution's emphasis on these values is more relevant than ever. The ongoing discourse around “*freedom of speech*”, “*minority rights*”, and “*social justice*”

underscores the need for a robust constitutional framework that protects individual liberties against potential state overreaches.

2. *“Addressing Social Inequalities”*: Despite constitutional provisions aimed at promoting social justice, caste-based discrimination and socio-economic disparities persist. The Constitution's *“Directive Principles of State Policy”* and provisions for *“reservations”* in education and employment reflect Ambedkar's commitment to uplifting marginalized communities. As India seeks to address these enduring inequalities, revisiting these constitutional mandates can guide policies aimed at fostering inclusivity and equity.

3. *“Judicial Interpretation and Protection of Rights”*: The judiciary has played a pivotal role in interpreting the Constitution and expanding its principles to safeguard individual rights. Landmark cases over the past decades have reinforced Ambedkar's vision of equality and justice, such as the recognition of the *“Right to Privacy”* and the establishment of guidelines against *“sexual harassment”*. These judicial interpretations highlight the dynamic nature of the Constitution and its ability to adapt to contemporary issues.

4. *“Public Engagement and Awareness”*: Initiatives like the *“Ghar Ghar Constitution”* program aim to enhance awareness about constitutional values among citizens, particularly youth and marginalized communities. Such efforts are essential for fostering a culture of constitutional literacy, enabling individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities within a democratic framework. Engaging citizens in discussions about the Constitution can empower them to advocate for their rights and participate actively in governance.

5. *“Civic Responsibility and Participation”*: The celebration of 75 years of constitutional democracy serves as a reminder of the importance of civic responsibility. Citizens are encouraged to engage with democratic processes, whether through voting, activism, or community service. The Constitution not only provides rights but also imposes duties on citizens to contribute positively to society and uphold democratic values.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

While celebrating this milestone, it is crucial to acknowledge ongoing challenges:

- “Political Polarization”: The current political landscape is marked by divisive rhetoric that can undermine constitutional values. Ensuring that political discourse remains respectful and constructive is vital for maintaining democratic integrity.
- “Protection of Minority Rights”: Safeguarding the rights of minorities continues to be a pressing concern. The Constitution’s provisions must be actively enforced to protect vulnerable groups from discrimination and violence.
- “Judicial Independence”: Ensuring that the judiciary remains independent and free from political influence is essential for upholding the rule of law and protecting individual rights.

CONCLUSION

Ambedkar's commitment to “*social justice*” is reflected in the various provisions of the Constitution that aim to uplift historically oppressed groups through affirmative action and reservation policies. His insistence on a “*social democracy*” underscores the necessity of addressing not only political rights but also socio-economic inequalities that continue to plague Indian society. Despite the robust constitutional framework he provided, challenges in implementation remain significant, as caste-based discrimination and social injustices persist. The relevance of Ambedkar's vision today is evident as India grapples with ongoing issues related to caste, inequality, and representation. His ideas serve as a guiding light for contemporary discussions on inclusivity and social justice, reminding us that true democracy cannot thrive without addressing the deep-rooted inequities that affect millions. Ambedkar’s legacy is not merely historical; it is a living framework that continues to inspire movements for social reform and justice in India. As we commemorate 75 years of constitutional democracy, it is imperative to reflect on both the achievements and shortcomings of this journey. Understanding Ambedkar's contributions allows us to critically engage with current challenges and strive towards realizing his vision of a society where every individual enjoys equal rights and opportunities.

In conclusion, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's constitutional framework remains a vital instrument for promoting human dignity and social equity in India. The ongoing struggle for social justice is a testament to his enduring influence, urging us to continue working towards an inclusive society that honors the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

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