

**“THE FORESIGHTED AMBEDKAR: IDEAS THAT SHAPED INDIAN
CONSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE” – BOOK REVIEW**

Raj Krishna *

ABSTRACT

Constitutional Law Scholar Anurag Bhaskar, in his latest book titled “The Foresighted Ambedkar,” has thoroughly and insightfully examined Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s constitutional philosophy and its enduring impact upon the Indian political and social landscape. The book is a must-read for anyone who wants to know about the efforts and hardships undertaken by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar towards the framing of the Constitution.

The author has drawn attention to Ambedkar's revolutionary views, especially his support of the rights of oppressed communities, which have had a long-lasting influence on India's democratic culture. By depicting Ambedkar as a key figure in the creation of an inclusive and equitable society, the story deftly conveys his unwavering quest for justice and equality.

Keywords: Constitution, Democracy, Equality, Justice, Society

* Lawyer, B.A, LL.B. (Chanakya National Law University, Patna), LL.M. (NLIU Bhopal).

“Constitution is not a mere lawyers document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of Age.”

- Dr B.R. Ambedkar

The founding fathers of our Constitution were entrusted with a duty to draft a text that would secure justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity to Indians. Despite being elected on the basis of limited franchise, the Constituent Assembly was still representative of all societal groups. It was primarily made up of visionary men and women who were aware of the historic but challenging job of forging an egalitarian society out of a bewildering jumble of faiths, communities, castes, races, languages, beliefs, and practices. They were conscious of the societal injustices and disparities that had existed historically and came to understand that it was crucial to correct them through constitutional means as soon as possible because the alternative was terrifying.¹

On August 29, 1947, a drafting committee was constituted with Dr BR Ambedkar as its chairman. The committee was entrusted with the task of drafting the Indian Constitution. It's interesting to note that Ambedkar is frequently associated with the Indian Constitution and the process of drafting it. One of our country's finest statesman, Dr BR Ambedkar, fought to reorganize Indian society according to the most humanitarian and equal ideals. He was the first Indian political theorist to see the value and suitability of the democratic model from the West for India.² Additionally, he was a key figure who advocated for the Constitution to include fundamental rights. Furthermore, he also played a significant role in the removal of caste-based discrimination and untouchability as well as the insertion of clauses safeguarding the rights of Dalits and other marginalized groups.³

Anurag Bhaskar in his latest book, “The Foresighted Ambedkar” argues that the Indian Constitution was written over a forty-years period, and not merely from 1946 to 1950. Interestingly since 1919, Dr Ambedkar has been the only individual to be involved in every step of the creation of the Indian Constitution. His participation and contribution are imprinted on these stages. From 1919, when he first came into the public eye, to the actual drafting of the Constitution and beyond, this book aims to highlight Dr Ambedkar's impact on the Indian constitutional discourse. It discusses the various constitutional moments as they occurred and

¹ “*Indra Sawhney v. Union of India*,” AIR 1993 SC 477.

² Dr Ram Sharan, ‘DR B.R. Ambedkar role in making of the Indian Constitution,’ “*International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*.”

³ Id.

emphasizes Dr Ambedkar's contribution to those events. The book begins by charting Ambedkar's early ascent and placing his sociopolitical growth inside the framework of the caste system, which was firmly established in colonial India. Ambedkar's outlook on how to deal with the immensely discriminatory and hierarchical structures of Indian society was greatly influenced by his education and his exposure to the liberal democratic ideals of the West.⁴

Bhaskar carefully traces Ambedkar's ascent from a symbolic and personal subaltern path in this first segment, establishing him as a beacon of light against the oppressive social order. The book then explores the constitutional debate that existed before Ambedkar's engagement as well as how it changed during and after his interventions. The author carefully highlights Dr. Ambedkar's efforts within the colonial political structure, such as the enactments of the British Parliament which continued to be exclusive, especially toward downtrodden castes, even if they laid the foundation for limited self-rule.⁵

As a Law Minister of the Independent India, his effort pertaining to the reform of Hindu personal laws are commendable. Both inside and outside of Parliament, the Bill was heavily criticized. Eventually he was forced to quit in 1951 after the Government finally gave in and withdrawn the Bill. The proposed draft did, however, become law a few years later.⁶

In this book, Bhaskar has tried to relate Ambedkar to contemporary intellectual trends in order to depict a visionary Ambedkar who is becoming more and more realized over time. Furthermore, Ambedkar's revolutionary efforts are trivialized by statues, platitudes, and gestures of greatness, which are readily hijacked for any political objective. Notably, Bhaskar contends that although Ambedkar's constitutional vision established the framework for affirmative action laws and legal safeguards, much more needs to be done to fully achieve social justice. The book acts as a call to action for those who are still fighting for a society that is more inclusive and just as well as a reminder of the revolutionary potential of constitutionalism.⁷

⁴ Swapna Peri, Book Review: 'The Foresighted Ambedkar' by Anurag Bhaskar, Storizen *available at* <https://www.storizen.com/book-reviews/the-foresighted-ambedkar-by-anurag-bhaskar/> (last visited on September 29, 2025).

⁵ Shubham Kumar, 'The Foresighted Ambedkar- Book Review,' *"CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion,"* Vol. 5 No. 3 (2024)

⁶ Anurag Bhaskar, *"The Foresighted Ambedkar: Ideas That Shaped Indian Constitutional Discourse,"* Penguin India (2024).

⁷ Suryapratim Roy, 'Was Ambedkar really farsighted in his constitutional vision?' *"The Hindu,"* December 6, 2024.

Furthermore, the idea that such measures should be limited to a specific time frame is effectively dismantled in the book's last chapter, which critically examines the current debate surrounding the so-called ten-year restriction on reservations. Ambedkar maintained that in order to attain the social revolution we need to follow an adaptable policy of affirmative action, one that is not limited by arbitrary timetables but rather responsive to the shifting sociopolitical scene.⁸

The book also explores Ambedkar's critical thoughts on the difficulties of putting constitutional principles into reality. Ambedkar's thoughts regarding the discrepancy between the Constitution's idealistic ideals and the actual social and political landscape of post-independence India are examined by Bhaskar. Ambedkar was extremely worried that the promises of equality and justice made in the Constitution would not be realized in the absence of significant social and economic reforms. Bhaskar's examination of this facet of Ambedkar's ideas demonstrates his practical awareness of the constitutional law's limitations in resolving long-standing socioeconomic injustices.⁹ Regarding Ambedkar's views on democracy, Bhaskar cites Ambedkar's recognition of citizens' social conscience as crucial to the defence of fundamental rights and concludes that his focus on constitutional culture among the populace forms the basis of Dr Ambedkar's constitutional principles. This statement requires further context. Ambedkar's normative perspective held that morality is something that must be developed in Indian citizens rather than something that is innate.¹⁰ Thus, the Foresighted Ambedkar is a must-read for anyone curious about the difficulties of drafting a constitution for a heterogeneous country like India.

⁸ Supra Note 5.

⁹ Supra Note 7.

¹⁰ Supra Note 5.