

HISTORY

B.R. Ambedkar's emancipatory vision of Democracy

Recently, it has been observed that it is imperative to understand the main reasons behind B.R. Ambedkar 's active interest in economic and labour rights' .

BR Ambedkar contribution in shaping modern india

- **Mooknayak (The Leader of the Mute)** was a fortnightly newspaper he started in 1920 with the patronage of his mentor, Shahuji Maharaj.
 - It was the first journalistic venture of Babasaheb Ambedkar.
 - It aimed to put forward Ambedkar's own point of view on matters such as Swaraj, the education of the 'untouchables', and the evils of untouchability, which had hitherto not found due representation in mainstream Hindi journals.
- **Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha**
 - **1924:** Founded the **Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha** also known as **Outcastes Welfare Association**, with an aim to spread education and awareness among the dalits.
- **Mahad Satyagraha**
 - **1927:** Led the **Mahad Satyagraha** in Maharashtra to challenge the regressive customs of the Hindu.
- **Kalaram Satyagraha**
 - **1930:** Started **Kalaram Satyagraha** in Nashik, which was a temple entry movement for the untouchables.
- **Poona Pact**
 - **1932:** He, on behalf of untouchables, signed the **Poona Pact** with Mahatma Gandhi, who was representing Congress.
 - The pact provided the provisions for reserved seats for the depressed class **instead of a separate electorate** in the regional legislative assemblies and Central Council of States.
- **1947:** Worked as the **first Law Minister of India** in Jawahar Lal Nehru's cabinet and was also made the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee of Constitution.**

Vision of Ambedkar's work on economic democracy

- He clearly laid out his vision regarding the **substance of political economy** through his writings such as **States and Minorities (1947),**
- In 1928, he struggled to get the **Maternity Benefit Bill** passed in the Bombay Legislative Council.
 - This was later taken up by the **Madras Legislative Council** in 1934.
- **In 1942,** Ambedkar changed the **work time to eight hours** per day from earlier 12 hours.
- The **Labour Investigation Committee and Labour Commissioners'** were instituted by Babasaheb to ameliorate the condition of workers as much as possible within the existing law.
- He strongly argued for simultaneously **addressing substantive questions of political, social, and economic democracy** because they are intertwined with each other in a way that leaving out one **will jeopardise the progress made in another.**
- He was as much a **believer in economic justice as in social justice.**
- This becomes clear when we go through his work, States and Minorities.
 - This document **contained extensive safeguards** for the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes and laid out his vision of **socio-cultural justice and economic fairness.**
- He had argued for **nationalisation of key and basic industries, the agriculture and insurance sectors.**
- He wanted the **State to allocate agricultural land** only on a tenancy basis to people (irrespective of caste, class and creed) for collective farming.
- He established **equal pay for equal work** irrespective of gender as a member of the Viceroy's Council but also included this as part of the **Directive Principles in the Indian Constitution.**
 - However, women still continue to receive on average between ₹70 to ₹90 a day, less than men as both formal and informal workers.

How the existing economic system pursued by the political parties is antagonistic to the model envisioned by B.R. Ambedkar?

- The attempts are being made to (mis)appropriate Ambedkar by parties, organisations and individuals of various ideological persuasions for their own interests without making any effort to embody Ambedkar's principles of socio-cultural justice and economic fairness.
 - It also seems to be deliberately ignoring his **world-view on economic equality, fairness and justice.**

- it does not do justice to Ambedkar's grand emancipatory vision of democracy.
- Some initiatives taken recently are against the **vision of B.R. Ambedkar**.
 - The on-going monetisation/sell-off/privatisation of airports, the Indian Railways, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)/ Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), public sector banks and other public sector organisations are grave assaults on economic democracy.

Issues /Concerns

- The process of massive '**contractualisation**' and '**informalisation/casualisation**' of labourers since the 1990s widened the **economic inequality** between employer and employee and also between high paid permanent employees on the one hand and low paid regular, contractual and temporary employees on the other.
 - Contract workers have increased from **15.5% in 2000-01 to 27.9%** in 2015-16 even in the organised manufacturing sector.
 - In States such as Bihar, Uttarakhand and Odisha, a majority of the organised manufacturing workforce is contractual.
- Despite the prohibition under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, contract workers are being paid lower salary/wage for the same work.
- This is a clear violation of the law and Article 141 of the Constitution, as observed by the Supreme Court of India in 2016.
- The four labour codes (on wages, social security, occupational safety and industrial relations) are going to worsen the situation of workers.

Way Forward

- The **Union and State governments** must take proactive measures to follow the triad vision of democracy — social, economic and political — if they want to celebrate Babasaheb in the true sense.
- Many of which the four labour codes seek to circumvent or reverse surreptitiously. Therefore, it is high time we stand by the ideals of the architect of the Constitution.

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM

1. e-Shram Portal:

- The portal was launched on **August 26, 2021**.
- The experts believe that as the enrolments progress on e-Shram portal towards the ultimate goal of enrolling all informal sector workers **estimated at 38 crore in the country**, the data would show **sharp disparities in the society**.
- **Aim:**
 - Creating a **National database of unorganised workers (NDUW)**.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Labour & Employment
- **e-Shram Card:**
 - Workers will be provided with an e-SHRAM card which will have a **12-digit unique number**.
 - The details of workers will also be shared by the state government and departments.
- **Single window:**
 - This will be a single-point reference to help authorities **reach out to and track workers** in the informal sector, and offer welfare in times of crisis.
- **Who all are included?**
 - The database will include construction workers, migrant workers, gig and platform workers, street vendors, domestic workers, agriculture workers, migrant workers and similar other sub-groups of unorganised workers.
- **Self-enrolment:**
 - It will be available in public for open access where workers can self-enrol through Aadhaar and mobile numbers.

Objectives of e-Shram:

- **Integration of social security schemes** like Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-DhanYojana (PM-SYM), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), etc.
- Providing a **comprehensive database** to central and state Governments for tackling any national crisis.
- Ascertaining their **movement from formal to the informal sector and vice versa**.
- **Sharing of information with other ministries/state governments** for delivery of social security schemes.
- Portability of welfare benefits to **migrant and construction workers**.

Benefits of e-Shram:

- **e-Shram cards** would be acceptable **across the country**.
- After registering, he/she will get an **Accidental Insurance** cover of 2 Lacs under PMSBY.
 - Rs 2 lakh for accidental death and **permanent disability** and Rs 1 lakh for **partial disability**.
- **Social security benefits** will also be delivered through this portal.
- This portal will be helpful to the State and Central governments while providing assistance during **calamities/pandemics**.

2. Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

- The UIDAI is a **statutory authority** established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (“Aadhaar Act 2016”) on 12 July 2016 by the Government of India, under **the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- The Aadhaar Act 2016 has been **amended** by the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019 (14 of 2019) w.e.f. 25.07.2019.
- UIDAI was created to issue Unique Identification numbers (UID), named as "Aadhaar", to all residents of India. The UID had to be -
 - robust enough to eliminate duplicate and fake identities, and
 - verifiable and authenticable in an easy, cost-effective way.
- As on 31st October 2021, the Authority has issued **131.68 crore** Aadhaar numbers to the residents of India.
- Under the Aadhaar Act 2016, **UIDAI is responsible for Aadhaar enrolment and authentication**, including operation and management of all stages of Aadhaar life cycle, developing the policy, procedure, and system for issuing Aadhaar numbers to individuals and perform authentication and the security of identity information and authentication records of individuals.

3. West Nile Virus

The Kerala health department is on alert after the death of a 47-year-old from Thrissur due to the West Nile Virus.

What is West Nile Virus?

- It is a mosquito-borne, single-stranded RNA virus.
- It is a member of the **flavivirus genus** and belongs to the **Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex** of the **family Flaviviridae**.
- It is commonly found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia.
- **Transmission : Culex species of mosquitoes** act as the principal vectors for transmission.
 - It is transmitted by **infected mosquitoes** between and among humans and animals, including birds, which are the reservoir host of the virus.
 - It can also **spread through blood transfusion**, from an infected mother to her child, or through exposure to the virus in laboratories.
 - It is not known to spread by contact with infected humans or animals.
 - To date, no human-to-human transmission of WNV through casual contact has been documented.
- **Impact** :It can cause neurological disease and death in people.
- **Detection of WNV**
 - The virus was first isolated in a woman in the West Nile district of Uganda in 1937.
 - It was identified in birds (crows and columbiformes like doves and pigeons) in the Nile delta region in 1953.
 - Before 1997, WNV was not considered pathogenic for birds, but then, a more virulent strain caused the death in Israel of different bird species, presenting signs of encephalitis and paralysis.
- **Preventive measures**
 - This vector-borne disease can be prevented by protecting one-self from mosquito bites.
 - Other steps are wearing clothing that acts as a barrier to exposure to bites, reducing breeding sites, covering water storage containers, eliminating puddles and drainage of places where water accumulates, eliminating unusable containers where water pools, and controlling garbage in yards and gardens.

DAILY MCQs

1. Which of the following operations are related to Indian Navy?
 1. Operations Cactus
 2. operation Parakram

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3. operation Rainbow
Choose the correct answer using the codes below
a) 1 and 2 only b) 1 and 3 only c) 2 and 3 only **d) 1,2 and 3**
2. Assertion (A): West Nile Virus does not transmitted from mother to her child .
Reason(R) : West Nile Virus is a single-stranded RNA virus.
Select the correct answer using the codes given below
a) A and R both are false
b) A is false but R is true
c) A is true and R false
d) A and R both are true but R is not the correct explanation of A
3. World No Tobacco Day is observed every year on which of the Date?
a) 31st MAY b) 1st JUNE c) 30th MAY d) 29th MAY
4. Consider the following statement Technology Development Fund Scheme
1. Technology Development Fund (TDF) has been established to promote self-reliance in defence technology as a part of the 'Make in India' initiative.
2. The scheme is executed by DRDO
Select the incorrect statement/s using the codes given below
a) 1 only b) 2 only c) Both 1 and 2 **d) Neither 1 nor 2**
5. Consider the following statement with regards to green climate fund
1. GCF is accountable to the United Nations.
2. It is guided by the principles and provisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
Which of the above statement/s is /are not correct
a) 1 only b) 2 only c) Both **d) Neither 1 nor 2**
6. Consider the following statement
1. India is the 3rd largest importer of crude oil as well as 3rd largest consumer of Energy resources
2. In the recent context the dependency of India on crude oil is higher than Natural gas
Select the correct statement/s using the codes given below
a) 1 only b) 2 only **c) Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following about the PM Gatishakti Master plan.
1. The PM-Gatishakti is a transformative approach is driven by roads, Railways and Air ports only.
2. It will also include the infrastructure developed by state governments.
Choose the correct statement/s.
a) 1 only **b) 2 only** c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Examine the following statements with reference to The Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act (AMASR), 1958.
1. Section 20A of AMASR Act is prohibit to carry out any construction within the 100m distance of the prohibited area of Monument
2. National Monuments Authority is a statutory body constitution under the AMASR Act.
Select the correct statement using the codes given below
a) 1 only b) 2 only **c) Both 1 and 2** d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the following statements Right to Information Act 2005.
1. The Right to Information act does not apply to constitutional bodies
2. The act applicable to the recipient of government grants.
Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below
(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. Assertion (A): Recently Uttar Pradesh has overtaken Maharashtra to regain its position as India's top sugar producer
Reason (R): Majority of the UP's cane area being planted under a single variety, Co-0238.
a) A is true but R is false
b) A is true and R is the correct Explanation of A
c) A is false and R is true
d) Both A and R are true and R is the correct Explanation of A