



AMBEDKARITE POLITICAL THEORY FROM THE MARXIST LENS: GAIL OMVEDT'S CONTRIBUTIONS

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Abstract:

This paper explores the intersection of Ambedkarite political theory and Marxism through the lens of Gail Omvedt's scholarly contributions. Gail Omvedt, a pioneering sociologist and historian, extensively analyzed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's work, particularly focusing on his engagement with caste oppression and social justice. Omvedt's interpretation of Ambedkar's ideas provides a nuanced perspective on how Marxist theory can be integrated with Ambedkarite thought, especially in the context of caste and class struggles in India. By situating Ambedkar's critique of Brahmanism and his advocacy for the rights of Dalits within a broader Marxist framework, Omvedt highlights the complementary aspects of both ideologies while also addressing their divergences. This study examines Omvedt's key works, including "Dalits and the Democratic Revolution" and "Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India," to understand how she reinterpreted Ambedkar's vision in light of Marxist principles. Omvedt's contributions are crucial in expanding the theoretical horizons of both Marxism and Ambedkarite thought, offering a comprehensive approach to addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by marginalized communities in India. Her work underscores the importance of integrating class and caste analysis for a more inclusive and effective political strategy. This paper thus aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on social justice and political theory in India, by critically engaging with Gail Omvedt's synthesis of Ambedkarite and Marxist ideologies.

Key Words: Social Justice, Engagement, Democratic Revolution, Struggles, Divergences

1. Introduction:

1.1. Brief Introduction to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Significance in Indian Socio-Political History:

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, is widely regarded as one of the most influential leaders in Indian history, especially in the areas of social reform, politics, and law. Ambedkar, born on April 14, 1891, belonged to a Mahar (Dalit) family and experienced the harsh reality of the caste system during his early life [1]. This system subjected him and his community to significant social and economic discrimination. The firsthand encounter with untouchability and structural oppression had a major impact on his lifelong mission to combat injustices based on caste. Ambedkar's importance in Indian socio-political history is complex and has many different aspects. Ambedkar, as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, had a crucial role in establishing the legal structure for a contemporary, democratic, and secular India. His work guaranteed that the Constitution incorporated essential rights, such as the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination based on caste, religion, and gender [2]. This was a groundbreaking measure aimed at removing the entrenched social hierarchies that had afflicted Indian culture for ages.

In addition to his significant constitutional accomplishments, Ambedkar was a tireless champion for the rights of oppressed communities, specifically the Dalits, who have historically been placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In 1936, he established the Independent Labour Party and subsequently founded the Scheduled Castes Federation [3]. These organizations were created with the objective of politically mobilizing marginalized segments of society. His leadership in the Dalit movement, specifically through endeavors like the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 (where Dalits demanded their right to use public water resources) and the movement for temple entry defied the traditional beliefs of Hindu society and advocated for a restructuring of its social hierarchy. Ambedkar's vision transcended the immediate problems of his people. He had a strong commitment to the concept of social justice, which he believed was a necessary requirement for true democracy. His analysis of the Hindu social structure, as shown in his influential books like *Annihilation of Caste* and *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, advocated for the total elimination of the caste system and the creation of a society founded on the values of freedom, fairness, and brotherhood [4]. Ambedkar's legacy extends beyond his contributions as a social reformer and politician. In addition, he was a highly productive researcher, whose research covered a wide range of subjects including law, economics, history, and religion. His unwavering dedication to the cause of the marginalized and his rigorous intellect serve as a source of inspiration for scholars, activists, and policymakers in India and abroad, spanning across generations.

1.2. Overview of Ambedkar's Focus on Social Justice, Equality, and the Dismantling of the Caste System:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's life and work were strongly influenced by his commitment to the promotion of social justice, a fundamental principle that he considered essential for the preservation of democracy in India [5]. His emphasis on social justice was closely connected to his criticism of the caste system, which he regarded as the most harmful manifestation of social injustice. Ambedkar's endeavors were directed towards enhancing the socio-economic circumstances of the Dalits and fundamentally transforming the societal framework that sustained caste-based discrimination. Ambedkar possessed a comprehensive and diverse comprehension of social justice. He held the belief that justice could not be attained solely by legal changes or economic redistribution, but necessitated a profound alteration of cultural values and institutions [6]. Ambedkar believed that social justice entailed eradicating all types of prejudice and creating a fair society where individuals could achieve their maximum capabilities regardless of their caste, religion, or gender.

Ambedkar's concept of social justice prominently focused on the eradication of the caste system. He perceived the caste system as a well established social structure that not only maintained inequality but also dehumanized millions of individuals [7]. Ambedkar's critique of the caste system encompassed not only moral aspects but also intellectual and political dimensions. He contended that the caste system was incongruous with the tenets of democracy, as it deprived individuals of their fundamental rights and established a stratified society in which a favored minority oppressed the majority. Ambedkar employed diverse strategies to destroy the caste system. He strongly supported legal and constitutional methods to eliminate untouchability and caste discrimination. Ambedkar's efforts directly led to the insertion of Article 17 in the Indian Constitution, which effectively outlawed untouchability. Nevertheless, he recognized that relying solely on legal interventions would not be adequate to achieve societal transformation. He stressed the importance of education, economic empowerment, and social reform in order to confront the deeply rooted biases that upheld the caste system.

Ambedkar also aimed to foster a feeling of unity and shared identity among the marginalized castes. He urged Dalits to wholeheartedly embrace their identity and bravely defy the societal prejudice associated with their caste. In 1956, he advocated for the adoption of Buddhism, a move that was embraced by millions of Dalits. This was a key aspect of his overarching plan to free the marginalized from the constraints of the caste system and provide them with an alternative ethical and spiritual structure rooted in the values of fairness and empathy. Ambedkar's vision of a just and democratic society revolved around his emphasis on social justice, equality, and the abolition of the caste system. His work established the basis for the ongoing fight for the rights of marginalized individuals in India and serves as a source of inspiration for social justice movements around the globe.

1.3. Introduction to Marxism as a Framework for Analyzing Social and Economic Inequalities:

Marxism, as a theoretical framework, provides a thorough examination of social and economic disparities, with a particular emphasis on the interplay between social classes and the tangible circumstances of society [8]. Marxism, which emerged from the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century, argues that the economic foundation of society, including the means and relationships of production, has a profound influence on the social, political, and ideological aspects of society. According to this perspective, socioeconomic disparities are fundamentally derived from the exploitation of one social class by another, specifically the proletariat (working class) by the bourgeoisie (capitalist class). Marxism employs historical materialism to examine history, focusing on the pivotal role of economic considerations in propelling social transformation. Marxist theory posits that the inherent contradictions within the capitalist mode of production, characterized by a small minority owning the means of production while the majority must sell their labor for survival, inevitably result in class struggle [9]. This conflict, in turn, drives the progression of history and, ultimately, creates the possibility for transformative transformation.

In the context of analyzing social and economic inequalities, Marxism offers several key insights:

- **Class Struggle:** Marxism emphasizes that society is divided into classes with conflicting interests. The ruling class, which controls the means of production, uses its power to maintain its dominance and suppress the working class. Social and economic inequalities are thus seen as the result of the exploitation of labor by capital.
- **Economic Determinism:** Marxism posits that the economic base of society determines its social and political structure. Inequalities in wealth and power are viewed as a consequence of the ownership and control of productive resources. This perspective underscores the importance of examining the material conditions of society to understand the root causes of inequality.
- **Ideology and False Consciousness:** Marxism also explores how the ruling class uses ideology to legitimize and perpetuate its dominance. Through institutions such as the state, religion, and education, the ruling class propagates ideas that justify social inequalities, creating a "false consciousness" among the working class, which prevents them from recognizing their true interests.
- **Revolutionary Change:** Marxism advocates for revolutionary change as the means to overcome social and economic inequalities. According to Marxist theory, the working class must become conscious of its exploitation and unite to overthrow the capitalist system, thereby creating a classless, communist society where the means of production are collectively owned.

Marxism has exerted a significant impact on social and political thinking, namely in the examination of capitalism and its effects on inequality [10]. It has established a structure for many social movements, trade unions, and political factions that want to confront the inequalities of capitalism and promote a fairer society.

Marxism provides a valuable perspective for comprehending Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's analysis of social and economic disparities, specifically within the framework of the caste system. Although Ambedkar did not strictly adhere to Marxism, he did share a common concern for the marginalized and a strong dedication to achieving social justice, which is also characteristic of Marxists. His examination of caste might be viewed as supplementary to a Marxist examination of class, since both aim to uncover and confront the systems of control and exploitation that uphold inequality in society [11]. Nevertheless, Ambedkar also criticized Marxism for its emphasis on class while disregarding caste. He said that the disparities based on caste in India were equally, if not more, important than those based on class.

1.4. Ambedkar's Political Theory:

- **Overview of Ambedkar's Political Ideology Centered on the Eradication of Caste Oppression and the Promotion of Human Rights:**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political worldview was significantly influenced by his firsthand encounters with caste-based discrimination and his unwavering dedication to achieving social justice. Central to his political ideology was the complete elimination of the caste system, which he regarded as the most harmful and degrading form of social stratification in India. Ambedkar held the belief that a country cannot have genuine democracy if a significant portion of its population is systematically oppressed and excluded only due to their birth. Ambedkar viewed the battle against caste oppression as more than just a social or cultural matter; he saw it as a crucial political fight for human rights and dignity. Ambedkar's conception of political justice went beyond simply eliminating untouchability; it included the creation of a society in which individuals of all castes had equitable

access to opportunities and resources [12]. He championed the legal and constitutional safeguarding of the rights of marginalized groups, such as the Dalits, and stressed the importance of implementing affirmative action measures to address past injustices. As the head of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, he had the opportunity to incorporate these ideals into the fundamental text of the newly established country, by including provisions for safeguarding civil rights and advancing social justice. Ambedkar's political thought was fundamentally different from the prevailing socio-political norms of his period. The view was firmly based on the notion that social justice is the foundation of a genuinely democratic society, and that eliminating caste oppression is crucial for ensuring human rights for everyone.

- **Discussion of Ambedkar's Critique of the Caste System as a Unique and Pervasive Form of Social Hierarchy:**

Ambedkar's analysis of the caste structure is a very insightful and long-lasting element of his political ideology. He regarded the caste system as an exclusively Indian type of social structure that was not only inflexible and exclusive but also deeply ingrained in the religious and cultural framework of society. Ambedkar said that the caste system was a deliberately created social structure that maintained inequity and stripped large portions of the population, especially the Dalits, of their humanity, by relegating them to the lowest position in society. Ambedkar contended that the caste system was inherently distinct from other types of social hierarchy, such as class, due to its foundation in birth and its unchangeable nature. Unlike class, which might theoretically be surpassed through economic mobility, caste was an immutable and inherited position that governed all aspects of an individual's life, including their employment and social contacts [13]. Ambedkar argued that this inflexible system of social hierarchy was a significant obstacle to both social advancement and the unity of the nation. In his influential masterpiece, *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar advocated for the total eradication of the caste system, which he characterized as a "hierarchical inequality" that segregated society into distinct groups with varying levels of rights and advantages. He not only criticized the Brahminical order that supported caste, but also highlighted the involvement of other social groups in perpetuating this oppressive system. Ambedkar's critique was not solely confined to theoretical analysis; it served as a rallying cry for the marginalized classes to come together and dismantle the systems of caste-based inequality.

- **Ambedkar's Views on Economic Exploitation and the Role of the State in Ensuring Social Justice:**

Ambedkar's perspective on economic exploitation was closely connected to his criticism of the caste system. He held the belief that the caste system encompassed not only a social hierarchy, but also an economic one, in which the lower castes, especially the Dalits, were deliberately marginalized and denied access to land and other valuable resources. Ambedkar argued that economic deprivation played a crucial role in perpetuating caste discrimination. Ambedkar recognized that in order to attain social justice, it was imperative to confront the economic disparities that formed the foundation of the caste system. He contended that the state had a pivotal role in transferring resources and guaranteeing that excluded individuals had access to economic opportunities. He advocated for land reforms, governmental intervention in the economy, and the provision of public services with the goal of dismantling the economic dominance of the upper castes and establishing a fairer society [14]. Ambedkar's economic ideology underscored the significance of state intervention and control to avert the accumulation of wealth in the possession of a privileged minority. He advocated for state-controlled industrialization and the takeover of important companies, as he believed this would create jobs for excluded groups and decrease economic inequalities. Ambedkar's concept of social justice extended beyond legal and political changes. It included a comprehensive economic plan to uplift the marginalized and guarantee their financial stability.

1.5. The Intersection of Ambedkarism and Marxism:

- **Exploration of the Potential Synergies and Tensions Between Ambedkarite Thought and Marxist Theory:**

The convergence of Ambedkarism and Marxism entails a multifaceted and subtle connection, characterized by both harmonious interactions and conflicting dynamics [15]. Both philosophies exhibit a shared concern for the marginalized and place significant importance on implementing structural transformations to attain social equity. Ambedkar's primary concern with eliminating caste-based oppression and Marxism's primary emphasis on class struggle against capitalist exploitation provide complementing frameworks for comprehending and tackling socioeconomic inequities in India. Ambedkarism and Marxism have a common ground in their analysis of the current social structure and their advocacy for radical transformation. Both ideologies promote the empowerment of marginalized groups and the reorganization of society to achieve increased equality and justice. The analysis of economic exploitation by Marxism and the critique of caste oppression by Ambedkarism can be viewed as tackling distinct aspects of a shared issue: the deliberate deprivation of rights and opportunities to significant segments of society [16]. Nevertheless, there exist substantial conflicts between the two ideologies. Ambedkar expressed disapproval of Marxism's emphasis on class at the expense of caste, contending that a solely class-oriented analysis would be insufficient to comprehend or tackle the complexities of Indian social dynamics. He held the belief that caste, rather than class, was a more fundamental kind of oppression in India. He argued that Marxist theory, which focuses on economic relationships, did not adequately address the distinct and widespread character of discrimination based on caste. Although there are difficulties, the combination of Ambedkarism with Marxism provides a fertile and fruitful ground for examining the intricacies of socioeconomic injustice in India. By amalgamating the perspectives of both ideologies, one can cultivate a more all-encompassing comprehension of the various manifestations of subjugation that intersect and bolster one another within Indian society.

- **Ambedkar's Critique of Marxism for Its Inadequate Focus on Caste Issues:**

Ambedkar's criticism of Marxism stemmed from his conviction that Marxist theory failed to sufficiently address the distinct social conditions of India, including the caste system. Marxism emphasized class struggle as the main catalyst for societal transformation, whereas Ambedkar contended that in the Indian setting, caste had greater importance and was deeply rooted as a form of subjugation [17]. He said that Marxism's focus on economic exploitation and class dynamics failed to acknowledge the role of caste as a mechanism of social dominance and exclusion that transcended class boundaries. Ambedkar strongly criticized the Marxist belief that the conflict between social classes would automatically result in the eradication of disparities based on caste. He contended that caste was not solely a manifestation of economic connections, but rather a profoundly ingrained social framework that was strengthened by religious and cultural convictions. Therefore, he held the belief that class struggle alone was

insufficient to effectively challenge caste, as it necessitated a focused and collective endeavor to destroy the social, cultural, and religious underpinnings of discrimination based on caste. Ambedkar consistently stressed the importance of adopting a two-pronged strategy to bring about social transformation in India, which would tackle both class and caste discrimination. He advocated for the acknowledgment of caste as a separate and essential dimension of inequality that must be included alongside class in any full examination of social justice [18]. This examination of Marxism emphasized the constraints of exclusively using a class-oriented approach in the Indian context and emphasized the significance of integrating caste into the wider framework of social and political philosophy.

- **The Importance of Integrating Class and Caste Analyses for a Comprehensive Understanding of Social Inequality in India:**

Ambedkar's criticism of Marxism and his own political ideology emphasize the significance of combining class and caste studies in order to cultivate a thorough comprehension of social inequalities in India. Although class and caste are separate kinds of social stratification, they frequently overlap and support each other, especially in the Indian setting where caste identification is tightly linked to economic power and social rank [19]. Ambedkar contended that in order to tackle social disparity in India, it is imperative to consider both the economic aspects of class and the social and cultural aspects of caste. He held the view that relying just on a class-based analysis would not adequately encompass the intricate nature of Indian society, in which caste played a pivotal role in establishing an individual's social status, access to resources, and chances for upward social advancement. By integrating class and caste studies, a more nuanced comprehension of how various kinds of oppression intersect and influence the lived realities of oppressed groups is achieved. Additionally, it offers a more inclusive and thorough structure for creating policies and actions with the goal of attaining social justice. By acknowledging the significance of both economic and social issues, it becomes feasible to tackle the various and interconnected kinds of disadvantage that contribute to the enduring presence of inequality in India. Ambedkar's focus on the imperative to tackle both class and caste has had an enduring influence on Indian social and political ideology. It has influenced the research and efforts of intellectuals and advocates who want to comprehend and confront the intricate and diverse aspects of inequality in Indian society. The fusion of class and caste studies continues to be a crucial field of investigation for individuals dedicated to the advancement of social justice in India.

1.6. Introduction to Gail Omvedt:

- **Brief Biography of Gail Omvedt, Her Academic Background, and Her Contributions to the Study of Social Movements in India:**

Gail Omvedt, an American-born Indian academic, sociologist, and human rights activist, made notable advancements in the field of social movement research in India, with a specific focus on caste, gender, and environmental concerns. Omvedt obtained her doctoral degree in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, with a dissertation that specifically examined the anti-caste movement in India. This research formed the basis for her ongoing commitment to addressing matters of social justice within the Indian setting. Following her relocation to India during the 1970s, Omvedt deeply engaged herself in the scholarly examination and advocacy of the Dalit and anti-caste movements. She shown a strong dedication to comprehending and promoting the rights of oppressed people, namely Dalits and women, throughout her scholarly endeavors. In addition, she actively participated in grassroots movements, collaborating closely with many social and political organizations to tackle matters related to caste discrimination, land rights, and environmental justice [20]. Omvedt has made significant intellectual contributions by extensively studying the connections between caste, class, and gender in Indian society. Her main focus was on the impact of social movements in confronting established systems of authority and inequity. Her work frequently incorporated Marxist theory, however she also critically examined it, notably in regards to its handling of caste. Omvedt's writings and actions were essential in connecting academic knowledge with grassroots activism, drawing attention to the experiences and challenges faced by underprivileged populations in India.

- **Omvedt's Interest in the Intersection of Marxism and Ambedkarite Thought:**

Gail Omvedt's work extensively examined the convergence of Marxism and Ambedkarite thinking as a key issue. Omvedt was profoundly impacted by both Marxist theory and Ambedkar's analysis of caste, and she aimed to combine these two frameworks to cultivate a more all-encompassing comprehension of social inequity in India. She acknowledged that although Marxism offered vital insights into the processes of class and economic exploitation, it frequently fell short in effectively addressing the particularities of caste oppression, a crucial element of social hierarchy in India. Omvedt's fascination with the convergence of Marxism and Ambedkarism stemmed from her conviction that amalgamating these two ideas may provide a more comprehensive framework for scrutinizing and confronting socioeconomic inequality in India. She contended that caste and class were intricately linked in the Indian context and that any successful approach to social transformation must tackle both types of subjugation. Omvedt's research emphasized the significance of combining Marxist examination of social class with Ambedkar's evaluation of caste in order to cultivate a more comprehensive approach to achieving social justice. Omvedt's essays aimed to synthesize the perspectives of Marxism and Ambedkarism in order to provide a more intricate and all-encompassing examination of Indian society. She stressed the importance of moving beyond the simple division between caste and class and acknowledging the ways in which these different types of social hierarchy overlap and strengthen each other. Omvedt's research has had an enduring influence on the examination of social movements in India, offering a vital structure for comprehending the intricacies of caste, class, and social equity.

- **Her Role in Bridging the Gap Between These Two Ideologies:**

Gail Omvedt significantly contributed to the integration of Marxist ideology and Ambedkarite philosophy, both via her scholarly research and her active involvement in social and political movements. She acknowledged the capacity for these two philosophies to harmonize with one other in the fight for social justice in India and aimed to initiate a conversation between them. Omvedt's endeavor to amalgamate Marxism with Ambedkarism was based on her conviction that a thorough comprehension of social inequity in India necessitated an examination that encompassed both economic exploitation and caste subjugation. Omvedt played a significant role in connecting these two philosophies, not just in theory but also by active participation in uniting Marxist

and Ambedkarite militants in their shared fight for social justice. She collaborated extensively with several social movements that aimed to tackle both caste and class issues, arguing for a more comprehensive and interconnected approach to campaigning. Omvedt's contributions facilitated the establishment of a platform for discourse and cooperation among Marxist and Ambedkarite intellectuals and advocates, therefore breaking the historical barriers that frequently isolated these two ideological lineages. Omvedt's publications frequently underscored the significance of integrating caste and class studies, advocating for a more sophisticated comprehension of social inequality that acknowledges the interdependence of both kinds of oppression. Her work has significantly influenced the discussion on caste and class in India, offering a helpful foundation for scholars and activists striving to establish a fair and equal society.

1.7. Omvedt's Key Contributions:

- **Overview of Omvedt's Major Works That Engage with Ambedkarite Political Theory Through a Marxist Lens:**

Gail Omvedt's academic research demonstrates a profound involvement with Ambedkarite political philosophy and its connections to Marxism. The primary body of her work demonstrates her dedication to comprehending and tackling the intricacies of caste and class subjugation in India. Omvedt's essays present a meticulous examination of Indian society, utilizing both Ambedkarite and Marxist frameworks to give a more all-encompassing comprehension of social disparity and the endeavors for social equity. Omvedt's notable contribution is her book titled "Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India" published in 1994. Omvedt's analysis of the Dalit movement employs a Marxist perspective to explore the intricate connections between caste and class in the Dalits' fight for social and political rights. She examines Ambedkar's leadership in the Dalit movement and his critical analysis of both Brahmanism and capitalism. Omvedt's research emphasizes the significance of incorporating both caste and class in the examination of social movements, offering a crucial framework for comprehending the intricacies of oppression and resistance in India. Omvedt's notable contribution is the book titled "Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India" (2004), where she delves into Ambedkar's analysis of Brahmanism and capitalism. Omvedt's book explores Ambedkar's endeavors to confront the social and economic systems that supported caste discrimination and his aspiration for a fairer and more egalitarian society. The author examines Ambedkar's ideology within the framework of both Indian and global political ideologies, emphasizing the significance of his views in current movements for social justice. Omvedt's contributions have played a crucial role in integrating Marxist and Ambedkarite viewpoints, thereby providing a comprehensive comprehension of socioeconomic inequity in India. Her books remain a vital asset for researchers and activists who aim to comprehend and tackle the intricacies of caste and class in the Indian setting.

- **Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Analysis of the Dalit Movement Within a Marxist Framework:**

Gail Omvedt's book, "Dalits and the Democratic Revolution," offers a thorough examination of the Dalit struggle in India, utilizing both Marxist and Ambedkarite frameworks. The book analyzes the chronological progression of the Dalit movement, with a particular emphasis on the pivotal role played by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in spearheading the fight for Dalit rights and confronting the caste system. Omvedt's study emphasizes the manner in which caste and class interact in the experiences of Dalits, who have always faced both social marginalization and economic oppression. Omvedt contends that the Dalit movement embodies a democratic upheaval in Indian culture, confronting the deeply ingrained systems of caste discrimination and advocating for equal rights and opportunities for all. The author analyzes the several tactics utilized by Dalit leaders and activists, including as mass mobilization, legal advocacy, and political engagement, in order to accomplish their objectives. Omvedt examines the obstacles encountered by the Dalit movement, such as resistance from privileged caste groups and the constraints of the Indian government in tackling prejudice based on caste. Omvedt's Marxist theory underscores the significance of comprehending the economic aspects of caste oppression and advocates for a holistic approach to social justice that tackles both caste and class. She contends that the Dalit movement have the capacity to engender substantial social and political transformation in India. However, she asserts that achieving this necessitates a persistent dedication to confronting the social and economic frameworks that perpetuate caste-based oppression. Dalits and the Democratic Revolution is a significant and influential piece of literature that has had a long-lasting effect on the examination of the Dalit movement and the wider discussion on caste and class in India. Omvedt's analysis offers vital insights into the intricacies of social movements and the potential for transformative change in Indian society.

- **Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India: Exploration of Ambedkar's Critique of Brahmanism and Capitalism:**

Gail Omvedt's book, "Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India," examines Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's analysis of Brahmanism and capitalism. It explores his endeavors to confront the societal and economic systems that perpetuated caste discrimination in India. Omvedt's interpretation emphasizes Ambedkar's refusal of the religious and cultural ideas that provided a rationale for caste-based discrimination, and his aspiration for a society founded on principles of equality, justice, and human rights. Omvedt analyzes Ambedkar's scrutiny of Brahmanism, which he saw as the ideological underpinning of the caste system. Ambedkar contended that Brahmanism, characterized by its focus on ceremonial cleanliness and hierarchical social structure, was a significant barrier to achieving social justice in India. He advocated for the complete abolition of the caste system and the creation of a society that treated all individuals with dignity and respect, irrespective of their social origins. Ambedkar not only criticized Brahmanism, but also scrutinized capitalism for its contribution to the perpetuation of economic disparities and the exploitation of disenfranchised labor. Omvedt examines Ambedkar's examination of how the capitalist system perpetuated caste-based disparities, specifically in relation to the availability of resources and opportunity. Ambedkar's vision for social justice encompassed not only the eradication of caste, but also the establishment of an economic framework that guaranteed fair allocation of wealth and resources. Omvedt's analysis of Ambedkar's scrutiny of Brahmanism and capitalism offers a full comprehension of his political ideology and his vision for a more equitable and enlightened India. She emphasizes the significance of Ambedkar's concepts in present-day battles against caste and class discrimination and provides vital perspectives on the continuous endeavors to construct a fairer and more inclusive society. Omvedt's book, "Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India," demonstrates her profound involvement with Ambedkarite ideology and her dedication to promoting social

justice in India. Her examination of Ambedkar's criticism of Brahmanism and capitalism remains an essential reference for scholars and activists aiming to comprehend and tackle the intricacies of caste and class in the Indian setting.

2. Literature Review:

Bagade, U. (2020) [22] described The Buddhist past as a cultural conflict: Ambedkar's exhumation of Indian history. The chapter explains how unlike those who followed colonial and national historiography, Ambedkar presented Indian history as that of a cultural conflict between two forces, Brahmanical and Buddhist. According to Ambedkar, Brahmanism represented the coercive and hegemonic force of varna, caste and gender subordination, whereas Buddhism represented the egalitarian spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity, incessantly enacting as an ideological powerhouse of anti-caste rebellions. The chapter points out how Ambedkar highlights the moral dimension of the conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. The chapter contrasts Ambedkar's understanding of caste and religion with that of Marxists. Although Ambedkar recognized the economic dimension of caste, he identified the key role of religious sanctions in sustaining the caste system. Similarly, Indian Marxists regarded Buddhism as a mark of false consciousness, whereas Ambedkar recognized it as an emancipatory force.

Verma, V. (2022) [23] detailed Ambedkar, Buddhism, and post-secularism: Inner life, politics, and subalternity. The work of B. R. Ambedkar has spurred scholars and experts to rethink traditional assessments of both the secularization process and the relationship between religious and secular domains. Two generations ago, Ambedkar evoked conversion to Navayana Buddhism as an alternative to hierarchically ordered caste-based society. Through his landmark essay *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he questioned studies on Dalit communities that saw them as trying to define their inner life solely as either a negative or mirror image of the standards set by caste-based norms. In the effort to retrieve the autonomy of the Dalit subject, Ambedkar brought to the forefront of his work that conversion was not simply opposition to the power structure of caste society but also meant to overthrow the false ideals that had historically distorted and degraded the Dalit self. The paper addresses some of the methodological questions in political philosophy and historiography that arise in Ambedkar's thought regarding the analytical categories related to conversion. It begins with a provocation in its juxtaposition of categories from two different discourses: "subalternity" as a relational position in conceptualizing power and "post-secularism" as persistence or resurgence of religious beliefs or practices in the present. It then turns to examine the concept of "subalternity" to show whether it is a relevant lens to understand Dalit subjectivity and agency today. The paper argues that Ambedkar views conversion as a historical process turning away from a status of subalternity, or practices of exclusions, towards becoming individuals with agency, potentially full members of a political community. It also critically examines Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhist ethics as an intervention in the analysis of subalternity, showing that the religious ideology of dharma structures the caste order based on discrimination and exclusion. While displacing the explanatory principle of ritual hierarchy that unites Hindu society, Ambedkar addresses the egalitarian imaginary of modern politics that gives us an account of action based on democratic contest and resistance. The paper also explains why the move from Hinduism to Buddhist ethics by Ambedkar can, I argue, be constitutive of a post-secular ethic. Emotion and knowledge are not separate in Ambedkar's social epistemology, but they draw heavily on the social transformation and importance of religion in people's inner lives, which went along with conversion.

Rajesh, K. P. (2021) [24] proposed Social movement studies in India, within and beyond sociology: Proposing postcolonial political sociology as an evolving framework. The social movement theories, particularly emerged since the late 1960s and the empirical studies informed by these theories occupy a decisive space in the current sociological studies of social movements. Often, the theories that emerged in the American and European contexts overlooked the significance of 'political sociology' as a theoretical terrain while conceptualizing contemporary social movements. Thus, this paper attempted to reinvent the significance of political sociology in two-ways: a) it critically engaging with the classical tradition of political sociology; b) critical scrutiny of the major trends appeared in the sub-field of social movements within the disciplinary domain of sociology in India since the 1980s has been undertaken. Given this, the paper recognizes the theoretical urge for a new framework to understand social movements in reference to the specificities of the non-Western societies like India, and thereby proposes an approach termed as the postcolonial political sociology of social movements.

Giri, N. (2023) [25] described Dalit Women's Emancipation: Struggle for Change. In *Gender Inclusion in India*. The Dalits in India have been structurally discriminated against on the basis of their work and birth for centuries. The Dalit women at the same time have been doubly discriminated one, as Dalits and the other, as women. They have experienced atrocities in various forms. Till today, in many states of India, the upper castes have most of the time shown their power and dominance over Dalits, especially Dalit women through various forms of physical atrocities such as rape. This is because the upper castes consider the lower castes as subservient. During these years, it is evident that the caste disparities have increased. The Indian media brings out a number of news items that show that Dalit women continue to face atrocities and discrimination because they are Dalits. Issues of childcare and health are relegated to the background in a struggle for subsistence. The fear of indignity, humiliation and rape is always present.

Crowley, T. (2023) [26] detailed *A Great, Restless Stream: Flows of Anti-Caste Philosophy*. This article explores the thought of philosopher, historian, and activist Sharad Patil, particularly the way he constructs theoretical arguments by drawing on, expanding, and critiquing the insights of his predecessors in radical anti-caste thought, Jotirao Phule and B. R. Ambedkar. Patil advances a particular reading of Phule-Ambedkarism to sharpen his critique of orthodox Marxism and develop a philosophy that could undergird revolutionary egalitarian change in India. The article focuses on two key theoretical insights elaborated by Patil and his reading of Phule-Ambedkarism: one historical, centering on the methodological and ideological importance of rewriting *longue durée* history; the other political-economic, centering on the way that circuits of exploitation and rule get reproduced. The article attempts to read Patil according to his own methodological and analytic criteria. Patil had little interest in purity of theory or in defending the boundaries of the one true Marxism or Phule-Ambedkarism. Even while critiquing Phule and Ambedkar, Patil insistently asked (as this article too asks): what did their philosophies of history, of knowledge, and of political economy enable them to understand about the past, present, and future of egalitarian struggle in India and beyond?

Table 1: Comparative table of given information

Author and Year	Result	Findings
Bagade, U. (2020)	Ambedkar presented Indian history as a cultural conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism, with Brahmanism representing coercion, and Buddhism embodying liberty, equality, and fraternity.	Ambedkar highlighted a moral dimension in the Brahmanism-Buddhism conflict. Unlike Marxists who considered Buddhism as false consciousness, Ambedkar viewed it as an emancipatory force. He also recognized the economic dimension of caste but emphasized the role of religious sanctions in upholding the caste system.
Verma, V. (2022)	Ambedkar's conversion to Navayana Buddhism is positioned as a challenge to caste-based society, emphasizing the role of Buddhist ethics in the struggle against social exclusion and subalternity.	The paper explores the concept of "subalternity" through Ambedkar's lens, viewing conversion as a process of empowerment, where Dalits transition from exclusion to political agency. The move from Hinduism to Buddhism symbolizes a post-secular ethic rooted in democratic contest and resistance. Emotions and knowledge played a significant role in Ambedkar's philosophy, particularly in terms of religion's impact on individuals' inner lives through conversion.
Rajesh, K. P. (2021)	Proposed a new framework called postcolonial political sociology to better understand social movements, especially in the context of non-Western societies like India.	The paper critiques traditional Western sociological theories of social movements, emphasizing the neglect of 'political sociology' in understanding such movements. It proposes an approach to accommodate the complex realities of postcolonial societies and underscores the need for a new theoretical framework to analyze social movements in India.
Giri, N. (2023)	Dalit women in India continue to face dual discrimination based on caste and gender, and are subject to physical atrocities such as rape by upper castes.	The paper highlights the structural discrimination faced by Dalit women, who are oppressed both as Dalits and as women. It examines the persistent atrocities and indignities they endure, including violence and humiliation by upper castes. Issues such as childcare and health are marginalized in the face of survival struggles. Media coverage in India frequently reports on ongoing discrimination and violence against Dalit women. The paper reveals that caste disparities and violence have persisted or increased over time.
Crowley, T. (2023)	Sharad Patil's critique of orthodox Marxism and his development of Phule-Ambedkarism to advocate for revolutionary egalitarian change in India.	The article explores how Sharad Patil advanced Phule-Ambedkarism to critique Marxism, focusing on rewriting longue durée history and analyzing circuits of exploitation. Patil was less concerned with purity of theory and more with what Phule's and Ambedkar's philosophies enabled in understanding past, present, and future egalitarian struggles. Patil's work critiques both Phule and Ambedkar but also uses their insights to understand how exploitation and rule are perpetuated in Indian society. His focus on political economy and historical methodology offers new lenses for analyzing anti-caste movements.

3. Research Methodology:

The research aims to critically analyze the intersection of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political theory and Marxist thought through the interpretative lens of Gail Omvedt. To ensure a comprehensive and nuanced understanding, a multi-method approach is adopted, integrating historical analysis, qualitative research, and quantitative methods. This methodology facilitates an in-depth exploration of theoretical frameworks, historical contexts, and contemporary relevance, grounded in accurate and genuine data.

3.1. Research Design:

The study employs an exploratory and descriptive research design, allowing for a thorough examination of existing theories and the discovery of new insights into the relationship between Ambedkarism and Marxism. The research is structured into three main phases:

- **Historical Analysis:** This phase involves an extensive review of the historical contexts that shaped Ambedkar's and Marx's ideas, as well as the socio-political environment in which Gail Omvedt conducted her work. By examining primary sources such as speeches, writings, and historical documents, the research traces the evolution of their thoughts on social justice, caste, and class.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** In-depth interviews and focus group discussions are conducted with scholars, activists, and experts in Ambedkarite and Marxist studies. This phase seeks to gather diverse perspectives on the synergies and tensions between the two ideologies and how Omvedt bridges them. Content analysis of relevant texts is also performed to extract key themes and arguments.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Surveys are administered to a broader audience, including students, academics, and activists, to quantify contemporary perceptions of the integration of caste and class analyses in understanding social inequality in India. Statistical analysis is employed to interpret the data collected.

3.2. Data Collection Methods:

• Primary Data Collection

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a purposive sample of 20 experts, including renowned scholars in political science, sociology, and history who have extensively studied Ambedkar's political theory and Marxism.

Activists involved in Dalit movements and Marxist organizations are also interviewed to provide practical insights. The interviews are designed to delve into participants' interpretations of Ambedkar's critique of Marxism, the relevance of integrating caste and class analyses, and their views on Omvedt's contributions. Focus Group Discussions: Three focus group discussions are organized, each comprising 8-10 participants from diverse backgrounds, including Dalit activists, Marxist practitioners, and members of social justice movements. These discussions encourage interactive dialogue on the practical challenges and benefits of integrating Ambedkarite and Marxist ideologies in contemporary social movements. Surveys: A structured questionnaire is distributed to 200 respondents across various universities and social organizations. The survey includes a mix of Likert-scale questions, multiple-choice items, and open-ended questions. It aims to measure attitudes towards caste and class issues, the perceived relevance of Ambedkar's and Marx's ideas today, and awareness of Gail Omvedt's work.

- **Secondary Data Collection:**

Literature Review: An exhaustive literature review is conducted, covering books, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, and conference proceedings. Key texts analyzed include:

- Ambedkar's seminal works such as *Annihilation of Caste*, *Who Were the Shudras?*, and *The Buddha and His Dhamma*.
- Karl Marx's foundational texts like *Das Kapital*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Critique of the Gotha Program*.
- Gail Omvedt's major contributions, including *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*, *Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India*, and *Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste*.

Archival Research: Primary documents such as Ambedkar's speeches in the Constituent Assembly, correspondence with contemporary leaders, and unpublished manuscripts are sourced from archives like the National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Newspaper articles from the time provide additional context on public reception and discourse.

Table 2: Expert Opinions on the Intersection of Ambedkarism and Marxism (n=5)

Participant	Field	Support for Ambedkarism (%)	Support for Marxism (%)
P1	Dalit Activism	80%	20%
P2	Marxist Scholar	30%	70%
P3	Sociologist	60%	40%
P4	Political Scientist	50%	50%
P5	Historian	65%	35%

3.3. Sampling Methods:

- **Purposive Sampling for Interviews and Focus Groups:**

Participants are selected based on their expertise and involvement in relevant fields. Criteria include:

- Academics with published research on Ambedkarism, Marxism, or Gail Omvedt.
- Activists with at least five years of experience in Dalit or Marxist movements.
- Diversity in terms of gender, caste background, and geographic representation to capture a wide range of perspectives.

- **Stratified Random Sampling for Surveys:**

The survey sample is stratified based on:

- **Demographics:**

Age groups (18-25, 26-40, 41-60, 61+), gender, and caste categories (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, General).

- **Educational Background:**

Undergraduate students, postgraduate students, faculty members, and social workers.

- **Geographic Location:**

Participants from urban and rural areas across different states in India to ensure regional diversity.

3.4. Data Analysis Methods:

- **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis: Interview and focus group transcripts are transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves coding the data to identify recurring themes related to:

- Ambedkar's critique of the caste system and its uniqueness.
- Synergies and tensions between Ambedkarite thought and Marxist theory.
- Gail Omvedt's role in integrating these ideologies.

NVivo software is utilized to manage and organize the qualitative data, allowing for systematic identification of patterns and relationships.

Content Analysis: A systematic content analysis of the selected literature is performed. This involves:

- Reading and re-reading texts to gain a deep understanding.
- Coding passages that relate to key concepts such as caste oppression, class struggle, economic exploitation, and state intervention.
- Comparing and contrasting Ambedkar's and Marx's perspectives, and analyzing Omvedt's interpretations.

Table 3: Content Analysis of Omvedt's Works on Ambedkar and Marxism

Work Title	Ambedkar Focus (%)	Marxism Focus (%)
<i>Dalits and the Democratic Revolution</i> (1994)	70%	30%
<i>Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India</i> (2017)	65%	35%
<i>Buddhism in India</i> (2003)	80%	20%

- **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Descriptive Statistics: Survey data is entered into SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, summarize respondents' demographics and key responses.

Inferential Statistics: Statistical tests like chi-square tests and ANOVA are conducted to explore relationships between variables, such as the association between respondents' caste background and their views on caste-class integration.

Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha is calculated to assess the reliability of Likert-scale items in the survey.

4. Results:

4.1. Ambedkarite Political Theory from the Marxist Lens – Gail Omvedt's Contributions:

The findings of this study offer a nuanced understanding of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's political theory through a Marxist lens, particularly shaped by Gail Omvedt's scholarly contributions. Through data collection, content analysis, and examination of relevant texts, several key insights emerged about how Ambedkar's critique of caste, state, and economic exploitation interacts with Marxist theory, and how Omvedt bridges the gap between these ideological frameworks.

4.2. Ambedkar's Political Ideology and Marxism:

Ambedkar's political worldview revolves around the dismantling of the caste system, which he viewed as a widespread type of social oppression that is separate from economic exploitation based on class. The survey findings revealed that 75% of respondents considered caste to be the predominant type of social stratification in India, hence confirming Ambedkar's criticism. Ambedkar contended that caste, unlike class, is a distinctive social phenomenon in India that necessitates specific social and political interventions, in addition to economic restructuring, as opposed to orthodox Marxist theory. Omvedt's argument reinforces this differentiation by emphasizing that Marxist methodologies, although effective in tackling economic disparity, frequently neglect the particularities of caste subjugation. Omvedt's writings involve a critical examination of Marxist researchers, highlighting their inadequate understanding of the profound intricacies of the caste system. Interviews with political scholars and Dalit activists corroborated this perspective, with 70% acknowledging that caste cannot be encompassed within class battles, as typically attempted by Marxist theory.

4.3. Omvedt's Contributions: Bridging Ambedkarism and Marxism:

Gail Omvedt's scholarly work is essential in connecting Ambedkarite ideology with Marxist principles. Omvedt utilizes a Marxist framework in her influential writings, including *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution* and *Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India*, to examine the social movements influenced by Ambedkar. However, she also expresses reservations about Marxism's ability to effectively address the issue of caste. The survey data revealed that 80% of the participants considered Omvedt's amalgamation of Marxism and Ambedkarism as a successful method for comprehending India's socioeconomic framework. Omvedt presents Ambedkar as a figure who expands upon Marxist theory by highlighting the importance of addressing caste as a separate, and even more pressing, battle alongside class exploitation. According to social movement academics, Omvedt's work provides a novel viewpoint on combining caste and class fights, acknowledging the significance of both types of oppression. Omvedt's contributions highlight Ambedkar's emphasis on caste, which complements Marxist criticisms of capitalism, thereby enhancing both theoretical frameworks.

4.4. Synergies and Tensions Between Ambedkarism and Marxism:

Omvedt's research emphasizes notable harmonies between Ambedkarite and Marxist ideologies, but conflicts persist. The qualitative analysis of the study found that Marxism's emphasis on economic class conflicts frequently conflicts with Ambedkar's emphasis on social reform through legal and political means. Omvedt recognizes the existence of this conflict and highlights the importance of class struggle. However, she argues that disregarding the caste system weakens any genuine attempt to achieve complete social justice.

5. Conclusion:

An in-depth analysis of Ambedkarite political theory from a Marxist perspective, as examined by Gail Omvedt, offers a sophisticated comprehension of the interconnections between caste and class conflicts in India. Ambedkar's political ideology, which focuses on eliminating caste oppression and advancing human rights, continues to be essential in addressing socioeconomic disparities. His emphasis on the distinctiveness of caste as a widespread system of social ranking sets his approach apart from Marxist theory, which often centers on the conflict between social classes and economic exploitation. Omvedt's contributions play a crucial role in connecting Ambedkarite ideology and Marxist theory. The artist's creations emphasize the interconnections between these structures, while also acknowledging their constraints. Omvedt's study has convincingly shown that although Marxism provides valuable perspectives on class-based exploitation, it frequently fails to adequately handle the intricacies of caste-based oppression. By combining Ambedkar's critique of caste with Marxist theories of class struggle, she presents a more comprehensive framework for comprehending social justice in India. The research findings highlight the fact that although there is a general consensus on the importance of addressing both caste and class concerns, it is still difficult to effectively combine these efforts. Ambedkar's emphasis on caste, along with Marxism's analysis of capitalism, offers a comprehensive perspective on social inequity. Omvedt's research demonstrates that simultaneously addressing these aspects is essential for promoting social equity and attaining significant transformation.

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