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Vasmat Road Parbhani, Maharashtra (India)

Email : [shrishiprakashan2009@gmail.com](mailto:shrishiprakashan2009@gmail.com) / [siddhiprakashan674@gmail.com](mailto:siddhiprakashan674@gmail.com)

Mob : +91-9623979067



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Special Issue

PUNYASHLOK AHILYADEVI HOLKAR  
SOLAPUR UNIVERSITY, SOLAPUR  
School of Social Sciences

&  
Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Chair

Under

PM-USA Grant For

Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities

Organizes

MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On

### “The Mind That Moved Millions: Unfolding The Global Relevance of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar”

- Editor in Chief -

Prof. Gautam Kamble

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**:: Editor in Chief ::**

**Prof. Gautam Kamble**

Conference Chair & Director, School of Social Sciences, P.A.H. Solapur University, Solapur,  
Maharashtra

**:: Editor ::**

**Dr. Prabhakar Kolekar**

Convenor & HOD, AIHC Archaeology, School of Social Sciences, P.A.H. Solapur University  
Solapur, Maharashtra

**Address for Correspondence**

**Editor in Chief : Mrs. Pallavi Laxman Shete Website: www.wiidrj.com**  
 Ramkrishna Nagar near Ganpati Mandir Vasmat Road Parbhani (India –Maharashtra)  
**Email:** siddhiprakashan674@gmail.com / Shrishprakashan2009@gmil.com  
**Mob. No:** +91-9623979067 **Director : Mr. Tejas Rampurkar, Hyderabad.**  
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# Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Foreign Policy Perspective

**Gurav Santosh Umakant**

Research Student (Political Science) School Of Social Science's PAHSUS

**Dr. Vishwanath Mahadev Awad**

Research Guide (Political Science) Shankarrao Mohite Mahavidyala, Akhuj

## Abstract

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's foreign policy perspective represents a unique blend of realism, constitutionalism, and moral internationalism shaped by his deep understanding of economics, geopolitics, and human rights. Although he was not India's External Affairs Minister, Ambedkar played a pivotal role in shaping early post-independence debates on defence, international labour laws, regional security, and India's strategic positioning in a rapidly changing global environment. His foreign policy thought, rooted in democratic values and socio-economic justice, emphasized that a nation's international standing depends primarily on its internal stability, social equality, and economic strength.

Ambedkar approached foreign relations through a pragmatic lens, cautioning against romanticism in international diplomacy. He advocated for a strong national defence, arguing that India's geographical vulnerabilities and historical experiences required a modernized military and a stable security doctrine. His speeches in the Constituent Assembly and in the Viceroy's Executive Council highlighted the importance of maintaining strategic autonomy while building cooperative relations with global powers, especially in the context of World War II and emerging Cold War tensions.

Equally significant was Ambedkar's engagement with international labour and economic institutions. As Labour Member, he contributed to India's active participation in the International Labour Organization (ILO), strengthening India's global role in framing labour rights, social security systems, and workers' welfare standards. His global vision also extended to the rights of minorities and oppressed groups, asserting that international human rights norms should inspire domestic constitutional guarantees.

Ambedkar's foreign policy perspective, therefore, combines internal nation-building with an outward-looking commitment to democratic values, human rights, and economic modernization. His pragmatic insights into defence, labour diplomacy, and global justice continue to provide a valuable framework for understanding India's role in the international arena and its pursuit of a stable, just, and strategically secure future.

**Keywords:** Foreign, Policy, Diplomacy, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

## Introduction

The architect of the Indian Constitution, a great personality who constantly tried and laid the foundation for social and economic democracy in India, and who made ideological contributions to India in various fields such as social, political, economic, educational, agricultural, and law. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was an all-round personality. He did not touch upon any subject related to India and Indian society. Not a single subject was left out. Babasaheb was not only a thinker or philosopher who formulated ideological ideas, but he was a great man of action. Foreign policy was his last concern. He has expressed his thoughts on foreign policy very clearly.

After India gained independence, the last important subject that connects India with the world is foreign policy. Foreign policy is seen as a means of achieving economic interests. Due to this, it has gained more importance. Pandit Nehru is seen as the architect of Indian foreign policy because he was also the Foreign Minister for almost a decade and a half, along with being the Prime Minister. Mahatma Gandhi also considered Nehru as his guru on foreign policy, but during this period, the only one who strongly criticized Nehru's foreign policy was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on foreign policy were mainly realistic and professional. He said that foreign

policy should not be based on ideology or emotion. His foreign policy gave priority to national interests along with moral values, which is why he has mentioned some important guiding principles regarding foreign policy in Article 51 of the Indian Constitution. He felt that India's international relations or relations with other nations should not be considered in foreign policy alone, but that India's internal problems should also be considered in it. That is, Dr. Ambedkar felt that along with taking care of external security, it should be considered whether the issues of internal security are being solved through foreign policy.

How does our foreign policy affect our treasury? While saying this, he says that we earn Rs 350 crores in taxes every year and out of that we spend about Rs 180 crores on the army. This huge expenditure is a direct result of our foreign policy. While studying India's foreign policy, Babasaheb's special focus was on how India would become a superpower. Although Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was against non-alignment, he was insistent that the freedom of decision in foreign policy should remain intact. During the Second World War, the Viceroy had declared that India supported England without considering the opinion of the Indians. At that time, Dr. Ambedkar criticized his policy and said that it was necessary for you to consider the opinion of the Indians. We must have freedom of decision in foreign policy and you should not take our decisions.

While studying Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts on foreign policy, he also expressed strong views on foreign relations between America, China, and Pakistan. It will be necessary to review them.

### **Keywords**

Establishing, permanent, international, non-alignment, Pakistan, Kashmir, China

### **Objectives**

- 1) To study Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's foreign policy towards China.
- 2) To study Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's foreign policy towards America.
- 3) To study Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's foreign policy towards Pakistan.

### **Hypothesis**

- 1) Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's perspective on foreign policy seems realistic.
- 2) It is seen that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has not only considered America and China but also the countries of the East regarding foreign policy.

### **Explanation**

#### **Thoughts on America:-**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had a special inclination towards America. He was of the opinion that America could be important to India from a defence as well as economic and trade perspective. He had strongly argued that establishing trade relations or trade partnership with America could be beneficial. India needed permanent membership of the United Nations Council to influence international politics. That could be obtained through America's friendship. That is why Babasaheb was insistent on establishing friendly relations with America. The then US President Eisenhower had also said that there was a need for an ally in Asia after World War II. He tried to get closer to China, but after 1949, when China adopted communist ideology, America turned its attention to India. In this regard, the American President had also written a letter to Nehru regarding friendship, but it must be said that Dr. Ambedkar was not as farsighted as others. Today, India is trying hard for this same membership. But it must be remembered that Dr. Ambedkar had thought of all these at that time.

Dr. Ambedkar, while expressing his thoughts regarding friendship with America, said that one should not only think of European or Western countries but also Eastern countries. India has cultural relations with Eastern countries like India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia. Therefore, India needs to build ties with them. For this, Dr. Ambedkar had demanded at that time that India should target the countries of Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. Later, in this region, a US-sponsored group called the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SOETO) was formed. America wanted India to become a member of this group. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also wanted India to accept the membership of this group because this would create India's dominance in the Southeast Asian region. But at that time, India rejected it. Later, these same countries proposed to form the ASEAN organization and accept

India's membership. But India rejected this proposal once again. Today, for the past thirty years, India has been making progress to become a member of this organization. But it is not possible for India. The reality was already stated by Babasaheb earlier.

#### **Thoughts on China:-**

How should foreign relations with China be? While expressing his opinion on this, Babasaheb used to say that China is a very cunning nation. India cannot remain oblivious to this nation and should not even try to be friends with China from an idealistic perspective. Nehru had a kind of cooperative role with China at that time. At that time, India had demanded that China become a member of the United Nations, on which Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had strongly criticized. Later, when the Panchsheel policy prepared by India in 1954 regarding China was discussed in the Parliament, Babasaheb had also criticized it there. He had said that the Panchsheel policy is an integral part of Buddhism. But this policy does not seem to be being implemented by China. If China is doing injustice to the Tibetan people, then they should not adopt such a Panchsheel policy.

What is the right? Babasaheb always had questions about Nehru's role in foreign policy. China is a country full of contradictions. Because China considers itself a Buddhist nation and treats the Buddhists in Tibet unfairly. Therefore, India should adopt a very realistic approach towards China. Babasaheb was of the clear opinion that a lot of thought should be given to signing a peace treaty with this country. Even today, this doubt increases because of the context. Because China objected to the issue of declaring Maulana Ashar Masood, the main architect of the Pathankot attack, as a terrorist in the United Nations and used its veto power and made a decision against India. China has always opposed India's name to get permanent membership in the Security Council. On one hand, China is doing things for peace, while on the other hand, it is doing acts of sabotage. This alone makes it clear that China is not a country to be trusted. Babasaheb had said this long ago.

#### **Regarding Pakistan and Kashmir:-**

Babasaheb's views on Pakistan and Kashmir were very clear. Half of the expenditure on defence is a direct result of our foreign policy. Babasaheb said that since we have strong relations with neighbouring countries, there is a need to spend more on defense. Babasaheb looked at the Kashmir issue from the social and economic perspective of India. When the communal riots took place in India in 1940, what was the nature of the Hindu-Muslim issues, what was the reason for the conflict and what should we do to reduce it? Galor had written a great book, Pakistan and Partition of India, but Babasaheb's ideas about solving the Hindu-Muslim issue were not implemented. Due to this, India had to face partition in 1947. Babasaheb had taken an important solution to resolve the Kashmir issue, but the rulers ignored it and it has continued to fester till date. According to Dr. Ambedkar, Kashmir is a predominantly mixed state. Jammu is Hindu, Ladakh is war-torn while Kashmir Valley is Muslim-majority. To solve this issue, he clearly said that Kashmir should be divided and the Hindu-Buddhist part should be added to India and the Muslim-majority part should be added to Pakistan. In reality, Kashmir has no connection with the Muslim part, so the issue should be resolved by the Muslims there and Pakistan. If it is desired, Kashmir should be divided into three parts - war-torn area, Kashmir Valley and Jammu and Ladakh - and a referendum should be held. If this had happened, this issue would have been resolved long ago, but due to the stubbornness of the then ruler, it has been going on till date and India is spending crores of rupees on it in the name of defence. Due to the Kashmir issue continuing to fester, India-Pakistan relations have become extremely tense. If the India-Pakistan border issue had been presented in the same manner as the one mentioned above, the border dispute between India and Pakistan could have ended.

#### **Summary:-**

In Babasaheb's overall foreign policy thinking, the idea of peace was of great importance. Along with foreign relations, the internal security system was also important. It is strongly felt today. If India wants to achieve economic development, it is necessary to resolve the Kashmir issue, the India-Pakistan border dispute and the India-China border dispute through peaceful means. Steps of Time

Babasaheb felt that we should formulate our foreign policy by recognizing it. He had such foresight. Today, India feels that this same thought is very much needed while formulating its foreign policy.

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