

# Economic Justice: Budhas Vision and the Path of Dr B R Ambedkar

Dr K.S.Kannan

*M.A, M.A, M.A, M.Ed, PGDCA, Ph.D, School Assistant in Social Studies, ZPHS (B), V Kota, Chittoor District, Department of School Education, AP*

**Abstract-** This article compares Gautama Buddha's moral-economic vision with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's structural-economic pathway. The Buddhist Sangha's framework of collective welfare, ethical livelihood, moderation, and voluntary sharing was the foundation of a non-hierarchical, compassionate economic order. By transforming economic justice into constitutional responsibility through state socialism, public ownership, land redistribution, and enforceable economic rights, Ambedkar addressed the unique reality of caste-driven poverty. The study argues that institutional enforcement and ethical awakening are essential for true economic justice. In a modern case study of a teacher-led digital inclusion initiative, the combined economic justice mo

**Keywords:** Economic Justice, Social Equality, Wealth Redistribution, Middle Path Economics, Compassion-based Economy, State Socialism, Public Ownership, Land Reform, Human Dignity, Non-exploitation, Inclusive Development, Poverty Eradication, Social Mobility, Constitutional Economic Rights.

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## I.INTRODUCTION

Economic justice is a moral imperative rooted in the dignity and equality of all human beings. The idea resonates powerfully in the teachings of the Enlightened One, Gautama Buddha, who envisioned a society free from suffering caused by greed, inequality and exploitation. His philosophy emphasized ethical economics based on compassion, moderation and collective well-being through principles such as right livelihood, non-possessiveness and social harmony.

Centuries later, the pursuit of economic justice found a transformative and pragmatic roadmap in the thought and action of India's great social reformer and constitutional architect, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who dedicated his life to dismantling structural inequality. As the chief architect of the Constitution of India and the founding leader of the emancipatory movement for the oppressed, he translated the vision of equality into legal and economic realities. Through land reforms, labour rights, state-led economic planning, social welfare policies and reservation frameworks, he laid down a revolutionary path towards economic empowerment of marginalized communities.

While Buddha articulated economic justice as a spiritual and ethical responsibility to alleviate suffering, Ambedkar approached it as a constitutionally guaranteed right and policy-driven mission to achieve social and economic democracy. Together, their visions converge on a central goal a just economy that uplifts the deprived, ensures equitable access to resources, and builds a humane society anchored in liberty, equality and fraternity.

## II.HISTORICAL ROOTS OF ECONOMIC INJUSTICE IN INDIA

The ancient Indian economic order was productive yet socially restrictive. The Caste System enforced an inherited labor system, limited ownership rights, and denied economic freedom to large sections of society. Land and capital historically remained in the hands of a privileged few, while occupations were forced by birth. Graded inequality created an economic structure where mobility was structurally blocked. This type of economic injustice necessitated reform beyond

charity, demanding moral as well as constitutional transformation.

### III. BUDDHA'S ECONOMIC VISION

Gautama Buddha envisioned the cessation of suffering (dukkha) as the basis of human progress. His teachings laid a moral economy model rejecting both wealth-based and birth-based hierarchy. Core principles such as Samma Ajiva (Right Livelihood) urged followers to earn without harming or exploiting others. The Middle Path (Madhyama Marga) advocated moderation avoiding extreme poverty and extreme accumulation of wealth. Within the Buddhist Sangha, resources including shelter, clothing, and food were redistributed voluntarily and collectively, creating dignity-centered welfare without ownership-driven dominance.

#### Dr B R Ambedkar's Structural Path-Constitutional Provisions for Economic Justice

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar identified the unique Indian barrier to economic justice: caste-based graded labor and land exclusion. He proposed State Socialism for constitutional public ownership of land, industries, agriculture, and insurance. Unlike classical Marxist trickle economics, he promoted direct distributive economics guided by the Constitution of India. Through constitutional instruments, he ensured economic justice was enforceable through state responsibility, economic rights, and prohibition of discrimination. Constitutional provisions reflect his vision: eliminating occupational barriers, preventing concentration of capital, and enabling fair share in national wealth for weaker sections of society.

*The economic justice principles are embedded in:*

- Preamble: Justice: Social, Economic, Political
- DPSP: Welfare of weaker sections, equal pay for equal work, right to work
- Article 17: Abolition of untouchability (removes occupational economic barriers)
- Article 39(b) & 39(c): Resources should not concentrate in few hands.

*Institutional support inspired by Dr B R Ambedkar:*

- NITI Aayog
- Planning Commission of India

- Financial inclusion strengthened via RBI, Core Banking System and Policies by NABARD

Convergence of Buddha and Dr B R Ambedkar  
While Buddha built the ethical foundation of economic harmony, Ambedkar structured its implementation through constitutional force. Both frameworks opposed exploitation, hierarchy, and accumulation-driven dominance. Their combined model suggests: change hearts through ethics, change systems through law. Compassion inspires justice, justice institutionalizes compassion.

#### Buddha + Dr B R Ambedkar - Combined Model for Today

Buddha	Dr B R Ambedkar
Moral redistribution	Legal redistribution
Compassion economy	Rights economy
Inequality causes suffering	Inequality causes exclusion
Change hearts	Change systems

#### Present-Day Challenges

Challenges persist in informal caste-based economic exclusion, widening Economic justice thus requires a 21st century distributive order combining moral inclusion, Present Challenges to Economic Justice in India

- Caste still influencing economy informally
- Wealth inequality despite legal equality
- Access gap between rural and urban learning economy
- Education → employability mismatch
- Digital divide for students, Example need: Study materials, PPT, digital resources (like the user's website initiative) policy inclusion, and digital inclusion.

#### Global Relevance of this Combined Economic Justice Model

Buddha-inspired sustainable economics influenced thinkers like E. F. Schumacher (Small Is Beautiful) and global SDG frameworks such as SDG-10 (Reduced Inequality), SDG-8 (Decent Work), and SDG-1 (No Poverty). Ambedkar influenced equality-driven justice frameworks, legal democratization

discourse, and inclusive welfare models relevant to civil rights economy transitions globally.

- Buddhist economics influencing global sustainability movement: UNO frameworks, SDGs
- Ambedkar influencing global equality movements: Civil rights, anti-discrimination frameworks across nations

Economic justice seminar indexing terms could also include:

- SDG-10 (Reduced Inequality)
- SDG-1 (No Poverty)
- SDG-8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Economic justice is neither purely moral nor purely structural; it must be both. Buddha gave the ethical lens to reduce suffering; Ambedkar enforced the constitutional pathway to remove structural chains. Their synthesis provides a blueprint for dignity-centered distributive prosperity.

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