# Ambedkar & Women's Rights

## Why in news?

On the day of Ambedkar Jayanti it is imperative to recognize his work that brought women to the centre of the development process.

## What are the efforts taken by Ambedkar towards womens' rights?

- **Equal participation of women** - Ambedkar advocated for equal participation of women in both personal and professional spheres.
- **Unequal treatment of women in factories** - He is the first to raise his voice against the unequal treatment of women in factories and other workplaces.
- He was instrumental in reducing working hours and improving working conditions for women.
- **Equal pay and equal rights** - He drafted legislation such as the *Mines Maternity Benefit Act*, which demanded equal pay and equal rights for coal mine workers.
- **Maternity leave for women** - He ensured that the question of maternity leave for women was brought up and they were protected under labour laws.
- **Reproductive rights of women** - He was a strong believer of it and urged them to make their own choices about conception.
- **Joginis and devadasis** - Since they were typically belonged to Dalit he was against devadasi system.
- **Birth control facilities** - In 1938, Ambedkar as a Legislative Assembly member of Bombay, recommended that birth control facilities be made available to women.
- **Hindu Code Bill** – It addressed a variety of issues
    - **Property Rights** – It abolished the idea of birthright to property and unequal ownership of property,
    - **Abolition of caste** – It supported the abolition of caste in matters of marriage
    - **Polygamy & divorce** – It addressed taboo topics such as polygamy and divorce
    - **Conjugal rights** - It led to the restitution of conjugal rights and judiciary rights, which enabled women to consciously make divorce a choice.
- From the Hindu code of bill the following acts were passed
    - **The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955** - Right to divorce and maintenance
    - **The Hindu Succession Act, 1956** - Legal right to inherit property
    - **The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956** - Legal right for women to adopt a child
    - **The Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act 1956** - Granted women the status of natural guardian of her children.
- These reforms led to the enactment of Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 and the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961.

- **Caste system –** His paper on Castes in India outlines how atrocities on women are rooted in the caste system and denounced sati, child marriage, and the condemnation of widow remarriage.

> *Unity is meaningless without the accompaniment of women*
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> *Education is fruitless without educated women*
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> *Agitation is incomplete without the strength of women*
>
> *- B R Ambedkar*

**References**

[The Indian Express | Ambedkar towards womens rights]

