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**DR BABU JAGJIVAN RAM'S LEGACY: TRANSFORMING PUBLIC  
POLICY FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DALIT EMPOWERMENT IN  
INDIA**

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.7871>**ABSTRACT**

The contribution of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram towards the Indian public policy and social change is another critical issue of post-independence politics that has not received serious criticisms it deserves. This conceptual review is a synthesis of the existing bodies of literature that seek to analyse how his political thought and his administrative policies contributed to social inclusion and empowerment of the Dalits. The paper places his work in the context of more general discussions about caste, affirmative action and democratic participation, and focuses on his impact on constructing institutionally embedded mechanisms tackling structural imbalance. The paper reveals the continuity and applicability of his ideological approach intending to make inclusive rulemaking visible through examining literature about his ideological adherence, interventions in the legislative system and socio-political policies. Three key themes are recognized by the review: social justice integration into policy structures, political mobilization to address the marginalization of people of color, and how caste intersects with economic and cultural changes. It also argues about the loopholes in the existing literature particularly on the fragmented approach on his works across disciplines. The article suggests that the legacy of Jagjivan Ram is a conceptual framework to be used to explain the idea of inclusive policy design in modern India. The findings of the review belong to the ongoing controversy of uniting different perspectives and establishing an effective analytical framework in order to make his contribution to the formation of the social and policy environment more comprehensible in a logical sequence.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Inclusion, Dalit Empowerment, Public Policy, Caste Dynamics, Political Mobilization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of social inclusion has been one of the keys focuses in the democratic and policy structure in India especially with regards to inequality based on caste. Among the leaders who were interested in such issues and contributed to them greatly, Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram takes a unique place because he was involved in political and policy-making all his life. His works go beyond symbolic representation and show a regular interest in institutional reform and social justice.

This paper is going to take a conceptual orientation to view the application of his legacy in relation to public policy and empowerment of the Dalit. In comparison with personalities whose role is largely philosophical, the work of Jagjivan Ram is pragmatic, with their ideology and administration combined. His policies on affirmative action, labor rights and agrarian reforms reveal his efforts at incorporating equity into the systems of governance.

The current literature tends to treat his input in a piece meal manner, either with his political career or a particular policy project. This generates a disconnect between his work in relation to the bigger conceptual integrity. This review aims to include an interdisciplinary literature analysis in order to establish a standardized view of his contribution to the remodelling of the structure of public policies.

The importance of this question is that it is directly related to the modern discourse on inclusive governance. Since India remains beset by the effects of social inequalities, a relapse into historical models of reform offer lessons on how to design and execute equitable policies. The paper thus places the legacy of Jagjivan Ram in the viewfinder with which the history of social inclusion in the Indian public policy could be more coherently viewed.

## 2. Literature Review

The academic discussion of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram demonstrates an interdisciplinary approach, utilizing the field of political science, sociology, history and the development studies to discuss his impact on social inclusion and the area of the government policy. His views on caste and religion are preannounced in early analyses, including Bandyopadhyay (2009), but they have a pragmatic orientation to reform. He did not promote radical structural change but instead saw a gradual incorporation, in placing the marginalized communities within the existing institutional structures. This view is consonant to a wider tradition of reformist politics in post-independence India where the idea of systemic change was a pursuit of constitutional and institutional means.

This knowledge is further elaborated by the later works in which his work is contextualized as being part of the broader social justice movements. According to Kumar (2013) and Patel (2018), he can be viewed as one of the key figures in the development of Dalit empowerment because he always focused on interventions that are policy-based. Their arguments demonstrate the relevance of legislative measures including affirmative action in redressing historical wrongs. To this line of thought, Desai and Kulkarni (2011) and Dubey (2015) present empirical tests of affirmative action policies in India, which in turn give a wider scope of analysis against which the works of Jagjivan Ram can be viewed. All these studies tend to lean to the fact that his policy stance was based on both ideological clinging and institutional beliefs, which allowed him to convert social legacies into institutional results.

Gupta (1991) takes the constitutional aspect of his work seriously as he focuses on his interest in legal frameworks aimed at enhancing equality and justice. This question of inquiry underscores his contribution to the strengthening of the normative basis of the Indian democracy especially in the institutionalization of the rights-based provisions. Kumar (2017) also augments this view, depicting his service to the public as a belief in a firm sense of institutional responsibility. Instead of the alignment of radical or confrontational approaches, his governance style is one of balance between negotiation and innovation which might be interpreted as a subtle insight on the boundaries and opportunities of the democratic systems.

Political mobilization is another theme of the literature. Kumar (2018) examines how he tried to involve the marginalized groups more in the democracies of the states and states that his efforts did pay off by bringing the level of representation up. This talk resonates with the discussion of Hardtmann (2009) on Dalit movement where he demonstrates the local modes of politics of creative manifestation on a wider global level. Put together the works have demonstrated that the works of Jagjivan Ram are not only readable within the framework of policy making, but the facilitation of political agency amongst historically marginalized groups. The kind of intervention he has appears to fill the gap between the mobilization at the ground level, and the institutional representation, hence the linking of the social movements to the structure of governance.

The Dalit assertion is discussed within the wider socio-political context in other studies, like Bhattacharya (2015) and Rajkumar (2019). With these writings, we are able to track the evolution of Dalit politics as a process of dynamic action between activism and institutional politics. Against this backdrop, Jagjivan Ram comes out as a leader who mediated these spaces urethrating communal demands into policies to be implemented. The importance of

the responsive leadership, which is capable of following social movements and coming to terms with the intricate system of politics, is highlighted by this mediating process.

Besides the caste, there is another area of his opinion in the literature concerning gender and social inclusion. Gupta (2018) also looks into his standing in favour of women rights as a part of a larger commitment to equality. The dimension denotes an intersectional plane of thought in that it recognizes that there is social exclusion on multiple planes. However, the given part is quite unexplored in his work, which presupposes the gap in the existing scholarships. Similarly, Mohan (2019) discusses his understanding of secularism and religious pluralism and states that his vision of inclusion was not confined to the caste-related issues but the expanded meaning of the social identities. It is also evident that this body of work leads to a wider understanding of social justice within his thinking, albeit to a more uneven extent at times, the bibulation of which is often assimilated into those mainstream analyses.

The other key theme of his work is where there is the convergence of economic factors. His gung-ho involvement in the process of agrarian reforms has been pointed out (Kumar, 2005), and he underlines his conception of economic inequality as the main factor of social exclusion. This position takes sides with the interdependence of social and economic policy, meaning that structural inequalities in resources distribution need to be resolved by the inclusion efforts. Gupta (2012) takes this analysis even further and analyses the connection existing between economic policy and cultural preservation especially in light of traditional industries. This practice shows the awareness of the cultural aspects of livelihood, the relation between the growth of the economy and sustenance of the social identity.

Other accounts, such as autobiographical and narrative, shed more light on his motivations and experiences. Ram (2010) presents a personal account that unveils the interplay of the agency of the individual and structural constraints, adding some complexity to the comprehension of his policy orientation. These biographies are useful in complementing scholarly works since they put his works into context within lived experiences, thus increasing the interpretive paradigm. Relative to this view and elaborating Ranjan et al. (2024) locate his work in the wider decolonization and nation-building processes, and emphasize his contribution to post-independence India.

Although the views are varied, the literature has some limitations. One such consistent problem is the inclination to look at particular facets of his work separately, which leads to a fractured analysis of the encompassing work. Although the individual studies are informative in relation to each of the aspects, namely caste, policy, or political mobilization, there is

scanty work done to integrate these aspects in an analytical framework. This discontinuity makes it impossible to fully realize how intertwined his social inclusion approach is.

The other weakness is that of a comparatively lesser involvement in modern policy discussion. A good part of the available literature is historical in nature, meaning that it considers the contributions of his work to be put into a particular time frame. Although this yields valuable knowledge, it also causes his irrelevance to the contemporary issues in governance and social policy to be underrepresented. With all the dynamics of inequality that are making changes, it is important to revise his views in regard to current dynamics.

The contributions of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram have a rich but disjointed literature that covers his contributions. It raises awareness of his contribution to the social justice cause by reforming the institutions, mobilizing the political sphere and influencing the economic policy, but also exposes the black holes in the integration process and the modern applicability. The need to fill these gaps creates a new opportunity in the future research to build a more comprehensive knowledge of his heritage in the context of inclusive public policy.

The literature reviewed can be summed up by three insights that relate to each other and show the stance of Jagjivan Ram on social inclusion and policy change. His approach was based first on institutional reform founded on a slow and systematic change within existing democratic and constitutional arrangements as opposed to radically or disruptively restructuring conditions. This orientation facilitated the implementation of equity-based principles in governance mechanisms in a sustainable way. Second, his works demonstrate a strong connection between the political mobilization and policy implementation.

He succeeded in enabling the inclusion of the marginalized groups into the democratic processes, which enabled him to translate societal needs into feasible policy action and enhance the representative inclusivity. Third, his work has a sensitive and holistic sense of inequality, which implies not only the social hierarchies, but the economic inequality and cultural aspects. Nonetheless, the literature reveals that this multidimensional integration is yet to be clearly defined since many studies are actually looking at these dimensions separately but not as the interrelated elements of a larger developmental model of inclusive realization.

### **3. Limitations & Research Directions**

There are a number of limitations on this conceptual review affecting its scope and interpretation. To start with, the discussion is based on secondary sources, which can be

subject to interpretive biases of the original works. In the disregard of primary archival analysis, there is a limitation of being able to review the historical accounts critically or policy achievements.

Second, the themes of literature on Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram are not spread equally. Whereas some of his elements like caste and political mobilization have been highly debated, others, especially his input in economic and cultural policy get relatively very little coverage. Such disproportion has an impact on the thoroughness of the synthesis of the concept. Third, the interdisciplinary character of the subject brings some difficulties to the unification of multiplicity of methodological techniques. The research based on the sociology, political science, and history tend to implement various analytical frameworks, and so it is hard to come up with one unified approach to it. Consequently, certain conceptual associations might not necessarily be expressed.

The other restriction is associated with the time of the literature. To a large extent, the scholarship is concerned with historical analysis though little current policy developments are addressed. This limits the possibility of being able to objectively judge the continued applicability of his concepts in present-day systems of governance. The review focuses on the conceptual elucidation as opposed to empirical confirmation. Though this way, one can integrate the theory, it lacks they quantifiable effects of the impact of the policy. Future studies that integrate empirical studies could be used to supplement this view and make results stronger.

Inclusion of a more heterogeneous manner of approach to methodology in future study of the legacy of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram is welcome. One of the ways is the systematic analysis of primary sources which include parliamentary debates, the policy-related documents and archives. This would allow a more in-depth insight into his contribution to the development of particular policy decisions and their implications in the long run.

Comparative studies are the other area of study. Comparative analysis of his work and contribution to others in the context of their input in the movements of social justice might provide an insight into different methods of inclusive governance. It would also aid in putting his work in a wider world perspective of marginalized representation and policy reform

Demonstrated studies on the effects of the policies on his initiatives are a tremendous loophole. Evidence-based studies of his legacy can be formed as per quantitative and qualitative research studies on affirmative action, labor reform and agrarian effectiveness. This would help in closing the gap between the conceptual analysis and practical impact.

Interdisciplinary methods, also, are of potential value. Perhaps the synthesis of the economics, cultural studies and the field of the public administration could provide us with new perspectives on his works. A case in point is the relationship between cultural preservation and economic policy which could give a more insightful definition of inclusive development. In addition, the contemporary policy analysis may find it prudent to re-evaluate his ideas with allusions to the emergent issues such as digital inequality and urban marginalization, and the development of the caste relationships. This would not only help to elaborate the applicability of his framework, but also, this would expose areas that need to be adapted. Generally speaking, the trend of the future research should be to continue the work beyond the piecemeal analyses, develop descriptive frameworks, which would indicate the complexity of his work. This would aid enhance academic knowledge and policy relevancy.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This theoretical review has reviewed the legacy of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram according to the prism of the policies of the state, social inclusion, and the empowerment of the Dalits. As demonstrated in the analysis his innovative style, in which he factored in social justice in the institutional frameworks and identified the political mobilization with the political execution is evident. The literature indicates that his work touches various spheres of interest like the constitutional values, affirmative action, economic reform and cultural inclusion. However, these things are talked about in the literature in discrete portions thereby limiting a comprehensive view of his work. With the integration of various opinions, this review has endeavoured to come up with a more integrated perspective of his legacy.

The work acknowledges some of his drawbacks, but again, repeats how the work is relevant in the current decades in tackling the issue of inequality and governance. His focus on progressive change, involvement of institutions, and policy that is inclusive provides a framework that is still relevant today. In conclusion, the writings by Dr. Jagjivan Ram provide an abstract idea into how that can be redefined to make up what is considered to be the public policy in different societies. This knowledge can be augmented in terms of continued research that applies both experimental and interdisciplinary methods that can be expanded to facilitated its broader application.

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