

The Temple and the Asuras: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Constitutional Disavowal and the 'Moulding' of National Truth (1932–2026)

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Abstract

This research interrogates the historical and intellectual paradox of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was both the "Father" of the Indian Constitution and its most radical internal critic. Moving beyond the celebratory nomenclature of traditional historiography, the study traces the "moulding" of the Indian Constitution as a national document back to the forced compromise of the 1932 Poona Pact and the strategic 1947 appointment of Ambedkar—a world-class economist with a D.Sc. from the London School of Economics—to the Law Ministry rather than an economic portfolio. By analyzing his 1949 "Grammar of Anarchy" speech, his 1953 "hack" disavowal, and his 1955 "Asuras in the temple" warning, the paper argues that the document was systematically re-engineered by institutional agents to favor majoritarian stability over radical social liberation. The study connects these historical ruptures to contemporary 2026 debates on "executive aggrandizement" and the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025. It concludes that the current "working" of the document reflects a "truth gap" Ambedkar predicted would lead to institutional capture, where the shell of democracy is preserved while its substance is hollowed out by state "agents."

Keywords: B.R. Ambedkar, Poona Pact, 1953 Rajya Sabha Speech, Constitutional Disavowal, Executive Aggrandizement, 130th Amendment Bill, Social Democracy, Law vs. Economics, National Document.

Introduction: The Irony of the Architect

The historical narrative of the Indian Constitution is typically presented as a triumphant linear progression toward democratic enlightenment, centered on the singular, almost divine genius of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In the official "National Narrative," Ambedkar is the unassailable monolith whose pen transformed a feudal society into a modern republic. This deification, however, creates a "monolithic myth" that obscures the "truth" of a document Ambedkar himself came to view with profound suspicion. While he is globally celebrated as its primary architect, he was also the first person to propose its symbolic destruction—a contradiction that forms the core of an intellectual crisis remaining unresolved in the cultural and legal landscape of 2026 (Bhaskar, 2024; [link](#)).

Ambedkar's journey from the drafting table to the pyre of disavowal begins with a chillingly prophetic realization: that the "National Document" was being "moulded" not by the needs of the marginalized, but by the exigencies of a new majoritarian elite. On November 25, 1949, in his final address to the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar delivered a cautionary masterpiece, warning that "political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy" (Ambedkar, 1949; [link](#)). He famously identified the coming republic as a "life of contradictions," where the formal equality of "one man, one vote" would be sabotaged by the persistent social and economic inequality of "one man, one value" (Culturalsamvaad, 2019; [link](#)).

This anxiety was rooted in the "working" of the document rather than its text. Ambedkar noted that "however good a constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot" (Ambedkar, 1949). By 1953, this theoretical anxiety had curdled into personal and political disillusionment. In a startling address to the Rajya Sabha on September 2, 1953, during a debate on the Andhra State Bill, he declared: "Sir, my friends tell me that I have made the Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it out. I do not want it. It does not suit anybody" (Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 1953; [link](#)). He further characterized himself as a "hack," performing tasks "much against my will,"

technicalizing a draft prepared by bureaucrats like Sir Benegal Narsing Rau that heavily mirrored the colonial Government of India Act 1935 (De, 2026; [link](#)).

The central inquiry of this paper is to unmask the "interpreters" who Ambedkar viewed as agents of this moulding. These were not just the judges and lawyers, but the very "political partisans" he warned against—those who would seek to carry amendments to facilitate party measures (Ambedkar, 1949). To understand this "moulding of the truth," we must look back to the 1932 Poona Pact, where Ambedkar was "blackmailed" into a joint electorate that he believed "disenfranchised" the Dalit community by making them politically dependent on the Hindu majority (Britannica, 2026; [link](#)). This foundational "truth" of the document is one of containment, not liberation.

Furthermore, the research probes the strategic paradox of 1947: why was a world-renowned economist—who had written the blueprint for the Reserve Bank of India—diverted into the Law Ministry? This study hypothesizes that this was a deliberate act of "strategic containment" intended to neutralize his radical vision of "State Socialism" (as seen in *States and Minorities*) by chaining him to the technical drafting of a document that served a centrist, majoritarian agenda (Dodamani & Natikar, 2026; [link](#)). In the contemporary context of 2026, these historical "burnt truths" are more relevant than ever. As India grapples with "executive aggrandizement," "institutional capture," and the "tyranny of the elected," Ambedkar's 1955 warning that the "temple" he built was being occupied by "Asuras" (devils) serves as a vital diagnostic for the survival of the republic (Khaitan, 2020; [link](#)).

Objectives

- To investigate the historical transition of Dr. Ambedkar from the principal architect of the Constitution to its most radical critic between 1949 and 1955.
- To analyze the strategic reasoning behind appointing an expert economist to the Law Ministry and its impact on the "containment" of radical social-economic policies.
- To examine the 1932 Poona Pact as the foundational event that "moulded" the structural limitations of the national document regarding marginalized representation.
- To evaluate the relevance of Ambedkar's 1955 "Asuras in the temple" warning in the context of 2026 executive aggrandizement and the 130th Amendment Bill.

- To deconstruct the role of institutional "interpreters" as agents of the state who "mould" the truth of the document for majoritarian ends.

Research Gap

Existing scholarship largely deifies Ambedkar, focusing on his role in the Drafting Committee while treating his later disavowals as anomalies or emotional outbursts (Keer, 1954; [link](#)). There is a significant academic gap in analyzing the "hack" and "burn" comments as a coherent structural critique of "constitutional capture." Most histories fail to link the Poona Pact's "forced compromise" directly to the eventual "moulding" of the law by state agents in the 1950s and the 2020s. Furthermore, the systematic diversion of Ambedkar's economic expertise into legal drafting remains an under-researched area of "strategic targeting" (Jayal, 2013). This paper addresses these gaps by framing Ambedkar's 1932–1955 trajectory as a deliberate struggle against the "dark arts" of constitutional interpretation and executive capture.

Hypothesis

This research hypothesizes that the 1947 Law Ministry appointment was a strategic "containment" maneuver by the Congress leadership to neutralize Ambedkar's radical economic vision. By "chaining" a world-class economist to the technical drafting of a centrist legal document—one that largely borrowed language from the colonial 1935 Government of India Act—the ruling elite ensured that his plans for state-led ownership of land and industry (as proposed in *States and Minorities*) were relegated to the non-justiciable "Directive Principles," thereby creating a "National Document" that he would eventually view as a "temple occupied by devils" (Dodamani & Natikar, 2026; [link](#)).

Problem Statement / Research Question

Why did the man celebrated as the "Father of the Constitution" claim in 1953 that he was a "hack" and was prepared to "burn it out"? To what extent did the legacy of the 1932 Poona Pact and the systematic exclusion of his economic expertise contribute to this profound disavowal? Finally, how does this historical "moulding of truth" manifest in the "executive aggrandizement" and "autocratic legalism" observed in the Indian scenario of 2026?

Literature Review

The scholarly landscape of 2026 has moved away from viewing the Constitution as a static "monument." Instead, researchers like De and Shani (2025) describe it as an "assembled" and "porous" structure that is constantly being reshaped by public engagement and institutional subversion ([link](#)).

6.1 The Poona Pact (1932): A Foundation of Friction

The "truth" of Ambedkar's relationship with the national document begins with the Poona Pact. Critical historiography identifies this as the moment when "Dalit radicalism" was replaced by "Dalit passivism" through joint electorates (Bhaskar, 2024). By forcing Ambedkar to accept reserved seats within a joint electorate to save Gandhi's life, the Pact ensured that Dalit representatives would have to "speak to the interests of the caste Hindu community" to win (Cambridge University Press, 2026). Modern critics see this as a "disenfranchising" event that established the majoritarian limits of the 1950 Constitution (Britannica, 2026; [link](#)).

6.2 The Law Minister Paradox and Economic Sidelining

Ambedkar was a premier economist, holding a Ph.D. from Columbia and a D.Sc. from LSE for *The Problem of the Rupee* (Ambedkar, 1923; [link](#)). Niraja Jayal (2013) argues that Ambedkar's 1947 memorandum *States and Minorities* was "the strongest articulation of social and economic rights," advocating for the nationalization of land. By appointing him as Law Minister, the interim government "caged" his expertise, forcing him to fine-tune a draft prepared by bureaucrats like B.N. Rau that mirrored the colonial 1935 Act (De, 2026; [link](#)).

6.3 1953 Disavowal: The "Hack" and the "Burn"

Modern analysis reframes the 1953 "burn" quote as a "public disavowal" centered on the failure to grant Governors powers to protect minorities from the "tyranny of the majority" (Elangovan, 2023). His admission that he was a "hack" signifies that the Constitution was a product of "colonial inheritance" and the rigid boundaries set by the Congress majority (De, 2026).

6.4 2026: Executive Aggrandizement and Autocratic Legalism

Modern legal theory identifies a shift toward "autocratic legalism," where "interpreters" function as agents who consolidate executive power through formally legal means (Scheppele, 2018). In 2026, the V-Dem Institute classifies India as an "electoral autocracy" due to "executive aggrandizement" (V-Dem, 2026; [link](#)). This echoes Ambedkar's 1949 anxiety that democracy might "retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact" (Ambedkar, 1949).

Methodology

This research utilizes a qualitative historical-legal analysis. It employs primary sources, including the *Constituent Assembly Debates (CAD)* and the *Rajya Sabha Parliamentary Debates* (1952–1956). The study examines Ambedkar's writings, specifically *States and Minorities* (1947) and *Annihilation of Caste* (1936). A comparative case study approach maps 1950s institutional resistance against 2026 developments like the *Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill*, using indices from the *V-Dem Institute*.

Results & Findings

8.1 The "Hack" Admission and Colonial Continuity

On September 2, 1953, Ambedkar explicitly challenged the myth of his sole authorship. By describing himself as a "hack," he admitted that the structure heavily mirrored the British **Government of India Act 1935** (De, 2026). This highlights that the Constitution was "moulded" by "colonial legacies" that Ambedkar was forced to technicalize against his radical socialist vision.

8.2 The Systematic Erasure of Economic Expertise

A critical finding is the "conspiracy of portfolios." Ambedkar was uniquely qualified for Finance, but by placing him in the Law Ministry, the government ensured his vision for state ownership of land was sidelined. His 1951 resignation letter confirms this frustration, noting he was "not even considered for holding a portfolio temporarily" (Ambedkar, 1951; [link](#)).

8.3 The Poona Pact as a "Moulding" of Truth

The 1932 Pact "moulded" a constitutional reality where the marginalized have "descriptive representation" but lack "substantive autonomy." Ambedkar lamented that this agreement resulted in the "disenfranchising of sixty million untouchables" (Britannica, 2026).

Discussion: The Living "Asuras" of 2026

The metamorphosis of the Indian Constitution from a foundational democratic covenant into a "moulded" instrument of state power is no longer a theoretical debate; it is an empirical reality in 2026. This discussion seeks to interlink Dr. Ambedkar's final warnings with the systemic failures observed in the current administrative and cultural landscape.

9.1 The Metaphor of the Temple and Constitutional Capture

In his 1955 Rajya Sabha address, Ambedkar utilized a profound metaphor to explain his desire to burn the document: "We built a temple for god to come in and reside, but before the god could be installed, if the devil had taken possession of it, what else could we do except destroy the temple? We did not intend that it should be occupied by the Asuras" (The Quint, 2021; [link](#)).

In 2026, this "possession by Asuras" is manifested through **executive aggrandizement**, a process where the executive branch systematically weakens institutional checks while maintaining a veneer of procedural legitimacy (V-Dem, 2026). The **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025**, which mandates the automatic removal of the Prime Minister and Ministers if they are detained for 30 consecutive days, is a primary example of this "moulding" (PRS, 2025; [link](#)). Critics argue that this bill effectively empowers investigative agencies—the "permanent executive"—to unseat elected governments even before a judicial finding of guilt. This hollowing out of the separation of powers is precisely the "Grammar of Anarchy" that Ambedkar predicted would lead to a "life of contradictions."

9.2 The "Interpreters" as Agents of the Centre

Modern scholarship in 2026 highlights the emergence of "interpreters" who function as agents of state power rather than neutral guardians. The role of the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** and the **Judiciary** has come under intense scrutiny. As constitutions mature, the meaning of the text becomes "overlaid with a mass of other words through the work of glossators, interpreters... and adjudicators" (Cambridge University Press, 2026). By weaving together

threads of meaning from partisan sources, these agents make current implementation hard to justify in terms of the original text. The failure to halt partisan cash disbursements during the 2025 Bihar polls, despite clear violations of the model code of conduct, reflect a "moulding of the truth" where institutional silence is used to favor the ruling party (The India Forum, 2026; [link](#)).

9.3 The "Truth Gap" and Administrative Culture

The research identifies a "stark gap" between the constitutional morality the public is taught to celebrate and the "autocratic legalism" practiced by state actors. While citizens are encouraged to view the Constitution as a "sacred document," the administrative machinery utilizes "abusive constitutionalism" to target dissent through laws like the UAPA and PMLA, which make bail near-impossible (Khaitan, 2020; [link](#)). This cultural shift—from viewing the Constitution as a "monument" to seeing it as an "assembled" Ikea-like structure—means that while the parts are preserved, the function is fundamentally altered by those who "work it". This represents a "thousand cuts" to the constitutional spirit, where the truth is moulded by omissions and the selective enforcement of legal norms.

Conclusion: The Torch of the Architect

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 1953 declaration to "burn" the Constitution was not an act of surrender, but a final, torch-bearing warning to a nation entering a "life of contradictions." The "National Document" was moulded in a crucible of forced compromise (Poona Pact) and strategic containment (Law Ministry portfolio exclusion). His admission that he was a "hack" serving a majoritarian agenda should be read as a structural diagnostic, not an emotional outburst. To preserve Indian democracy in 2026, the focus must shift from deifying the "Father" to resuscitating his radical critique: that a document "moulded" by state agents to serve majoritarian "truth" is a temple that requires constant vigilance, lest its sacred chambers be overrun by the "Asuras" of tyranny.

The findings of this research—the systematic erasure of his economic vision, the technical containment of his radical socialist syntax, and the prophecy of the "Asuras"—provide the only legitimate framework for understanding contemporary democratic stress. As the 130th Amendment and the rise of autocratic legalism suggest, the "Asuras" of tyranny have already entered the sanctuary. The "truth" of the Constitution is not found in its ceremonial celebration,

but in Ambedkar's willingness to burn the very monument he built if it failed to serve the "one man, one value" ideal of social democracy. For the culture of 2026, the Architect's torch remains the only light capable of exposing the agents who seek to turn a document of liberation into an instrument of institutional capture. If the temple is occupied by devils, the only constitutional act left is to hold fast to the torch of truth, lest the "Grammar of Anarchy" consume the soul of the republic.

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