



“Research to me is important because it is a way of illuminating what often seems to be either very obvious and commonsensical or so difficult that it seems impossible to understand.”

Amita Baviskar

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- B.A. in Economics from the University of Delhi
- M.A. in Sociology from the University of Delhi
- Ph.D. in Development Sociology from Cornell University

Prof. Amita Baviskar is widely recognized as the premier sociologist of social movements involving environment and development in contemporary India. Her studies have shown how major government interventions for rural and urban development in India often adversely affect the ability of socially disadvantaged groups to secure access to natural resources, livelihoods and democratic rights.



Working for environmental and social justice



Have you paused to think how our fetish for instant food and an easy lifestyle is altering the ecological balance? Have you wondered where the water and electricity in your city comes from and where your sewage goes? The true cost of our comfortable lives is being paid by others, usually poor villagers and the land, rivers and forests that they depend upon.

India's economic growth has benefited some of us at the expense of others. This injustice has often been worsened by government policies that have displaced or deprived indigenous and other poor people of their rights. The same policies have also depleted our natural resources, affecting other species and the fate of future generations.

Mining for coal, iron and bauxite, building large dams and other projects has displaced more than 50 million people in India since independence. Many of them who come to cities in search of work are forced to live in slums, without clean water or toilets. Denied legal rights, they struggle to survive in a hostile environment.

Prof. Amita Baviskar has been examining the social and ecological impacts of unequal economic growth in India. She has focused on the ill effects of industrial and urban development and has analyzed how poor people are fighting to defend their rights and resources.

An important part of Prof. Baviskar's work has been to analyze how poor people in rural and urban India come together to protect their lives and livelihoods. Her research has shown that poor people overcome their lack of power by building alliances with other social groups. She also shows how social movements fight for justice by mobilizing their cultural heritage to win support from the media and the judicial systems.

Prof. Baviskar is a premier sociologist of current social movements in India. Her work has highlighted many social inequality and resource conflict issues that need to be resolved. Her work has exposed the critical need to mobilize civil society, especially in a democratic country like ours.