

**Aspects of the
Constitution of India**



Notes

what a 'Preamble' is. The Preamble is like an introduction or preface of a book. As an introduction, it is not a part of the contents but it explains the purposes and objectives with which the document has been written. So is the case with the 'Preamble' to the Indian Constitution. As such the 'Preamble' provides the guide lines of the Constitution.

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the

²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty second Amendment) Act, 1976, s. 2 for "SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC" (w.e.f. 3-1-1977)
2. Subs. by s. 2. ibid, for "unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3-1-1977).

Preamble of Indian Constitution

The Preamble, in brief, explains the objectives of the Constitution in two ways: one, about the structure of the governance and the other, about the ideals to be achieved in independent India. It is because of this, the Preamble is considered to be the key of the Constitution. The objectives, which are laid down in the Preamble, are:

- i) Description of Indian State as Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic. (Socialist, Secular added by 42nd Amendment, 1976).
- ii) Provision to all the citizens of India i.e.,
 - a) *Justice* social, economic and political
 - b) *Liberty* of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship
 - c) *Equality* of status and opportunity

- d) *Fraternity assuring dignity* of the individual and unity and integrity of the nation.

Let us see what these objectives mean and how have these been reflected in the Constitution?

5.5 Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is one of the foremost elements of any independent State. It means absolute independence, i.e., a government which is not controlled by any other power : internal or external. A country *cannot* have its own constitution without being sovereign. India is a sovereign country. It is free from external control. It can frame its policies. India is free to formulate its own foreign policy.

Socialist

The word socialist was not there in the Preamble of the Constitution in its original form. In 1976, the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution incorporated 'Socialist' and 'Secular', in the Preamble. The word 'Socialism' had been used in the context of economic planning. It signifies major role in the economy. It also means commitment to attain ideals like removal of inequalities, provision of minimum basic necessities to all, equal pay for equal work. When you read about the Directive Principles of the State Policy, you will see how these ideals have been incorporated as well as partly, implemented in the Constitution.

Secularism

In the context of secularism in India, it is said that 'India is neither religious, nor irreligious nor anti-religious.' Now what does this imply? It implies that in India there will be no 'State' religion – the 'State' will not support any particular religion out of public fund. This has two implications, a) every individual is free to believe in, and practice, any religion he/she belongs to, and, b) State will not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of religion.

Democratic Republic

As you have noticed while reading the Preamble to the Constitution, that the Constitution belongs to the people of India. The last line of the Preamble says '.... Hereby Adopt, Enact And Give To Ourselves This Constitution'. In fact the Democratic principles of the country flow from this memorable last line of the Preamble. Democracy is generally known as government of the people, by the people and for the people. Effectively this means that the Government is elected by the people, it is responsible and accountable to the people. The democratic principles are highlighted with the provisions of universal adult franchise, elections, fundamental rights, and responsible government. These you will read in subsequent lessons.

The Preamble also declares India as a Republic. It means that the head of the State is the President who is indirectly elected and he is not a hereditary ruler as in case of the British Monarch. Under chapter of Union Executive you will read in detail about the election of the President of India.

