

2. Preamble to the Constitution

We learnt this in the previous chapter:

- The Constitution is an important document clarifying the rules of administration.
- The Constituent Assembly made the Constitution of India.
- Our representatives have to carry out the administration as per the law laid down by the Constitution.

Our Constitution is the fundamental and the highest law of the land. There are definite aims or purposes in making any law. Basic provisions in the law are made after clarifying these objectives. A systematic arrangement of all the aims and objectives of a law is the Preface to the law. The Preface to the Indian Constitution is called the 'Preamble'. The Preamble sets out the objectives of our Constitution.



Do this.

Read the Preamble to our Constitution. Make a list of the important words in it. Where else do you come across these words?

We all are Indian citizens. The Preamble tells us what we all have to achieve as a people. The values, thoughts and ideas in it are noble. The entire Constitution lays down the provisions through which these goals are to be realised.

The Preamble begins with the words, 'We, the people of India'. It talks about the resolve of the Indians to constitute

India into a 'Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic'. We shall now understand the meaning of each of these terms.

(1) Sovereign State : India was ruled by Britain for a long period. The British rule ended on 15th August 1947. Our country became independent. India became sovereign. We are now free to take decisions as we think fit in our own country. The word sovereign means that a State is not under the control of a foreign power.

The most important goal of our freedom struggle was to acquire sovereignty. Sovereignty means the ultimate authority to govern yourself. In a democracy, sovereignty rests with the people. The people elect their representatives and grant them the permission to exercise sovereign authority on their behalf. Thus the Constitution reflects the principle of popular sovereignty and the government elected by the people makes laws on behalf of the people.

(2) Socialist State : A Socialist State is such a State where the gap between the rich and the poor is minimum. All have a right over the wealth of the country. It is ensured that wealth is not concentrated in the hands of a few people.

(3) Secular State : The Preamble states secularism as one of our goals. In a secular State, all religions are considered as equal.

No one religion is considered to be the State religion. The citizens are free to follow their own religion. State cannot discriminate among citizens on the basis of religion.



Do you know?

We have endeavoured to preserve the multi-religious nature of our society. We cannot exercise the rights given to us by our Constitution, in an unrestrained manner. The same is true of religious freedom as well. Whenever we celebrate our festivals, we are required to be concerned about public cleanliness, health and the environment.

(4) Democratic State : In a democracy, the sovereign power is in the hands of the people. Government makes decisions and draws up policies in keeping with the people's wishes. Government has to take important financial, social and other decisions to promote common welfare. All the people are not able to come together and take such decisions on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, elections are conducted after a fixed period when voters elect their representatives. These representatives sit in the institutions created by the Constitution like the Parliament or Legislature and the Executive. They take decisions for the entire population as per the procedure laid down by the Constitution.

(5) Republic : Along with being a democracy, we are a Republic. All public positions in a Republic are elected by the people. No public position is occupied on the basis of hereditary succession.

The positions like the President, the Prime Minister, the Governor, the Chief Minister, the Mayor, the Sarpanch, etc. are public positions. Any Indian citizen fulfilling the prescribed age criterion can get himself/herself elected to any of these positions. In a monarchy, these positions may be occupied by members of a single family following the principle of heredity.

Discuss.

Read what Deepa has written on the topic : 'My Family'.

Democracy does not only imply elections. My parents do all household work together. We also participate in it. We ensure that we talk cordially with each other. Even if we happen to fight, we try to listen to each other's views by stopping the fight as soon as possible. If any change has to be made, even the grandparents are consulted. Anuja wants to take up agricultural research as her career. Her decision was appreciated by everybody.

Do you think that Deepa's house functions in a democratic way? Which features of democracy can be found in this passage?

The Preamble has guaranteed the Indian citizens the three values of Justice, Liberty and Equality. It has enjoined upon the Indian citizens to practise these values and make laws in keeping with these values. Let us understand these values :

(1) Justice : Justice implies removal of injustice and ensuring that everybody has the opportunity for progress. Establishing justice is adopting such policies that will promote public good. Three types of justice are talked of in the Preamble. They are as follows:

(a) Social Justice : There should be no discrimination among individuals on the basis of caste, creed, race, language, region, place of birth or sex. As human beings, all have the right to the same dignity and respect, the same status.

(b) Economic Justice : Poverty leads to the evils of hunger, hunger-deaths or malnourishment. If poverty is to be eradicated, everyone should have the right to a source of livelihood so as to look after oneself and one's family. Our

Constitution has given this right to every citizen without any discrimination.

(c) Political Justice : We have adopted universal adult franchise to enable equal participation in the running of the country. Accordingly, all citizens completing 18 years of age have the right to vote in elections.

(2) Liberty : Liberty implies that there should be no coercive, unfair restrictions upon us and that there should be an atmosphere conducive to the development of our inherent capacities. In a democracy, citizens enjoy liberty. In fact, democracy becomes mature only if citizens enjoy freedom.

Freedom of thought and expression is the most fundamental freedom for an individual. Everyone is free to express their own views and opinions. A give and take of ideas enhances the spirit of cooperation and unity amongst us. Similarly, it also enables us to understand the various dimensions of any problem.

The liberty of belief, faith and worship implies religious freedom. Every Indian citizen is free to act as per the teachings of their religion or the religion of their choice. It implies the freedom of celebrating the festivals and the freedom of faith and worship.

(3) Equality : The Preamble guarantees the Indian citizens an equality of status and of opportunity.

It means that all have equal human status and there will be no discrimination based on caste, creed, race, sex, place of birth, etc. The guarantee of equal status means not to discriminate between people in terms of high-low, superior-inferior. The Preamble has given great importance to equality of opportunity as well. All

will get the opportunities for development without any discrimination.

Discuss.

Some statements regarding freedom have been given below for discussion.

Express your views.

- While publicly celebrating our festivals, we need to follow some rules. That does not restrict our freedom.
- Freedom means behaving in a responsible way, not as per our whims and fancies.

The Preamble to our Constitution refers to a unique ideal or principle. It is the goal of promoting fraternity among the citizens and to assure the dignity of the individual.

Fraternity : The makers of the Constitution believed that merely guaranteeing justice, freedom and equality would not lead to establishing equality in Indian society. No amount of laws would help us achieve these goals if fraternity is lacking among Indians. Hence the promotion of fraternity has been included in the Preamble as a goal. Fraternity implies a 'we-feeling' towards one another. It creates a feeling of empathy. People become more understanding towards each others' problems and needs.

Fraternity is closely related to human dignity. Human dignity implies equal respect to each individual as a human being. It does not depend upon the criteria of caste, creed, race, sex, language, etc. Just as we would like to be treated with dignity and respect by others, we should also treat others with the same dignity and respect.



When every individual respects another and honours their freedom and rights, dignity of the individual will get established. In such an atmosphere, fraternity will grow automatically. The task of bringing about a new society based on the values of justice and equality

will be facilitated. The Preamble to the Constitution of India guides us to this very goal.

The Preamble ends with a mention of the fact that the people of India have given the Constitution to themselves.



Exercise

1. Find the following words in the grid.

F	A	Y	Q	A	R	O	K	J	I
R	G	Z	E	L	F	K	M	L	L
A	E	G	P	S	H	M	Y	N	D
T	F	P	R	E	A	M	B	L	E
E	E	A	Z	C	H	I	J	I	M
R	D	O	P	U	J	A	B	K	O
N	I	M	E	L	K	P	S	Q	C
I	H	N	Z	A	R	C	O	T	R
T	C	G	F	R	G	H	G	K	A
Y	B	N	Q	H	I	E	F	J	C
Y	A	A	P	S	L	S	I	F	Y

1. A sense of 'we-feeling' and empathy towards fellow citizens
2. A system in which Sovereign power is in the hands of the people
3. Introduction to the Constitution
4. A system in which all religions are considered equal

2. Answer the following questions.

- (1) What are the provisions in a secular Constitution?
- (2) What is meant by adult franchise?
- (3) What right does economic justice ensure?
- (4) How will human dignity be established in a society?

3. How should we make use of our freedom? Write your views about it.

4. Explain the following concepts.

1. Socialist State
2. Equality
3. Sovereign State
4. Equality of opportunity

5. Make a list of the key words in the Preamble. Look for their meanings in a dictionary. Prepare a chart in the following way:

Keyword	Pronunciation	Dictionary Meaning

Activities

- (1) Visit your Tehsil office with your teacher to understand how a vote is cast and how the electronic voting machine works.
- (2) Make a list of newspapers available in your locality.

