

3. PREAMBLE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The American Constitution was the first to begin with a Preamble. It contains the summary or essence of the Constitution. The Preamble to the Indian Constitution is based on the 'Objectives Resolution', drafted and moved by Pandit Nehru, and adopted by the Constituent Assembly¹. It has been amended by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1976), which added three new words—socialist, secular and integrity.

TEXT OF THE PREAMBLE

The pramble in its present form reads:

"We THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a 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 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".

INGREDIENTS OF THE PREAMBLE

The Preamble reveals four ingredients or components:

- **Date of adoption of the Constitution:** It stipulates November 26, 1949 as the date.
- **Nature of Indian State:** It declares India to be of a sovereign, socialist, secular democratic and republican polity.
- **Objectives of the Constitution:** It specifies justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as the objectives.
- **Source of authority of the Constitution:** The Preamble states that the Constitution derives its authority from the people of India.

KEY WORDS IN THE PREAMBLE

Equality

The term 'equality' means the absence of special privileges to any section of the society, and the provi-

sion of adequate opportunities for all individuals without any discrimination. The Preamble secures to all citizens of India equality of status and opportunity.

Fraternity

Fraternity means a sense of brotherhood. The Constitution promotes this feeling of fraternity by the system of single citizenship. The Preamble declares that fraternity has to assure two things the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. The word 'integrity' has been added to the preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976).

Secular

The term 'secular' too was added by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976. The Indian Constitution embodies the positive concept of secularism i.e., all religions in our country (irrespective of their strength) have the same status and support from the state.

Democratic

A democratic polity, as stipulated in the Preamble, is based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty, that is, possession of supreme power by the people. The term 'democratic' is used in the preamble in the broader sense embracing not only political democracy but also social and economic democracy.

Republic

The term 'republic' in our Preamble indicates that India has an elected head called the president. He is elected indirectly for a fixed period of five years. A republic also means two more things: one, vesting of political sovereignty in the people and not in a single individual like a king; second, the absence of any privileged class and hence all public offices being opened to every citizen without any discrimination.

Justice

The term 'justice' in the Preamble embraces three distinct forms—social, economic and political, secured through various provisions of Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. The ideal of justice—social, economic and Political - has been taken from the Russian Revolution (1917).



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Sovereign

The word 'Sovereign' implies that India is neither a dependency nor a dominion of any other nation, but an independent state. Being a sovereign state, India can either acquire a foreign territory or cede a part of its territory in favour of a foreign state.

Socialist

Even before the term was added by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, the Constitution had a socialist content in the form of certain Directive Principles of State Policy. The Indian brand of socialism is a 'democratic socialism' and not a 'communistic socialism'.

Democratic socialism, on the other hand, holds faith in a 'mixed economy' where both public and private sectors co-exist side by side.

Liberty

The term 'liberty' means the absence of restraints on the activities of individuals, and at the same time, providing opportunities for the development of individual personalities. Liberty as elaborated in the Preamble is very essential for the successful functioning of the Indian democratic system. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in our Preamble have been taken from the French Revolution (1789-1799).



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