

## Constitution of India Art 0 - Preamble

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.

### SYNOPSIS

#### Republic

- Sovereign
- Socialist
- Secular
- Democratic

#### Values

- Justice
- Freedom
- Equality
- Fraternity

#### Short title and commencement

## Republic

Through their Constitution, the people of India have committed to shaping India as a **sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic** republic. A republic is a form of government in which the country is considered a "public matter" (res publica), with the head of state as an elected or appointed official rather than a monarch. In republics, power ultimately rests with the people, either directly or through elected representatives.

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**Sovereign:** A sovereign state is an independent, self-governing entity with full control over its own affairs, both domestically and internationally, free from interference by other nations. This autonomy allows a state to create its own laws, policies, and decisions. In a sovereign nation, the government holds ultimate authority over its domestic and international matters, including legislation, economic management, defense, and foreign relations, affirming its right to operate as an equal member of the global community.

**Socialist:** The term "socialist" was intentionally introduced in the Preamble through the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976. The primary goal of a socialist state is to eliminate inequalities in income, social status, and living standards. The framework of socialism aims to provide a decent quality of life for working people and to ensure lifelong security. This approach, particularly in the economic domain, strives for income equality and fair distribution of wealth, blending elements of Marxism and Gandhism, with a strong emphasis on Gandhian Socialism.<sup>1</sup>

**Secularism:** In a secular system, the government operates independently of religious institutions, ensuring that religion does not shape its policies. All religions are treated equally under the law, with no preference or discrimination, safeguarding individuals' freedom to practice any faith—or none—without fear of state interference. Secularism protects individuals from religious bias in government affairs, maintains neutrality on religious issues, promotes harmony among different faith groups, and bases public policies on universal principles rather than

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<sup>1</sup> D.S. Nakara v. Union of India (1983) 1 SCC 305

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religious beliefs. Secularism has been held to be a basic feature of the Constitution.<sup>^2</sup>

**Democratic:** A democratic system is one in which people hold the power to make decisions about their government, either directly or through elected representatives. This system emphasizes majority rule, individual rights, equality before the law, and freedom of expression. Democratic systems vary, including forms like **direct democracy** (where citizens vote on all major decisions) and **representative democracy** (where citizens elect officials to make decisions on their behalf). India follows a system of representative democracy.

## Values

The cherished values of an egalitarian society, as guaranteed by the Constitution of India to its citizens, include:

- Justice in social, economic, and political spheres;
- Freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship;
- Equality of status and opportunity; and
- Promotion of fraternity to uphold individual dignity and the unity and integrity of the nation.

**Justice:** Justice is the principle of fairness, moral rightness, and lawfulness, ensuring that individuals receive fair treatment, rights are respected, and wrongdoings are addressed appropriately. Justice can take various forms:

- Social Justice: Ensures all individuals have equal access to resources, opportunities, and privileges within society, often addressing issues like poverty, discrimination, and social inequality.

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<sup>2</sup> S.R. Bommai v. Union of India, (1994) 3 SCC 1 cited in Sankaranarayanan 2017

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- Economic Justice: Focuses on fair distribution of wealth, opportunities, and economic resources, aiming to reduce disparities between rich and poor and create a fair economic environment.
- Political Justice: Guarantees equal rights to participate in the political process, including voting, freedom of expression, and access to public decision-making.

**Freedom:** Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, or think without undue restraint or interference. It allows individuals to make choices and pursue goals independently, as long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others. Freedom is fundamental to personal autonomy and includes:

- Freedom of Thought: The right to form opinions, ideas, and perspectives independently, without outside coercion.
- Freedom of Expression: The ability to communicate thoughts, ideas, or opinions openly—whether verbally, in writing, through art, or other forms—without censorship or fear of punishment, as long as it respects others' rights.
- Freedom of Belief and Faith: The right to adopt any religious belief or philosophical worldview, or none at all, according to one's conscience.
- Freedom of Worship: The right to practice one's religion or spiritual beliefs individually or in a community, through prayer, rituals, or ceremonies, free from persecution or restriction.

**Equality:** Equality is the principle that all individuals should be treated fairly and have the same rights, opportunities, and access to resources, regardless of characteristics such as race, gender,

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religion, socioeconomic status, or background. It is a fundamental feature of the Constitution<sup>3</sup> and includes:

- Equality of Status: Ensures that every person is valued equally within society, without discrimination or bias, and is afforded the same social and legal recognition. It involves recognizing each individual's dignity and respecting their identity and contributions.
- Equality of Opportunity: Provides everyone with a fair chance to succeed by removing barriers based on social or economic factors, creating a level playing field where individuals can access resources, compete fairly, and achieve their potential.

**Fraternity:** Fraternity refers to a sense of brotherhood, unity, and solidarity within society. It emphasizes mutual respect, compassion, and the shared responsibility to support one another, fostering a cohesive and inclusive community. In social and constitutional contexts, fraternity encourages individuals to look beyond personal and cultural differences, contributing to a harmonious society where every person is valued.

The promotion of fraternity to uphold individual dignity and the unity and integrity of the nation emphasizes fostering mutual respect among all citizens. This sense of fraternity encourages respect for each individual's worth and contributes to a harmonious society. By valuing and uplifting each person, fraternity not only safeguards personal dignity but also reinforces national unity and cohesion. Through this collective sense of unity, the nation maintains its integrity and fosters an inclusive environment where everyone feels connected and committed to the common good.

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<sup>3</sup> Indra Sawhney II v. Union of India, (2000) 1 SCC 168 cited in Sankaranarayanan 2017  
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## **Short title and commencement**

The short title and dates for commencement of the Constitution of India are provided in Articles 393 and 394.