

**Class 8**  
**Social Science**  
**Book: Social and Political Life – III**

**Chapter – 1: The Indian Constitution**

General Instructions

1. Question-answers are to be written in Social Science notebook/practice notebook/ruled sheets.
2. YouTube links are for the explanation of the chapter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGW4ggH5Jvs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=285eelwhNFs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ictIxpXdfL8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io3FmUxn07I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQLPat5oaN8>



## Introduction

In this chapter students will study about the Indian Constitution and how it has shaped to form a proper governance scheme for the people of the country. The importance of the Constitution in a democratic country has been discussed in this chapter.

The key features of the Indian Constitution have been talked about in detail in this chapter. Given below are the important features of the Indian Constitution:

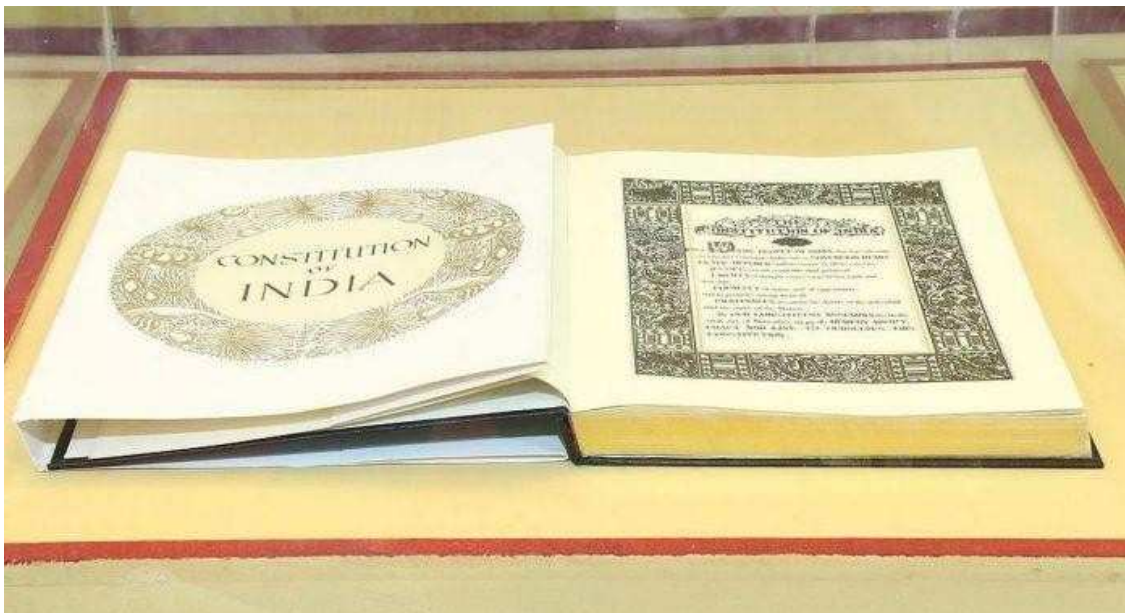
1. Federalism: the existence of more than one level of Government.
2. Parliamentary Form of Government: The right to vote for each citizen of the country irrespective of caste or creed.
3. Separation of Powers: the three organs of government – judiciary, legislature and executive.
4. Fundamental Rights: The six major fundamental rights that every citizen of the country deserves as per the Indian Constitution
5. Secularism: A country that promotes religious freedom for all its citizens.

## Explanation

The chapter 'The Indian Constitution' highlights the importance and need for a 'Constitution' for a democratic country. It also explains the crucial features of the Indian Constitution.

### What is a Constitution?

**The Constitution is a written document that lays down the framework for how a country needs to be governed. It is a set of rules and regulations guiding the administration of a country.**





**Baba Saheb Ambedkar is known as the father of the Indian Constitution.**

### The Need for a Constitution

- It was in 1934, the Congress put the demand for a Constituent Assembly for India for the first time. As the Second World War (1939-45) commenced, this assertion only grew further among the Indians. Finally, the British Government agreed to it which finally convened in December 1946.
- Several lawmakers came together to draft the Constitution of India between December 1946 and November 1949. It was finally on November 26, 1949 that our constitution was completed. It was implemented on January 26, 1950 which we celebrate as Republic Day today.
- A majority of countries across the world identify themselves as 'Democratic.' Several such countries have their own 'Constitution.'
- A Constitution is crucial for any country as it serves various purposes which help in the smooth functioning of a country.



Firstly, it puts forward particular ideals on the basis of which the citizens get to know that in which type of country they wish to live in.



Secondly, it also defines our society's fundamental nature.



## Nepal's struggle for democracy

- Nepal is a country which has China in its North and India in its South. In the last three decades, the Nepalese citizens led several struggles for democracy. One such struggle had taken place in 1990, after which democracy lasted till 2002 in the country. It was of 'Constitutional Monarchy' type and final authority rested with the King.
- The reason behind Nepalese citizens' protest over the King's rule was that they did not agree with his rule. It didn't match with the ideals of a country that the citizens wanted to be. With an aim to usher in a new progressive society, Nepal adopted a new Constitution in 2015.
- Another important purpose of the Constitution is that it defines a country's political system. As you read in the previous example about how Nepal's 1990 constitution allowed the King to have the last call over any matter. The countries which are democratic, the Constitution lays a set of guidelines so that the government can function in coordination with its people who elect it.
- A Democracy is a setup where people choose their leaders through elections. These leaders exercise their powers while running the government. Although there are chances that the leaders could even misuse their powers, however, our Constitution has provided certain measures to deal with such leaders.

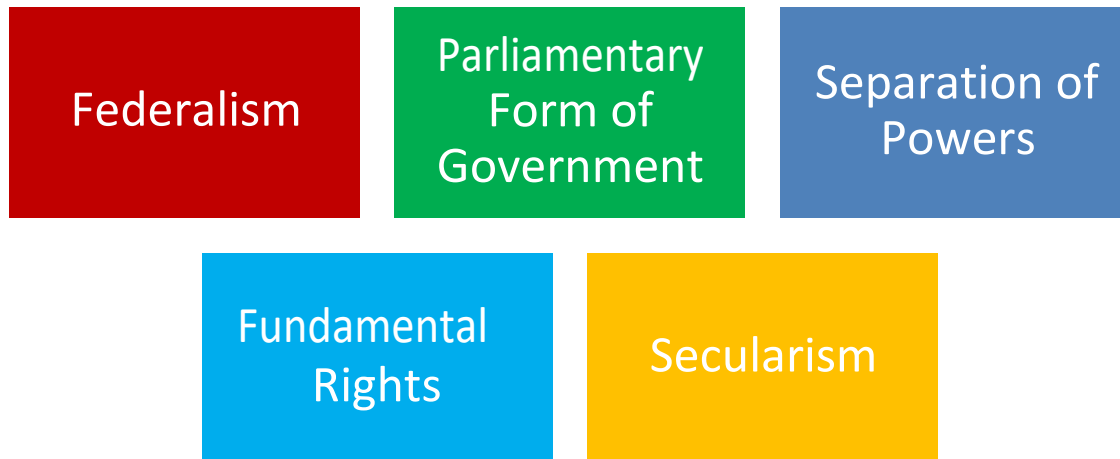
## **The Constitution has a vital role**

- Our Constitution provides equal rights to all its citizens. It states that one can't discriminate against a citizen on the basis of caste, religion, race, gender or birth place. This Fundamental Right is popularly known as 'Right to Equality.'
- Our Constitution also emphasizes on the fact that a dominant group cannot use its power against those who are less powerful or the weaker sections of society.
- It has a rule that states that minorities are entitled to everything that is available to the majority. The constitution has played a major role in preventing the exploitation of minorities by people belonging to the majority section.

## **The Indian Constitution: Key Features**

- The British ruled India for several decades. During the freedom struggle many Indians sacrificed their lives and played a major role in providing independence to India.
- Once the country was free, there was a major challenge before our leaders regarding the setting up of a democratic government and how it would function.
- Around 300 experienced leaders from different fields started working on the making of Constitution from December 1946 and it was over by November 1949.
- The members of the Constituent Assembly had to face several challenges while they were working together to draft the Constitution.
- India is a country which is known for its diverse culture. Different communities have different cultures, follow different religions and speak different languages. Not to forget, the partition was just announced when this process was going on.
- All these issues affected the process of drafting the Constitution.

# The key features of our Constitution are as given below:

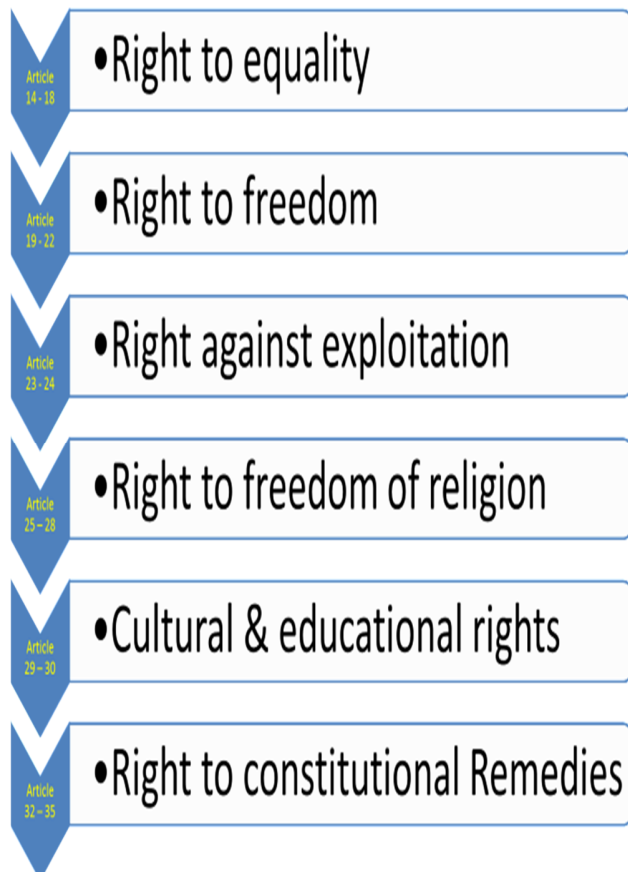


1. **Federalism:** It provides the existence of more than one level of government in a democratic country. Our country has governments at both the Centre and State level. Panchayati Raj is considered as a third tier of the Government that governs the villages of our country. Our constitution provides a list of details regarding the powers of each level of government. It also specifies how the governments at each level should work by coordinating with each other.
2. **Parliamentary Form of Government:** The different tiers of government consist of representatives elected by the people. The people of India have a direct role in electing their representatives.
3. **Separation of Powers:** Our Constitution states that there are three organs of the Indian government. They are Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Our elected representatives form the 'Legislative' type. A group of people who are assigned the task of running the government and implementing the laws form the 'Executive' type. The system of courts comes under the 'Judiciary' type.

The Constitution states that in order to prevent the misuse of power at any level of government, these three types should exercise their powers differently. Due to this, each type acts as a check on the other two.



**4. Fundamental Rights:** This section has been referred as the 'conscience' of Indian Constitution. It protects them against the absolute and arbitrary power exercised by the states. It guarantees an individual's right against other individuals or sometimes even the State.



5) **Secularism:** In a secular state, a single religion is never promoted as the State religion. Our country is neutral in the matter of religion. Every citizen is free to follow their own faith.

India became a secular state in 1976 with 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India. With this, India doesn't have any official state religion. The laws of the country work in several ways to prevent religious domination.





## Mind map

The Constitution is an important document that contains principles or rules according to which a state or an organisation is governed. ↓

It is the written law of the land. It is on the basis of provisions in the Constitution that governance in the country is carried out. ↓

A democratic country needs a Constitution ↓

It gives valuable information about the composition of the government regarding its structure, organs, duties and responsibilities. ↓

It lays out certain ideals that form the basis of the kind of country that the citizens aspire to and the fundamental nature of our society. ↓

It has a system of checks and balances which prevents the misuse of power vested in the government. ↓

It also defines the country's political system. ↓

Fundamental Rights: The six major fundamental rights that every citizen of the country deserves as per the Indian Constitution. ↓

It guarantees several fundamental rights to citizens in order to protect them from any injustice faced by them. ↓

It also saves us from ourselves, i.e. if we ever think of taking any steps that might harm us or go against us in the long run, it helps guard us. ↓

It protects the rights of the minorities from the suppression faced by the majority. ↓

Federalism - the existence of more than one level of Government. ↓

Parliamentary Form of Government: The right to vote for each citizen of the country irrespective of caste or creed. ↓

Separation of Powers: the three organs of government – judiciary, legislature and executive. ↓

Secularism: A secular state is one in which the state does not officially promote any one religion as the state religion.

## Question-Answers

**Q1.** Why does a democratic country need a Constitution?

**Ans:** There are various reasons why a democratic country needs a Constitution:

1. It lays down certain ideals that form the basis of the kind of country that we as citizens aspire to live in.
2. It ensures that dominant groups don't use their power over less powerful people or groups.
3. It defines the nature of the political system of the country.
4. It keeps a check on the arbitrary behaviour of the elected leaders so that they don't misuse their authority.
5. It safeguards us from ourselves.

**Q2.** What would happen if there were no restrictions on the power of elected representatives?

**Ans:** In a democracy, the citizens of the country are responsible for electing their leaders. However, there is always a possibility that the leaders might misuse their authority and use it for wrong purposes. Hence, the constitution has provided measures to safeguard the country against such misuse of powers.

**Q3.** In each of the following situations, identify the minority. Write one reason why you think it is important to respect the views of the minority in each of these situations.

(a) In a school with 30 teachers, 20 of them are male.

**Ans:** The minority here are the 10 female teachers teaching in the school. It is important to keep the point of view of the female teachers in mind, because despite being a minority, their opinions are of great importance and no decision made keeping the majority views in mind, should cause discomfort for the female teachers.

(b) In a city, 5 percent of the population are Buddhists.

**Ans:** Here, the minority is the 5 percent Buddhist population in the city. Their views should be respected. Just because they are in a minority with different religious beliefs, they should not be disrespected. Any decision should be taken keeping in mind the religious feelings of the Buddhist population.

(c) In a factory mess for all employees, 80 percent are vegetarians.

**Ans:** The minority here are the 20 per cent non-vegetarians having food at the factory mess. It is important that the food prepared in the factory mess must be prepared for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

(d) In a class of 50 students, 40 belong to more well-off families.

**Ans:** In this case, the minority are the 10 students who do not belong to well-off families. It is important to keep their viewpoints in mind, because they may not be able to contribute to the various expenses required by the school and they should not feel humiliated for the same.

Q4. List the features of the Indian constitution and write their significance.

Ans:

<b>Key Feature</b>	<b>Significance</b>
<b>Federalism</b>	It is important, because in a country like India, there are people living at different levels and only one level of government cannot govern them. Hence, to form a government for the different levels is important. The Panchayati Raj is responsible for governing the village, the state government is responsible for governing the state and the Central Government is responsible for governing the entire country.
<b>Separation of Powers</b>	There are three organs of governance: legislature, executive and judiciary. Each of these organs have different powers and serve different functions. In order to prevent the misuse of power by any one branch of government, the Constitution says that each of these organs should exercise different powers.
<b>Fundamental Rights</b>	There are three organs of governance: legislature, executive and judiciary. Each of these organs have different powers and serve different functions. In order to prevent the misuse of power by any one branch of government, the Constitution says that each of these organs should exercise different powers.
<b>Parliamentary Form of Government</b>	The different tiers of government consist of representatives elected by the people. The people of India have a direct role in electing their representatives.

