

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 we do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution”.

2. Thus

- a) The preamble declares India Sovereign, Socialist, secular, democratic and a republican state which draws its authority from the people.
- b) It intends to provide its citizens social economic and political justice.
- c) It assures them liberty of thought expression, belief, faith and worship.
- d) It assures equality of status and opportunity.
- e) It aims at securing a fraternity based on dignity of the individual and
- f) It aims at securing the unity and integrity of the nation.

3. The word Sovereign means that India is both internally as well as externally free and is not dependent upon any outside authority.

4. The term 'socialism' in the preamble (inserted by the 42nd Amendment) refers to some form of ownership of means, of production and distribution by the state. However, the Indian brand of socialism is quite different and holds faith in a mixed economy.

5. Secularism implies that the state is only concerned with relations between various citizens and is not concerned with relations of man with God.
Further, it means that the state has no religion of its own.

6. The term Democratic implies that the government draws its authority from the people.
The rulers are elected by the people and are accountable to them.

7. The word republic implies that the head of the state in India shall be an elected person and shall hold office for a fixed term. The president of India is the chief executive head of India.

8. The preamble has great value and has been described as the “Key to the Constitution”. It has helped courts to resolve various ambiguous points of the constitution and interpret it in the true spirit in which it was enacted by the framers.

9. Despite the importance of the Preamble, initially it was not regarded as part of the constitution and hence, was not treated as source of any substantive powers.

In the Berubari Case, the Supreme Court specifically held that the Preamble could not override the express provisions of the Act. However, in the Keshavananda Bharati case of 1973, the Supreme Court took the view that the Preamble is part of the constitution.

The then CJI Justice Sikri observed "The Preamble of our constitution is of extreme importance in the light of the grand and noble vision expressed in the preamble".

The court relied on the Preamble while restricting the amending power of the Parliament under Article 368 of the constitution. It held that the basic element of the Preamble cannot be amended under Article 368. It was further held that since the Preamble was part of the constitution it can be amended subject to the condition that the 'basic feature' in the Preamble cannot be amended. The court contended that if any of the basic elements mentioned in the Preamble is removed, the structure will not survive.

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