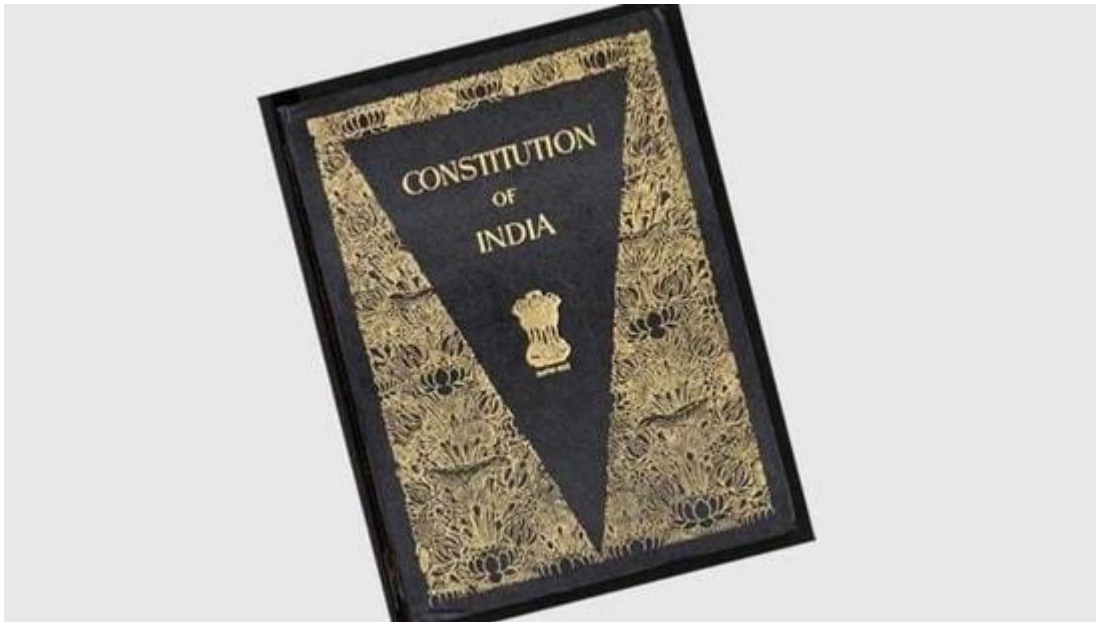


KNOW YOUR CONSTITUTION

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF EVERY INDIAN CITIZEN

The Constitution of India, the longest written constitution of any country, is considered the supreme law of the nation, and demarcates the structure, framework, powers, and duties of government institutions, and sets out fundamental rights, directive principles, and duties of citizens.



The Constitution of India

India, celebrating its 75th year of Independence from colonial rule, is all set to mark Republic Day on January 26, the celebrations for which kicked off today. The country will be cherishing the date on which the Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950, thus turning India into a newly-formed “republic”.

The Constitution of India, which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, and came into effect a year later, contains the fundamental code and structures signifying India as an independent republic with a democratic government.

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Every year, Indians across the length and breadth of the nation pay their respects to the significant piece of document that lays down the entire framework of the fundamental political code of the country.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Here are the fundamental rights of citizens as enshrined in the Constitution of India:

1. Right to Equality: The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

2. Right to Freedom: Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc.

All citizens shall have the right —

(a) to freedom of speech and expression;

(b) to assemble peaceably and without arms;

(c) to form associations or unions [or co-operative societies];

(d) to move freely throughout the territory of India;

(e) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and

(f) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business.

Right to Life: Protection with respect to a conviction for offences is guaranteed under the right to life and personal liberty. According to Article 20 of the Constitution, no one can be awarded punishment that is more than what the law of the land prescribes at the time of the commission of the crime.

Protection of life and personal liberty is also stated under the right to life and personal liberty. Article 21 declares that no citizen can be denied his life and liberty except by due process of law. This means that a person's life and personal liberty can be disputed only if that person has committed a crime.

3. Right against Exploitation: Traffic in human beings and beggars and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law.

4. Right to Freedom of Religion: Subject to public order, morality, and health and to the other provisions, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion.

They also have the right to manage religious affairs —

(a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;

(b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;

(c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property

5. Cultural and Educational Rights: Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script, or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

6. Right to constitutional remedies: Article 32 provides a guaranteed remedy, in the form of a fundamental right itself, for enforcement of all the other fundamental rights, and the Supreme Court is designated as the protector of these rights by the Constitution.

The Supreme Court has been empowered to issue writs, namely *habeas corpus*, *mandamus*, *prohibition*, *certiorari*, and *quo warranto*, for the enforcement of the fundamental rights.

8. Right to privacy: The right to privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution. It protects the inner sphere of the individual from interference from both State and non-State actors and allows individuals to make autonomous life choices.

FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES

Here are the fundamental duties of citizens as enshrined in the Constitution of India:

(a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;

(b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;

(c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India;

(d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;

(e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic, and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;

(f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;

(g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures;

(h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism, and the spirit of inquiry and reform;

(i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;

(j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;

(k) who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.