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General Studies

Volume 8

Indian Polity and Constitution - I



INDIAN POLITY AND CONSTITUTION - I

S.No.	Chapter Name	Page No.
1.	Basics of Indian Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions of a Constitution • Evolution of Constitution of India • Constituent Assembly • Committees of the Constituent Assembly 	1
2.	Preamble <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Terms related to Preamble • Preamble as a part of the Constitution 	9
3.	Salient Features of the Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts and Schedules of Indian Constitution 	14
4.	Union And Its Territory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Evolution of states and Union Territories 	19
5.	Citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional provisions • Citizenship • Citizenship Act 1955 • Overseas Citizens of India • Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 	24
6.	Fundamental Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Origin of Fundamental Rights • Features of Fundamental Rights • Six Fundamental Rights • Writs and Its Types • Restrictions on Fundamental Rights • Martial Law and Fundamental Rights • Rights Outside Part III of the Constitution • Exceptions To Fundamental Rights 	33
7.	Directive Principles Of State Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Feature of Directive Principles • Classification Of Directive Principles • New directive principles subsequently added • Utility of Directive principles • Implementation of DPs • Conflict between DPSPs and Fundamental rights 	59
8.	Fundamental Duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Fundamental Duties 	66

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features of Fundamental Duties • Criticism Of Fundamental Duties • Significance Of Fundamental Duties • Observations Of Verma Committee On Fundamental Duties 	
9.	Constitutional Amendment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Types Of Amendment • Procedure for amendment: 	69
10.	Center State Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Legislative Relations • Financial Relations • Finance Commission 	71
11.	Inter State Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Adjudication of Inter-state water disputes • River Water Dispute tribunals • Councils 	83
12.	Emergency Provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Types of Emergency 	90
13.	President <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Executive • Constitutional Provisions • Election of the President • Votes in Election • Qualifications • Oath for President's Office • Conditions for President's office • Immunities and Privileges of President's office • Term of President's Office • Impeachment of President • Vacancy in President's Office • Election on Vacancy • Powers of President • Veto Power of the President • Ordinance Making Power of The President (Article 123) • Pardoning Power of the President • Discretionary Power of President 	96
14.	Vice President <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Election • Qualification • Oath • Conditions of office • Emoluments • Term of office • Vacancy in office • Removal from office • Powers of the Vice President 	105

15.	Prime Minister <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Appointment • Oath • Qualification • Term of Office • Emoluments • Powers of Prime Minister 	107
16.	Central Council of Ministers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Composition • Appointment Of minister • Oath of the ministers • Salary of Ministers • Responsibility of ministers • Cabinet Committees 	110
17.	Parliament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional Provisions • Composition of Parliament • Composition of the Two Houses • Membership of Parliament • Presiding officers of the Parliament • Leaders in Parliament • Devices of Parliamentary proceedings • Legislative Procedure in Parliament • Budget in Parliament • Grants • Funds for Central Government • Powers and function of Parliament • Position of Rajya Sabha • Parliamentary Privileges • Sovereignty of Parliament • Parliamentary Committees • Parliamentary Forums • Parliamentary Groups 	116

1 CHAPTER

Basics of Indian Constitution



- A set of **fundamental legal-political rules** that:
 - **binding on everyone** in the state, including law making institutions;
 - concern the **structure and operation** of the institutions of **government**, political principles, and the **rights of citizens**;
 - based on widespread **public legitimacy**;
 - **harder to change than ordinary laws**;
 - recognized **criteria for a democratic system** in terms of **representation and human rights**.

Functions of a Constitution

- Declare and **define the boundaries** of the political community.
- Declare and **define the nature and authority** of the political community.
- Express the **identity and values of a national community**.
- Declare and **define the rights and duties** of citizens.
- **Establish** legislative, executive, and judicial **branches of government**.
- **Share power between different layers** of government or sub-state communities.
- Declare the **official religious identity of the state**
- Commit states to particular **social, economic, or developmental goals**.



Evolution of Constitution of India

Company Rule in India (1773-1858)



Regulating Act, 1773	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● laid the foundation of Central Administration in India. ● Governor of Bengal → Governor-General of Bengal. (Lord Warren Hastings) ● Executive Council of 4 members to assist the GGB. ● Governors of Madras & Bombay presidencies subordinate to GGB. ● Set up the SC of Calcutta with 1 Chief justice and 3 other judges. ● Court of Directors of the Company to report the British Government regarding Company's revenue, civil and military affairs in India.
Act of Settlement, 1781	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safeguarded the GGB and its council from the jurisdiction of the SC. ● provided immunity to the servants for their official actions. ● Exempted revenue matters of Company from jurisdiction of the SC ● SC to administer the personal law of the defendant. ● GGB to frame regulations for Provincial Courts and Councils.
Pitt's India Act, 1784	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established a system of Double Government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Court of Director to manage Company's commercial affairs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board of Control to manage its political affairs. ● Board of Control to supervise and direct civil and military operations and revenues of the British possessions in India. (First time acknowledged)
Charter Act, 1813	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abolished the trade monopoly of the Company in India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ exceptions: trade in tea and trade with China. ● Authorized Local Governments to levy taxes
Charter Act, 1833	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GGB = Governor-General of India (Lord William Bentinck) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vested all civil and military powers ○ exclusive legislative powers of the entire British India. ● Company → purely administrative body.
Charter Act, 1853	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separated legislative and executive functions of the GGI's Council. ● 6 members Indian Legislative Council to function as mini parliament. ● open competition system for Indian Civil Services for Indians also. ● Introduced local representation in the Indian (Central) Legislative Council. (out of 6 members 4 to be appointed by the local governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and Agra)

Crown Rule in India (1858 to 1947)

Government of India Act, 1858	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● British Government took control over territory of India ● aka Act of Good Government of India. ● GGI = Viceroy of India (Lord Canning) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ representative of British Crown in India. ● Board of Control and Court of Directors ceased to exist. ● Secretary of State for India, with complete authority and control over Indian administration. ● Created a 15 member Council of India to assist the SSI.
Indian Councils Act, 1861	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Viceroy to nominate Indians as the non-official members (Lord Canning nominated 3 Indians: The Raja of Benaras, the Maharaja of Patiala and Sir Dinkar Rao) ● Decentralized legislative powers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empowered the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. ● established new legislative councils for Bengal, North-Western Provinces and Punjab. ● Viceroy to make rules and orders for the Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ members of the council in-charge of and authorized to issue orders regarding their allocated departments ● Viceroy to issue ordinances in emergency with a validity of 6 months.
Indian Councils Act, 1892	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased non-official members in Central and Provincial legislative councils. ● legislative councils can discuss budget and address questions to the executive. ● Provided for the nomination of some non-official members of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CLC by Viceroy based on recommendation of PLCs and Bengal Chamber of Commerce

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PLCs by Governors on the recommendation of district boards, Municipalities, universities, trade associations, zamindars and chambers.
<p style="text-align: center;">Indian Councils Act, 1909</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● aka Morley-Minto Reforms. ● members in the CLC ↑ from 16 to 60 and members in the PLCs also increased but not uniformly. ● members of LC can ask supplementary questions, move resolutions on the budget, etc. ● association of Indians with the executive councils of the Viceroy and Governors. (Satyendra Prasad Sinha as the Law member) ● communal representation for Muslims and separate electorate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Government of India Act, 1919</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● aka the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. ● Separated Central and Provincial subjects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provincial subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transferred subjects: governed by the Governor with the aid of ministers of the LC ■ Reserved subjects: governed by the Governor with his executive council. ● Introduced bicameralism and direct elections in the country. ● 3 out of 6 members of the Viceroy's executive council = Indian. ● separate electorates for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans also. ● Granted franchise to a people based on property, tax or education. ● Created office of High Commissioner for India in London. ● set up a Central Service Commission for recruiting civil servants. ● Separated provincial budgets from the Central budget and authorized the provincial legislatures to enact their budgets.
<p style="text-align: center;">Government of India Act, 1935</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Established All India Federation = provinces + princely states. ● Divided powers into three lists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Federal list (for Centre, with 59 items), ○ Provincial list (for Provinces, with 54 items) ○ Concurrent list (for both, with 36 items). ● Residuary Powers: vested in the Viceroy ● Abolished dyarchy in the provinces and introduced provincial autonomy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introduced responsible Governments in provinces ● adoption of dyarchy at the Centre ● Federal subjects were divided into transferred subjects and reserved subjects. ● Introduced bicameralism in 6 out of 11 provinces (Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Assam and the United Provinces). ● separate electorates for depressed classes, women and labour. ● Abolished the Council of India. ● Established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reserve Bank of India to control currency and credit of the country. ○ Federal Public Service Commission, ○ Provincial Public Service Commission

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint Public Service Commission. ○ Federal Court.
Indian Independence Act, 1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● gave immediate effect to Mountbatten Plan ● Ended British rule in India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ declared India independent and sovereign state from August 15, 1947. ● partitioned of India and Pakistan as two independent dominions with right to secede from the British Commonwealth. ● empowered the Constituent Assemblies to frame and adopt any constitution of their respective nations ● abolished the office of SSI and transferred his powers to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discontinued the appointment of Civil Servants ● dropped the title of Emperor of India of the King of England. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crown ceased to be the Source of Authority. ○ deprived him of his right to veto bills or ask for reservation of certain bills for his approval. ● designated the GGI and provincial governors = constitutional (nominal) heads of the states.

Constituent Assembly

Cabinet Mission Plan provisioned to set up a **Constituent Assembly of India**:

- **total strength = 389 partly elected and partly nominated**
 - **296 seats** were allotted to **British India**
 - **292 members** from the **11 governors' provinces**
 - **4 from the 4 chief commissioners' provinces**
 - **93 seats** to the **Princely States**.
- **allotted seats in proportion to their respective population.**
- **Seats** allocated to each **British province** were to be **divided among Muslims, Sikhs and General (others), in proportion to their population.**
- representatives of each community → **elected by members of that community by proportional representation using a single transferable vote.**
- representatives of the **princely states** were to be **nominated by the heads of the princely states**
- members were **indirectly elected** by the members of the provincial assemblies.
- **did not present the sentiments of the masses** as the members of provincial assemblies themselves were elected on a limited franchise.
- **election for British Indian Provinces was held in July-August 1946.**
 - **Indian National Congress** won **208 seats**,
 - **Muslim League** won **73 seats**
 - **Independent players** held **15 seats**
- **seats of princely states were not filled** as they refrained from the Assembly
- Assembly had **representatives from every section** of the society
- **Mahatma Gandhi was not a member** of the Constituent Assembly.
- **On April 28, 1947** representatives of the **6 states became part of the assembly**



- after the **Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947**, most of the **princely states entered the assembly**.
- Later **Muslim League from the Indian dominion also joined the assembly**.

Working of the Constituent Assembly

- **first meeting:** December 9, 1946.
 - **Muslim League boycotted and demanded a separate state of Pakistan**
 - Only 21 members attended the first meeting.
 - **Dr Sachchidananda Sinha** was elected as the **interim President of the Assembly, (French practice)**
 - **Dr Rajendra Prasad** was elected as the **President of the Assembly**
 - **H.C. Mukherjee and V.T. Krishnamachari** → **Vice-President**



Objective Resolution:

- Presented on Dec 13, 1946, by **JL Nehru** in the Constituent Assembly, **unanimously adopted** by the assembly on **January 22, 1947**.
- **Important provisions:**
 - **proclaim India as the Independent Sovereign Republic**
 - **India, shall be a Union** of territories of British India that join it
 - **Boundaries determined by the Constituent Assembly** which shall possess **residuary powers and exercise all powers and functions** of the Government and administration implied in the Union
 - **power and authority** of Independent India **derived from the people**
 - shall **guarantee** to all the people of India
 - **justice**, social, economic and political;
 - **equality** of status of opportunity, and before the law;
 - **freedom** of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, association and action
 - **adequate safeguards** shall be provided for **minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other backward classes**
 - Maintain **integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights** on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilized nations
 - **attains its rightful and honoured place in the world** and makes its full and willing **contribution** to the promotion of **world peace and the welfare of mankind**.



Changes after the Indian Independence Act, 1947

- **Assembly** → **fully sovereign body** to frame Constitution
- became the **legislative body**.
 - **responsible to frame the Constitution** and **enact ordinary laws** for the country.
 - **worked as the Constitutional body** → **chaired by Dr Rajendra Prasad**
 - **as a legislative body** → **G.V. Mavlankar** became chairman (till **Nov 26, 1949**).
- **Muslim League withdrew from the assembly**
 - **reduced the total strength** of the assembly to **299** from 389.
 - **strength of Indian provinces** reduced to **229** from 296
 - **princely states** to **70** from 93.



Other Functions Performed by the Assembly

- Ratified India's membership of the Commonwealth in May 1949
- Adopted National Flag of India on July 22, 1947
- Adopted National Anthem on January 24, 1950
- Elected Dr Rajendra Prasad as the first President of India on January 24, 1950
- On January 24, 1950, the Constituent Assembly held its final session but continued as the provincial parliament from January 26, 1950, till the first general elections in 1951-52 were held.



Committees of the Constituent Assembly

	Committee	Headed by
Major Committee	Union Powers Committee	J.L. Nehru
	Union Constitution Committee	J.L. Nehru
	Provincial Constitution Committee	Sardar Patel
	Drafting Committee	Dr B.R. Ambedkar
	Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas	Sardar Patel
	Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee	J.B. Kriplani
	Minorities Sub-Committee	H.C. Mukherjee
	North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded & Partially Excluded Areas Sub-Committee	Gopinath Bardoloi
	Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (Other than those in Assam) Sub-Committee	A.V. Thakkar
	North-West Frontier Tribal Areas Sub-Committee	
	Rules of Procedure Committee	Dr Rajendra Prasad
	States Committee (for Negotiation with states)	J.L. Nehru
Steering Committee	Dr Rajendra Prasad	
Minor Committee	Finance and Staff Committee	Dr Rajendra Prasad
	Credentials Committee	A.K. Ayyar
	House Committee	B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
	Order of Business Committee	Dr K.M. Munshi
	Ad-hoc Committee on National Flag	Dr Rajendra Prasad
	Committee on Functions of the Constituent Assembly	G.V. Mavalankar
	Ad-hoc Committee on the SC	S. Varadachari
	Committee on Chief Commissioners' Provinces	B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
	Expert Committee on the Financial Provisions of the Union Constitution	Nalini Ranjan Sarkar
	Linguistic Provinces Commission	S.K. Dar
	Special Committee to Examine the Draft Constitution	J.L. Nehru
	Press Gallery Committee	Usha Nath Sen
	Ad-hoc Committee on Citizenship	S. Vallabhachari

Drafting Committee



- On **August 29, 1947**, set up to **prepare a draft of the new Constitution**.
- **seven-member committee** with
 - Dr B.R. Ambedkar → Chairman
 - N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar
 - Alladi Krishnaswamy Ayyar
 - Dr K.M. Munshi
 - Syed Mohammad Saadullah
 - N.M. Rau
 - T.T. Krishnamachari
- **First draft published in February 1948**
- **second draft published in October 1948.**

Enactment of the Constitution



- **Dr B.R. Ambedkar introduced the final draft on Nov 4, 1948**, for first reading.
- **Second reading** held on **November 15, 1948**,
- **third reading** on **November 14, 1949**.
- **draft was passed on November 26, 1949 (Constitution day)**.
- **Constitution as adopted on November 26, 1949**, contained
 - **Preamble**
 - **394 Articles**
 - **8 Schedules**.
- Provisions of citizenship, elections, provisional parliament, temporary and transitional provisions and short title contained in Article 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 60, 324, 366, 367, 379, 380, 388, 391, 392 and 393 **came into force on November 26, 1949**. The **remaining** provisions came into force **on January 26, 1950**.
- With the adoption of the Constitution, all the provisions under the Indian Independence Act, 1947 and the **Government of India Act, 1935 were repealed**.
- **Abolition of Privy Council Jurisdiction Act (1949)** continued.

Criticism to the Constituent Assembly



- **Not a Representative Body** - did not reflect the mass verdict due to election by the limited franchise.
- **Not a Sovereign body** as it was formed based on the proposals of the British Government and held its meeting with their permission.
- **Took greater time in framing** the Constitution as compared to the American constitution which took only 4 months.
- **Dominated by Congress**
- **Domination of Lawyers and Politicians**
- **Dominated by Hindus**

- **S.N. Mukherjee = chief draftsman** of the constitution
- **Prem Behari Narain Raizada = calligrapher**
 - **handwritten the original text** of the constitution in a **flowing italic style**.
- **beautified and decorated by** artists from **Shanti Niketan** including **Nand Lal Bose** and **Beohar Rammanohar Sinha**.
- **calligraphy of the Hindi version = Vasant Krishan Vaidya**
 - **decorated and illuminated = Nand Lal Bose**.
- **elephant = symbol** of the Constituent Assembly.
 - **Elephant figurine carved on the seal of the assembly**.
- Originally, the Constitution of India did **not** make any **provision concerning an authoritative text of the Constitution in the Hindi Language**.
 - made by the **58th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1987** which inserted a new **Article 394-A** in the last part of the constitution.



THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **¹[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 **²[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.**


1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

- **Introduction or preface** to the Constitution
- **Provides guidelines** for the Constitution
- **embodies basic philosophy and fundamental values** as basis for the Constitution
- **Reflects dreams and aspirations** of founding fathers of the Constitution.
- **enacted after the rest of the Constitution** was already enacted.
- **neither a source of power** to the legislature **nor a prohibition**
- **non justiciable** not enforceable in Courts of law.
- **can be amended** without altering the basic structure.

Ingredients of the Preamble

- Preamble makes **people of India, the ultimate authority**
- declares India as **sovereign, socialist, secular democratic and republican polity.**
- **Objectives of the Constitution: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity**
- **Date of adoption of the Constitution: It stipulates November 26, 1949** as the date.

Key Terms related to Preamble

- **Sovereignty: absolute Independence** that is a Government which is **not controlled by any other power**: internal or external. A country cannot have its own Constitution without being sovereign. India is a sovereign country. It is free from any external control. 
- **Socialist: not part of the original Constitution.**
 - Added by **42nd Amendment act**
 - used in the context of economic planning.
 - commitment to attain ideals like **removal of inequalities, provision of minimum basic necessities to all, equal pay for equal work.**
- **Secularism: added by 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1976.**
 - India is **neither religious nor irreligious nor anti-religious.**
 - **no state religion**- the state **does not support any particular religion**
- **Democratic Republic: Government is elected by the people and is responsible and accountable to the people.**
 - **democratic provisions:** Universal adult franchise, elections, Fundamental Rights and responsible Government.
 - **Republic:** the **elected head** of the state (President → indirectly elected) not a hereditary ruler as Britain.
- **Justice: to give people what they are entitled to in terms of basic rights to food, clothing, housing, participation in decision making and living with dignity as human beings.**
 - taken from the **Russian Revolution (1917)**
 - three **dimensions of Justice- social, economic and political.**
 - **Social justice:** equal treatment of all citizens without any social distinction based on caste, colour, race, religion, sex and so on.
 - **Economic justice:** non-discrimination on economic factors.

Social justice + economic justice = 'distributive justice'

- **Political justice:** all citizens should have equal political rights, equal access to all political offices and equal voice in the Government.
- **Liberty:** of thought and expression; **absence of restraints** on the activities of individuals, and at the same time, **providing opportunities** for the development of individual personalities.
 - taken from the **French Revolution (1789–1799)**.
- **Equality: absence of special privileges** to any section of the society, and the provision of adequate opportunities for all individuals without any discrimination.
 - three **dimensions of equality—civic, political and economic**.
- **Fraternity:** sense of brotherhood; promotes the feeling of fraternity by a system of **single citizenship and by article 51A** (Fundamental Duties).



Preamble as a part of the Constitution

Berubari Union v. Unknown Case, 1960	Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala Case, 1973	Union Government Vs LIC of India Case, 1995
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SC stated that 'Preamble is the key to open the mind of the makers' but it cannot be considered as part of the Constitution. Therefore it is not enforceable in a Court of law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SC held that “Preamble of the Constitution will now be considered as part of the Constitution. The Preamble is not the supreme power or source of any restriction or prohibition but it plays an important role in the interpretation of statutes and provisions of the Constitution.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SC held that Preamble is the integral part of the Constitution but is not directly enforceable in a Court of justice in India.

Salient Features of the Constitution

- **Longest written constitution:** it contains:
 - **Separate provisions for states and centre** and their inter-relationship.
 - **borrowed provisions** from several sources and constitutions of the world.

Countries	Borrowed Features of Indian Constitution
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Concurrent list ● Freedom of trade, commerce and intercourse ● Joint-sitting of the two Houses of Parliament
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Federation with a strong Centre ● Vesting of residuary powers in the Centre ● Appointment of state Governors by the Centre ● Advisory jurisdiction of the SC
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Directive Principles of State Policy ● Nomination of members to Rajya Sabha ● Method of election of the President
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedure Established by law
USSR/Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fundamental Duties ● Ideal of justice (social, economic and political) in the Preamble

UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parliamentary Government ● Rule of Law ● Legislative procedure ● Single Citizenship ● Cabinet system ● Prerogative writs ● Parliamentary privileges ● Bicameralism ● Procedure Established by law
US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fundamental Rights ● Independence of judiciary ● Judicial Review ● Impeachment of the President ● Removal of SC and HC Judges ● Post of vice-President
Germany (Weimar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suspension of Fundamental Rights during emergency
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedure for Amendment in the Indian Constitution ● Election of members of Rajya Sabha
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Republic ● Ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Preamble

- **separate provisions for SC, ST, women, children, and backward regions.**
- **detailed list of rights, DPSPs and details of administration procedures**
- **Originally (1949), had a Preamble, 395 Articles (divided into 22 Parts) and 8 Schedules.**
- **Presently, it consists of a Preamble, 25 parts, 448 Articles, 12 Schedules, and 104 Amendments till date.**
- **Unique blend of rigidity and flexibility:**
 - **Some parts can be amended by ordinary law making procedure** while certain provisions can be amended **by a majority of the total membership of that house and by a majority of not less than two-third of the members** of that house present and voting.
 - Some amendments are also **required to be ratified by the legislatures of not less than one-half of the states** before being presented to the President for assent.
- **India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic and republic:** India is **governed by its people through their elected representatives** based on universal adult franchise.
- **Parliamentary System of Government:** Parliament controls the functioning of the CoM
 - **executive is responsible to the legislature** and remains in power as long as it enjoys the confidence of the legislature.
 - **President** of India, who remains in office for five years, is the **nominal, titular or constitutional head (Executive).**
 - **PM is the real executive and head of the CoM** who is collectively responsible to the lower house (Lok Sabha).

- **Single Citizenship:** single citizenship **provided by the union and recognized by all the states** across India.
- **Universal Adult Franchise:** establishes political equality in India through the method of universal adult franchise which **functions on the basis of 'one person one vote'**.
 - Every Indian who is **18 years of age or above is entitled to vote** in the elections, irrespective of caste, sex, race, religion or status.
- **Independent and Integrated Judicial System:** **free from the influence of the executive and the legislature.**
 - SC as the apex court below which HCs and lower courts come
- **Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and DPSPs:**
 - **Fundamental Rights are not absolute** but are **subject to the limitations** defined by the constitution itself and are enforceable in the court of law.
 - **DPSPs are the guidelines** to be followed by the states regarding governance and are not enforceable in the court of law.
 - **Fundamental Duties, added by the 42nd Amendment are moral conscience** which ought to be followed by the Citizens.
- **Federation with a strong centralising tendency:** India is an **indestructible Union with destructible states** means it acquires a unitary character during the time of emergency.
- **Balancing Parliamentary supremacy with Judicial Review:** An **independent judiciary with the power of judicial review**