CONSTITUTION – A Constitution is a written document of rules, regulations and laws by which a country’s government is run accordingly.

Do We Need a Constitution?

Yes. A constitution has written laws accepted by people living together in a country.

- It generates trust and co-ordination.
- It specifies how a government should be constituted.
- It lays down limits on the powers of the government.
- It expresses the aspirations of the people about creating a good society.

Making of the Indian Constitution

- The process began during the national struggle for freedom.
- First draft 1928, then 1931. Motilal Nehru and 8 leaders demanded in the draft: universal Adult franchise, social justice, right to freedom and liberty.
- Participation in Provincial Legislatures helped Indians in framing their constitution.
- Leaders inspired by French Revolution, British parliamentary system and the Bill of Rights of the US. They also learnt what the British were denying Indian citizens.

The Constituent Assembly

- Elections to the Constituent Assembly held in July 1946.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar appointed chairman of the drafting committee.
- Constitution adopted on 26 November 1949, and enacted on 26 January, 1950, when India became a republic.
- The Constitution reflects the best minds of the country. Its members represented mini-India. Every law was debated clause by clause and a consensus arrived at. It is the longest written constitution.

PROBLEMS FACED WHILE MAKING INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- India was a huge and diverse country and making of the constitution was not an easy affair.
- The country was divided on the basis of religious differences.
- The merger of Princely states was a difficult and uncertain task.
- The future of the country was not much secure.

Significance of Preamble to the constitution

The Preamble provides the guidelines of the constitution and is considered to be the key of the constitution.
WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA-

*SOVEREIGN *SOCIALIST *SECULAR *DEMOCRATIC *REPUBLIC *JUSTICE *LIBERTY *EQUALITY
*FRATERNITY.

Important Members of Constituent Assembly


Democratic Constitution in South Africa

- Nelson Mandela, the South African leader of African National Congress, fought a long battle Against Apartheid.
- Imprisoned for 28 years (1964–1992) emerged as the First President of the Republic of South Africa.
- People struggled against the horrible discrimination practiced against them by the white Minority rulers.
- Apartheid finally defeated in 1994 and a new constitution made in 1996.
- Remarkable constitution, forgot past sufferings, sought co-operation of all the races which made a new S. Africa based on equality, democratic values and social justice.
Q.1. In which way was the system of 'apartheid' oppressive?

Ans.: The apartheid system was particularly oppressive for the blacks. They were forbidden from living in white areas. They could work in white areas only if they had a permit. Trains, buses, taxis, hotels, hospitals, schools and colleges, swimming pools, public toilets etc. were all separate for the whites and blacks. They could not even visit the churches where the whites worshipped. Blacks could not form associations or protest against the terrible treatment.

Q.2 What is meant by the term ‘Constitution’?

Ans. The constitution of a country is a set of written rules that are accepted by all people living in that country. It is the supreme law that determines the relationship among the people living in a territory (called citizens) and also the relationship between the people and government. It specifies how the government will be constituted and who will have the power to take different decisions.


Ans. The Constituent Assembly was elected mainly by the members of the existing Provincial Legislatures. This ensured a fair geographical share of members from all the regions of the country. Congress, which was the dominant party in the Assembly itself, included a variety of political groups and opinions. It represented members from different languages, castes, religions, classes and occupations.

Q.4. What are Constitutional Amendments? State its significance in a democratic country like India.

Ans. Constitutional Amendments are changes in the constitution made by the Supreme Legislative body in a country. The constitution of India is a very long and detailed document. Therefore it needs to be amended quite regularly to keep it updated.

Q.5. Regarding the constitution making, what was the compromise reached at between the blacks and whites?

- The constitution of South Africa was drawn together by the party of whites which had ruled through oppression and the party that led the freedom struggle.
- The constitution gave to its citizens the most extensive rights available in any country. After long negotiations both parties agreed to a compromise.
- The whites agreed to the principle of majority rule and that of one person one vote. They also agreed to accept some basic rights for the poor and the workers.
- The blacks agreed that the majority rule would not be absolute. They agreed that the majority would not take away the property of the white minority.

Q.6 What does the constitution effectively do that makes a country a democratic one?

Ans. A constitution does many things to make a country a democratic one:

- It generates a degree of trust and coordination that is necessary for different kind of people to live together.
- It specifies how the government will be constituted and who will have the power of taking which decisions.
Q.7. What was the appeal made by the black leaders to the fellow blacks after the emergence of the new democratic South Africa?

Ans. After the emergence of the new democratic South Africa, black leaders appealed to fellow blacks to forgive the whites for the atrocities they had committed while in power. They urged the people to build a new South Africa based on equality of all races, and of men and women, on democratic values, social justice and human rights.

* Extra Questions (Do not write these in the class work, but it needs to be learnt)

Q.1. Describe the advantages that Indians had when they participated in the legislatures which were set up as a result of the elections of 1937.

Ans. Although the legislatures set up in India as a result of elections of 1937 were not fully democratic, the experience gained by Indians in the working of the legislative institutions proved to be very useful for the country in setting up its own institutions and working in them.

Q.2. Why was a constitution necessary for a country like South Africa?

Ans. The oppressor and the oppressed, i.e. the whites and the blacks were planning to live together, as equals. It was not going to be easy for them to trust each other. They wanted to safeguard their interests. The only way to build and maintain trust was to write down some rules. This set of basic rules was the constitution needed for South Africa.

Q.3. What do you understand by secularism? Why India is called a secular country?

Ans. India is a country of many religions and it respects all religions. No religion is given the status of state religion and equal respect is given to all beliefs, faiths and practices. Citizens have complete freedom to follow any religion.

Q.4. What were the difficulties faced during the making of Indian constitution?

Ans. It was drawn up under very difficult circumstances. Making a constitution for a huge country like India was not an easy affair. The country was born through partition. The problem of princely states was left undecided by the British. There were anxieties about the present and future of the country.

Q.5. What did Ambedkar mean by ‘Contradiction’ in his concluding speech to the Constituent Assembly?

Ans. In his concluding speech to the Constituent Assembly Dr. Ambedkar said that India was entering a life of ‘contradictions’ on 26th Jan 1950. By this he meant that in politics Indians would have equality but in social and economic life, there would be inequality. In politics India would be recognising the principle of one man one vote, with one value, but in social and economic life, the principle of one man one value would be denied.
Constitutional Design – MCQs

1. On what charges was Nelson Mandela sentenced to life imprisonment?
   (a) For treason
   (b) For breaking the laws
   (c) For corruption charges
   (d) For possessing illegal property

2. What is apartheid?
   (a) Election in proportion to population
   (b) Official policy of discrimination against the Blacks
   (c) Equality among all
   (d) None of the above

3. In which way did the system of apartheid discriminate among the South Africans?
   (a) Restricted social contacts between the races
   (b) Segregation of public facilities
   (c) Created race specific job categories
   (d) All the above

4. Name the organisation that led the struggle against the policies of segregation.
   (a) African National Conference
   (b) African Neutral Congress
   (c) African National Congress
   (d) All National Party

5. Why did the white regime decide to change its policies?
   (a) Increase in protests and struggles
   (b) Government realised that repression was becoming difficult
   (c) Rise of sympathetic attitude in government for the blacks
   (d) Both (a) and (b)

6. Which of these did not form a part of the changed attitude of South African government?
   (a) Discriminatory laws were repealed
   (b) Ban on political parties and media was lifted
   (c) Nelson Mandela was freed from imprisonment
   (d) More discriminatory laws were passed

7. When did South Africa become a democratic country?
   (a) 26 April, 1995
8. With the end of apartheid, who became the first President of South African Republic?
(a) F.W. de Klerk
(b) P.W. Botha
(c) Nelson Mandela
(d) None of the above

9. Name the autobiography of Nelson Mandela.
(a) The Long Walk to Freedom
(b) South Africa Wins Freedom
(c) Walk to Freedom
(d) Our Freedom

10. What did the black population want in the new Constitution?
(a) A black President
(b) Substantial social and economic rights
(c) Whites should be turned out of the country
(d) Apartheid for the whites

11. What did the white minority want from the new Constitution?
(a) Protect its privileges and property
(b) A separate country for themselves
(c) Reservation in legislature
(d) Some special rights

12. During negotiations for making the Constitution, the whites agreed to
(a) The principle of majority rule
(b) One person one vote
(c) Accept some basic rights for the poor and the workers
(d) All the above

13. Which of the following sentences is correct?
(a) All countries that have constitutions are necessarily democratic
(b) All countries that are democratic necessarily have constitutions
(c) Both (a) and (b)
(d) None of the above)
14. When did Motilal Nehru draft a Constitution for India?
(a) 1927
(b) 1926
(c) 1929
(d) 1928

15. Where was the 1931 session of Indian National Congress held?
(a) Nagpur
(b) Karachi
(c) Calcutta
(d) Delhi

16. Which of these features were accepted by all the Indian leaders much before they sat down to make the Constitution?
(a) Universal adult franchise
(b) Right to freedom
(c) Protection of the rights of minorities
(d) All the above

17. According to which Act were the elections held to provincial legislatures in India in 1937?
(a) Government of India Act, 1935
(b) Government of India Act, 1919
(c) Government of India Act, 1909
(d) None of the above

18. Which of these inspired our leaders while framing the Constitution?
(a) Ideals of the French Revolution
(b) Parliamentary democracy in Britain
(c) Bill of Rights in US
(d) All the above

19. Which revolution in the world inspired the Indians to set up a socialist economy?
(a) French Revolution
(b) Turkish Revolution
(c) Russian Revolution
(d) American War of Independence

20. Name the body which framed the Constitution of India?
(a) General Assembly
21. When did the Assembly adopt the Constitution?
(a) 26 November, 1949
(b) 26 December, 1949 (c) 26 January, 1950
(d) 26 January, 1949

22. Who was the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly?
(a) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(d) Abul Kalam Azad

23. How many amendments were considered before adopting the Constitution?
(a) Around 500
(b) Around 2000
(c) Around 1550
(d) Around 1000

24. Who said the following?
“...I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country ..... In which all communities shall live in perfect harmony?”
(a) Mahatma Gandhi
(b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(d) Sarojini Naidu

25. Who among these leaders was a bitter critic of Mahatma Gandhi?
(a) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
(b) Sarojini Naidu
(c) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(d) Dr. Rajendra Prasad

26. “The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye.” Who was Nehru referring to in his speech?
(a) Abdul Ghaffar Khan
(b) Mahatma Gandhi
(c) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(d) Vallabhbhai Patel
27. The Constitution begins with a short statement of its basic values. What is it called?
(a) Preface   (b) Preamble   (c) Introduction   (d) Article

28. Match these guiding values with their meanings.
(A) Sovereign   (i) government will not favour any particular religion
(B) Republic   (ii) People will have supreme right to make decisions without outside interference
(C) Fraternity   (iii) Head of the state is an elected person
(D) Secular   (iv) There should be a feeling of brotherhood among all the people

(a) A-(iii), B-(i), C-(ii), D-(iv)
(b) A-(ii), B-(iii), C-(iv), D-(i)
(c) A-(i), B-(iv), C-(iii), D-(ii)
(d) A-(iv), B-(iii), C-(i), D-(ii)

29. Which of these countries is/are examples of a Republic?
(a) USA   (b) India
(c) South Africa   (d) All the above

30. What kind of ‘Justice’ does our Preamble provide?
(a) Economic Justice   (b) Political Justice
(C) Social Justice   (d) All the above

31. Which of these positions is correct in relation to the ‘Sovereign’ status of India?
(a) USA can decide India’s foreign policy
(b) USSR can support the CPI (M) in setting up its government here
(c) The Indian government only can decide its internal and external policies
(d) Pakistan can control India’s Armed Forces

32. Who was the chairman of the Constituent Assembly?
(a) Jawaharlal Nehru
(b) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(c) B.R. Ambedkar
(d) Mahatma Gandhi

33. Which of the following days is celebrated to mark the enforcement of the constitution?
(a) Republic Day
(b) Independence Day
(c) Gandhi Jayanti
34. The Indian constitution has borrowed from
(i) Ideas from French Revolution
(ii) The British Constitution
(iii) The Bill of Rights of the US
(iv) Israeli Constitution

(a) i, ii, iv
(b) i, ii, iii,
(c) ii, iii, iv
(d) i, ii, iv

35. The Constituent Assembly met for how many days?
(a) 114    (b) 280   (c) 365   (d) 150

Q36. Who was the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian constitution?
(a) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
(b) Jawaharlal Nehru
(c) C. Rajgopalachari
(d) Dr. Rajendra Prasad

37. When did the Indian constitution come into force?
(a) 26th Nov, 1949     (b) 15th August, 1947
(c) 26th Jan, 1950     (d) 26th Jan, 1930

38. Who prepared the draft of a constitution for India in 1928?
(a) Motilal Nehru
(b) B. R. Ambedkar
(c) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(d) Jawaharlal Nehru

39When was the Constitution of India adopted?
(a) 26th Nov, 1949     (b) 26th Jan, 1949
(c) 26th Jan, 1950     (d) 26th Nov, 1950

40. Drafting Committee was chaired by:
(a) Gandhiji          (b) Pt. J.L. Nehru
(c) Baldev Singh      (d) Dr B.R. Ambedkar