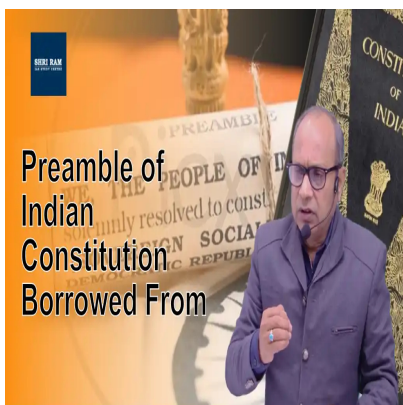




Preamble of Indian Constitution Borrowed From

Description

The Preamble of the [Indian Constitution](#) stands as a concise yet profound statement, encapsulating the aspirations and foundational philosophy of the nation. It serves as an introductory declaration, outlining the guiding principles, purpose, and objectives of the Constitution. For any serious student of [Indian polity](#), understanding the Preamble is paramount, as it provides a window into the minds of the framers and the vision they held for an independent India.

The crafting of India's Constitution, including its Preamble, was a monumental task undertaken by the Constituent Assembly. Recognising the complex and diverse nature of the country, the framers meticulously studied various constitutional systems and democratic traditions from around the world. This deliberate approach meant that while the Constitution is undeniably Indian in its spirit and application, it also bears the imprint of carefully selected ideas and principles from other established democracies. This blend of indigenous thought and global best practices is particularly evident in the Preamble, which drew significant inspiration from international constitutional experiences to articulate its core ideals.

What is the Preamble of India?

The Preamble to the Indian Constitution is an introductory statement that explains the document's objectives and philosophy. It essentially serves as a preface, summarising the aims and goals that the Constitution seeks to achieve. It declares India to be a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic, committed to securing Justice, Liberty, Equality for all its citizens, and promoting Fraternity among them, ensuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

Adopted on November 26, 1949, the Preamble begins with the powerful words "We, the People of India," signifying that the ultimate authority rests with the citizens of the country. This opening declaration is not merely ceremonial; it establishes popular sovereignty as a cornerstone of the Indian political system. The terms Socialist and Secular were added to the Preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976 during the Emergency, reflecting a further articulation of the nation's commitment to these values.

While the Preamble is non-justiciable, meaning its provisions cannot be enforced in a court of law, it holds immense interpretative value. The Supreme Court of India has recognised it as a key to understanding the Constitution's intent and purpose. It is considered an integral part of the Constitution, as affirmed in the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati* case (1973), which also established that the Preamble forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution and therefore cannot be amended in a way that destroys its fundamental character. This point needs attention: any modification to the Preamble must uphold its core essence, which itself draws from a blend of national aspirations and global democratic ideals.

Ideas Borrowed for Indian Preamble

The framers of the Indian Constitution, with their profound understanding of global constitutionalism, consciously incorporated well-established ideals from other nations into the Preamble. This was not an act of mere copying but a thoughtful process of adaptation to suit India's unique context and aspirations.

One of the most significant influences on the Indian Preamble came from the **United States of America**. The very concept of beginning a constitution with a Preamble was pioneered by the US Constitution. The opening phrase of the Indian Preamble, "We, the People of India," directly reflects the spirit of the US Preamble, which begins with "We, the People of the United States." This phrase establishes the democratic principle of popular sovereignty, stating that the Constitution derives its authority from the people themselves. The idea of a sovereign republic, where the head of state is elected and not a hereditary monarch, also finds strong resonance with the American model.

From the **French Constitution** and the French Revolution, the Indian Preamble adopted the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. These three concepts are fundamental to any modern democratic society and represent the core values that the Indian state pledges to secure for its citizens.

- **Liberty** refers to the freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship. It is not absolute but qualified, meaning it operates within the framework of law and public order.
- **Equality** signifies equality of status and opportunity for all individuals, aiming to eliminate discrimination based on caste, religion, race, sex, or place of birth.
- **Fraternity** promotes a sense of common brotherhood among all Indians, transcending regional, linguistic, religious, and sectional diversities. This point needs attention: fraternity is critical for national unity and integration, especially in a country as diverse as India. These ideals, born out of revolutionary struggles for human dignity in France, were seen as essential for building a cohesive and just society in India.

The ideals of Justice – Social, Economic, and Political – enshrined in the Indian Preamble, were inspired by the **Russian Revolution (erstwhile USSR)**. While India did not adopt the communist economic system, the framers recognised the importance of securing socio-economic justice for its vast population, which had long suffered from exploitation and inequality.

- **Social Justice** implies the absence of discrimination on grounds of caste, colour, race, religion, sex, etc., and the improvement of the conditions of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.

- **Economic Justice** means no discrimination between people on the basis of economic factors. It involves the equitable distribution of wealth, income, and property, aiming to bridge the gap between rich and poor.
- **Political Justice** ensures equal access to political offices, equal voice in government, and universal adult franchise, guaranteeing every citizen the right to vote and contest elections. Now this becomes important: the inclusion of these forms of justice reflects a commitment to a welfare state model, ensuring that democracy is not just political but also has a substantial social and economic dimension.

Why India Looked at Other Constitutions

India's decision to draw upon the experiences of other constitutions for its Preamble and indeed for the entire constitutional framework was a pragmatic and strategic choice made by the Constituent Assembly. This approach was not born out of a lack of originality but from a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by nation-building in post-colonial India.

Firstly, India was embarking on the monumental task of establishing a democratic republic in a newly independent nation with immense diversity and complex socio-economic issues. The framers had to create a robust and enduring framework that could cater to the aspirations of millions, address historical injustices, and ensure stability. At this stage, one issue becomes clear: designing a constitution from scratch without any reference points would have been an incredibly risky and time-consuming endeavour.

Secondly, learning from the successes and failures of existing constitutional models around the world offered a significant advantage. By studying various democracies, the framers could identify provisions and principles that had proven effective in upholding human rights, ensuring governance, and promoting social harmony. Conversely, they could also learn from the shortcomings of other systems, thereby avoiding potential pitfalls in the Indian context. This pragmatic approach allowed them to adopt "best practices" rather than reinventing the wheel entirely.

Thirdly, the Constituent Assembly's approach was characterised by a philosophy of selective adaptation rather than blind imitation. Dr. B.R. [Ambedkar](#), often regarded as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, articulated this clearly, stating that the Constitution was "a composite of various streams from various rivers of the world" but with a distinct Indian identity. The borrowed elements were meticulously debated, modified, and integrated to align with India's unique cultural ethos, historical experiences, and future vision. For example, while the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity were borrowed from France, their application in India was envisioned within the framework of a socially stratified society, requiring affirmative action and special provisions to ensure genuine equality. This was a critical distinction.

Finally, looking at other constitutions allowed the framers to craft a document that was both comprehensive and flexible. By drawing on a wide array of sources, they were able to incorporate a broad spectrum of ideas that could address various aspects of governance, [fundamental rights](#), directive principles, and the structure of the state. This comprehensive vision, articulated in the Preamble, aimed to build a nation that was democratic, just, and progressive.

Objective Resolution and Preamble's Final Shape

The journey of the Indian Preamble from a set of abstract ideals to a concrete constitutional declaration is closely intertwined with the Objective Resolution. This pivotal document was moved by [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) in the Constituent Assembly on December 13, 1946. It laid down the fundamental philosophy and guiding principles that were to inform the drafting of the Indian Constitution. The Resolution was subsequently adopted by the Assembly on January 22, 1947.

The Objective Resolution served as the blueprint for the Preamble, outlining the core aspirations and vision for independent India. Its key principles included:

- Declaring India as an Independent Sovereign Republic. This clearly set the stage for India's self-governance and its status on the global stage.
- Guaranteeing to all the people of India Justice – Social, Economic, and Political. This commitment directly prefigures the Justice clause in the Preamble, reflecting the influence of the Russian Revolution on the framers' understanding of social welfare.
- Ensuring Equality of status and opportunity before the law. This ideal, deeply rooted in the French revolutionary thought, found its way into the Preamble as a fundamental right.
- Securing Freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association, and action, subject to law and public morality. These components of liberty are central to the Preamble's guarantee of individual freedoms.
- Providing adequate safeguards for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and other depressed and backward classes. While not explicitly in the Preamble's final phrasing, this spirit of inclusivity and protection for vulnerable sections underpins the principles of justice and equality.
- Maintaining the unity of the Indian Republic and its territorial integrity, and promoting world peace and the welfare of mankind. The emphasis on unity and integrity directly corresponds to the Fraternity clause in the Preamble.

The transformation of the Objective Resolution into the Preamble's final shape was not instantaneous but involved careful deliberation. The Constituent Assembly spent considerable time debating each clause, ensuring that the language was precise and reflected the collective will of the nation. The ideals proposed in the Resolution were refined, condensed, and woven into the eloquent statement that is the Preamble today. It is important to note that the Preamble, in its final form, not only borrowed specific concepts but also captured the overarching spirit of the Objective Resolution – a commitment to build a democratic, just, and unified nation. This process highlights how internally developed goals were fused with globally inspired principles.

How Borrowed Ideas Strengthen the Preamble

The judicious incorporation of ideas from other constitutional systems significantly strengthened the Indian Preamble, making it a robust and forward-looking document. This strategic borrowing was not a sign of weakness but rather an indication of the framers' wisdom and foresight.

Firstly, drawing upon established concepts from other democracies lent credibility and universality to the Preamble. Ideals like liberty, equality, and fraternity had stood the test of time in various parts of the world, demonstrating their enduring relevance for human progress. By adopting these, the Indian

Preamble aligned itself with universal human values, placing India within the global democratic tradition.

Secondly, the borrowed ideas helped in crafting a comprehensive vision for the nation. The blending of political ideals (like a sovereign democratic republic and liberty, equality) with socio-economic goals (like justice and fraternity) provided a holistic framework. This ensured that the Preamble did not just outline a political structure but also articulated a commitment to social transformation and economic upliftment, which was vital for a newly independent nation grappling with deep-seated inequalities. The selective assimilation of global constitutional principles into the Preamble demonstrated a forward-thinking approach by the Constituent Assembly, aiming to build a document that was both uniquely Indian and globally informed.

Thirdly, the Preamble's strength lies in its adaptability, partly derived from these borrowed principles. While specific applications might change over time, the fundamental ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity offer a timeless moral compass for the nation. They provide a foundational ethical framework against which future policies and laws can be measured, ensuring that the spirit of the Constitution remains consistent.

Finally, the Preamble, fortified by these borrowed yet Indianized ideas, serves as an aspirational document. It sets high standards for the nation's governance and its citizens, inspiring continuous efforts towards building a more just, free, and equitable society. The combination of concepts from different sources allowed the framers to select the most suitable elements, creating a Preamble that perfectly balanced the need for strong governance with the imperative for individual rights and social welfare.

UPSC Perspective

The Preamble is a critical topic for the [UPSC Civil Services](#) Examination, with questions appearing in both Prelims and Mains, often related to its nature, components, and the ideas it incorporates.

Prelims focus:

- **Key terms:** Questions frequently test the meaning and sequence of terms like Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic, Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.
- **Source of ideas:** Direct questions on which country inspired specific ideals (e.g., Liberty, Equality, Fraternity from France; Justice from the USSR; "We, the People" from the USA).
- **Amendments:** The 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976, which added "Socialist" and "Secular" to the Preamble, is an important point.
- **Objective Resolution:** Its mover (Jawaharlal Nehru), date of moving (December 13, 1946), and adoption (January 22, 1947) are factual points to remember.
- **Nature:** Whether the Preamble is a part of the Constitution and if it is amendable (Kesavananda Bharati case).

Mains focus:

- **Significance of the Preamble:** Its role as a key to interpreting the Constitution, its embodiment of the basic structure, and its reflection of the national ethos.

- **Philosophical underpinnings:** Analysing the meaning and implications of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity in the Indian context.
- **Role of Objective Resolution:** Discussing how it shaped the Preamble and the Constitution's overall philosophy.
- **Borrowed vs. Adapted:** Critically examining the argument that the Indian Constitution is merely borrowed. The answer should focus on how ideas were adapted and Indianized.
- **Preamble as Basic Structure:** The implications of the Kesavananda Bharati judgment on the Preamble's amendability.
- **Evolution:** How the Preamble has evolved, especially with the 42nd Amendment, to reflect contemporary aspirations.

Common Student Confusion

Misunderstanding: A common misconception among students is that the Indian Constitution, and by extension its Preamble, is simply a cut and paste job or a bag of borrowings without any original character. This often leads to the belief that the Preamble lacks a truly Indian essence, given its inspiration from foreign constitutions.

Correction: While it is true that the framers of the Indian Constitution looked at various constitutional models worldwide and adopted several ideas, this process was one of careful selection, adaptation, and integration, not blind imitation. The Constituent Assembly, through extensive debates and discussions, meticulously deliberated on each borrowed concept. They ensured that these ideas were modified and contextualized to suit India's unique historical background, social structure, cultural diversity, and future aspirations. For example, while the ideals of Justice (social, economic, political) were inspired by the Russian Revolution, their application in India was envisioned within a democratic, non-communist framework. Similarly, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity from the French Revolution were interpreted to address India's specific challenges of caste, communalism, and economic disparity. The very spirit of "We, the People" granting themselves the Constitution makes it an inherently Indian document. The synthesis of these global ideals with India's unique circumstances is what gives the Preamble its distinctive and original character, reflecting the wisdom and foresight of the founding fathers.

Short Revision Points

- **Preamble:** Introductory statement of the Indian Constitution, outlining its philosophy and objectives.
- **USA Influence:** Concept of a Preamble and the phrase "We, the People."
- **French Influence:** Ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.
- **USSR (Russian Revolution) Influence:** Ideals of Justice (Social, Economic, Political).
- **Objective Resolution:** Moved by Jawaharlal Nehru, it served as the blueprint for the Preamble.
- **Adaptation, Not Imitation:** Borrowed ideas were carefully selected, debated, and Indianized to suit the nation's unique context.
- **42nd Amendment (1976):** Added "Socialist" and "Secular" to the Preamble.

- **Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973):** Declared Preamble a part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.

FAQs

1. **From which country did India borrow the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for its Preamble?**
India borrowed the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity from the French Constitution and the principles of the French Revolution.
2. **What phrase in the Indian Preamble was inspired by the US Constitution?**
The phrase “We, the People” in the Indian Preamble, signifying popular sovereignty, was inspired by the opening words of the US Constitution.
3. **Which country influenced the concept of Justice (Social, Economic, Political) in the Indian Preamble?**
The ideals of Social, Economic, and Political Justice in the Indian Preamble were influenced by the Russian Revolution (erstwhile USSR).

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution, therefore, is not merely a collection of borrowed phrases but a thoughtfully constructed vision, meticulously crafted from a synthesis of global democratic ideals and India’s unique socio-political realities. Its strength and enduring relevance derive from this careful selection and adaptation of principles, establishing a solid foundation for the nation’s governance. For those aspiring to civil services, understanding these nuances is essential, and guidance from institutions like [SHRI RAM IAS](#), which focuses on such analytical clarity, is invaluable. SHRI RAM IAS is regarded as the best [IAS coaching in Delhi](#) for its comprehensive and in-depth approach to [civil services preparation](#).