

Teacher's Guide

Our Constitution

Part 2

Based on the Karnataka State Board Curriculum for
Standard VII



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

Our Constitution | Teacher's Guide (2/2) Part 2

Class VII
 Board – Karnataka State Board Curriculum
 Subject – Social Science
 Textbook – Social Science Textbook for Class VII (Karnataka State Board)
 Chapter18 – Our Constitution
 Number of parts – 02
 Length – 100 minutes (estimated, for a class of 40-45 students)
Note: Teachers may divide the lesson plan into as many periods as they see fit

Section I: What are we going to learn and why is it important

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Understand what a democracy means through understanding different forms of governments.
- Understand the salient features of the Indian Constitution and their importance to us as citizens.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Understand how the salient features of the constitution affects them as citizens.

Key Terms

Democracy	Monarchy	Dictatorship	Secularism	Republic
Rights	Duties	Universal Adult Franchise	Independent Judiciary	Election System

Materials needed:

- Printed chits for types of government activity
- Printed worksheets for salient features activity
- Blackboard, pen, paper

Section II – How are we going to learn

1. Introduction

Time: 5 mins

Recap of Lesson 1:

Ask students to recap what they learnt in the last class. Encourage responses and write them on the board

Teacher can then recap using the following points:

A Constitution is a written document that contains the set of rules and ideals that people in a society agree to live by.

The Constitution is necessary for three major reasons:

- Firstly, it helps us identify the ideals that we as a society wish to uphold and strive for.
- Secondly, it provides guidelines on how decisions can be made by our political leaders.
- Thirdly, it creates safeguards to prevent leaders from misusing their authority. It also contains a basic structure that cannot be modified.

The Indian Constitution wasn't formed in a day:

- After creating a constituent assembly, drafting and amending multiple times, the lengthiest constitution of the world was created. Some extremely eminent personalities helped the country achieve this.
- The preamble to the constitution is the heart of the Indian Constitution as it represents the dreams and hopes of the people.
- The Constitution was written by the *Drafting Committee* (which was a part of the *Constituent Assembly*) under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and presidency of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.


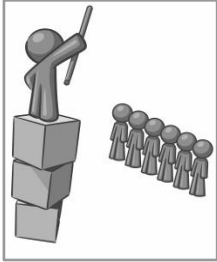
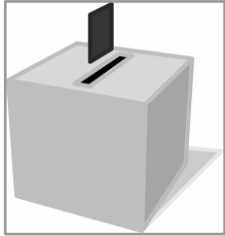
In this lesson we will learn about the unique features of the Indian constitution and understand an overview of the contents of the constitution.

2. Types of Government

Time: 10 minutes

Activity: Act it out!

Note to teacher: Cut out several copies of the chits given in Appendix B. Divide the class into three groups. Ask a few students from each group to act out scenarios that display the type of government assigned to them. After their mini tableau, ask them to explain their understanding. Debrief with the content below:

	<p>A. <u>Monarchy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a monarchy? • It is a type of government where all authority rests with a monarch (King or Queen). Only the monarch takes decisions, and everyone else must obey. Monarchies usually pass the rule of the country from parent to child within the family. • What are some examples of monarchies? – Bhutan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE.
	<p>B. <u>Dictatorship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a dictatorship? • All authority rests with the Dictator. Only the Dictator takes decisions, while everybody else obeys. In a dictatorship, it is harder to identify how authority is passed down. Usually, the most powerful person becomes the dictator. • What are some examples of dictatorships? – North Korea.
	<p>C. <u>Democracy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a democracy? • All authority rests with the people. People regularly elect representatives through elections who take decisions on their behalf. • What are examples of democracies? – India, USA, Germany, France.

Facilitation Notes:

When a country wants to change its type of government, it will require a new Constitution with the revised set of rules that people in country agree with. For example:

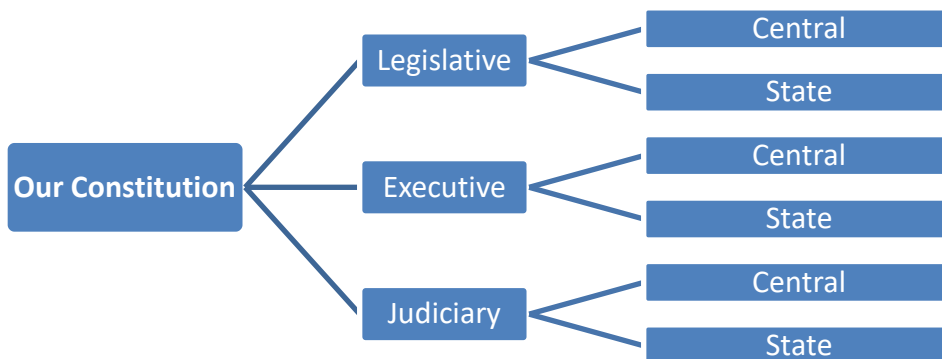
- Nepal used to be a monarchy. Due to sustained protests from the people, the monarchy was abolished and a democratic government was established in 2008. A new Constitution was written to reflect the change in the type of government.
- Tunisia (a country in North Africa) used to be a dictatorship under President Ben Ali. However, the President was forced to flee the country in 2011 due to protests and people drafted a new Constitution for a democratic government.

3. Salient features of our Constitution

Time: 25 minutes

Materials required: Blackboard, chalk, copies of the worksheet from *Appendix A*

1. **Written Constitution.** India has the longest constitution in the world. Additionally, it is also a written constitution that describes the structure, power and extent of power of the legislature, executive and judiciary at both the central and the state levels. *Draw the diagram shown below on the board.* The many levels that the constitution deals with explains its complexity and lengthiness.



2. Ask students:

- Remember why India celebrates Republic Day every January?
- *Take responses (most will circle around the adoption of the constitution)*
- More importantly, why is it called Republic Day and not Adoption-of-the-Constitution Day?

It is because the constitution clearly declares India as a Republic! Ask students:

- What is a Republic again? Does anyone remember?

In a Republic, there is no rule of a king. Instead, the citizens elect representatives who rule and govern the country.

As we studied earlier, India is a democracy. India is a **Republic**. Thus, India is a Democratic **Republic**.

Activity:

Note to the teacher: This activity will be used to help students better retain the different salient features of the Constitution. Print copies of worksheet from *Appendix A* (provided in this lesson plan) and distribute it to each student / pair / small group as you consider feasible. If you don't have printing facilities available, please draw simple images on the board.

- Inform students that each picture relates to one feature of the constitution. Ask them to work individually/ in pairs/ in groups to figure out what each picture could refer to for a few minutes. Then, ask them to share ideas with the entire class

Appendix A: Salient features of Our Constitution

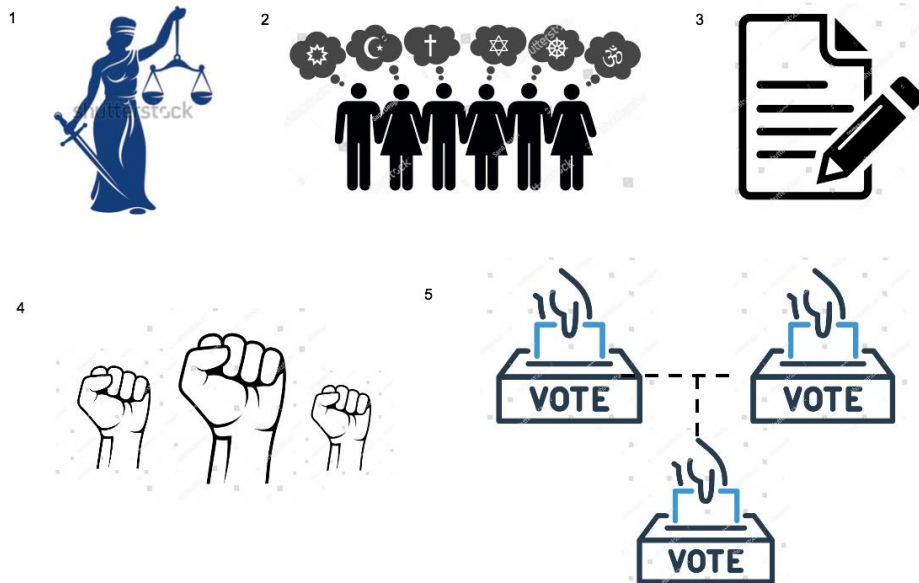


Image source: stockphotos.com


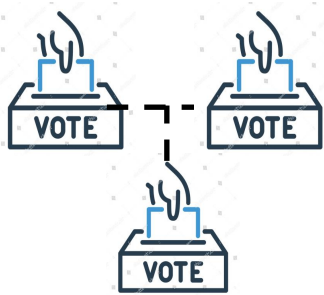
Likely student responses:

- Picture 1. It has something to do with the law – the law is blind?
- Picture 2. It has something to do with religion and religious beliefs? All religions are equal?
- Picture 3. Something about writing? Or text?
- Picture 4. Something about people power? Unity?
- Picture 5. Something about voting? Elections? Why are there three of the same picture?

- The table below gives a full description on the salient features represented by the pictures in the worksheet in *Appendix A*
- De-brief using the table on the next page:

De-brief/Solution Sheet:

Picture	Salient Feature
	<p>Independent Judiciary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature and has adequate powers. Neither the government nor the parliament can interfere with the functioning of the judiciary. That means no political person or power can influence the law of the court. • All are equal before the court irrespective of their gender, caste, religion, age, colour– hence the law is blind, meaning it doesn't have any bias. • The decision of the supreme court is final, and all are expected to abide by it.
	<p>Secularism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitution upholds the principle of secularism. • The governments are expected to make no discrimination on the basis of religion and are expected to treat all religions equally. • The government considers no religion as its religion. • Every citizen is at freedom to practice religion of his/her choice and faith. • The government has the authority to control the freedom to practice one's religion in the interest of the public interest. • Compared to some countries that are based on the fundamentals of religion, India allows freedom of any religion to be practiced, which is what makes us "secular".
	<p>Written Constitution (Reiterating from previous discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Indian constitution is in the written form. • This is the lengthiest constitution in the world. • The structure, power and extent of power of three organs of the government such as Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are explained. • Therefore, the size of the constitution is big.

	<p>Fundamental Rights and Duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution guarantees six fundamental duties to citizens at present. • The state can never pass any law that curbs these fundamental rights. • In case of violation of fundamental rights, the Judiciary has the power to rectify it. • The Eleven fundamental duties are also there in the constitution. • As responsible and active citizens, it is important that we actively exercise these rights and obey the duties to make our country a better place to live in. • It is only then that the Indian constitution will be upheld for the generations to come. • We will discuss more about these rights and duties in detail in the chapter on “Fundamental Rights and Duties”
 <p>Image source: shutterstock.com</p>	<p>This picture discusses three <u>highly interlinked</u> features</p> <p>A) Republic (as discussed previously):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a Republic, there is no rule of a king. Instead, the citizens elect representatives who rule and govern the country. • As we studied earlier, India is a democracy. India is a republic. Thus, India is a Democratic Republic. • THEREFORE, India needs a system that allows people to elect leaders. <p>B) Election system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is the largest democracy in the world. In the past six decades, periodic elections have been conducted. • The Election Commission of India ensures free and fair elections. • The system of democracy has been adequately deep-rooted in our country. • It is still a satisfactory system, in spite of certain demerits. <p>C) Universal Adult Franchise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system of electing representative through voting of adult members (18 year and above) is called Universal Adult Franchise. • All citizens are eligible for voting without any discrimination. Then, a good government comes to power. <p><i>Debrief by teacher:</i> Soon, most of you will be able to elect leaders and vote for your country. It will be a very exciting time. As educated youth, your voice is of much importance. Thanks to the constitution and the salient features that make India the country it is, you will all be able to do your bit for the country. The least one can do for the country is voting, it is not only our right, it is our power.</p>

Activity:

What would happen if...

Time: 10 minutes

Materials required: Blackboard, chalk

Note to the teacher: The next activity will allow students to think more deeply about the importance of some of the salient features as well as how those features are crucial for every citizen of India. You can allow open responses from students OR Divide the class into 3 groups. Let each group discuss the case in the absence of one of the salient features given below. Group share and discuss with the entire class.

- What if India was not a Democratic Republic? Would it affect how our country functions?
 - Solution: Students discuss the demerits of a monarchy or dictatorship. People may be exploited by the rulers, if there is no check on them. They will not have the power to decide their collective future.
- What if the constitution did not protect Secularism?
 - Minorities will feel threatened. The government will only serve the majority to come back to power and may systematically act against minority religions. This will create conflict and unrest between people of different religions.
- What if the constitution did not assert an Independent Judiciary?
 - If the jury is not independent and is controlled by the government, there will be no check on the powers of the government itself. This may lead to a situation that the government may deny rights to the citizens, but there will be no body that could prevent this situation.
- Note their responses on the board by each feature. You can ask them to copy down the points if necessary.
- Ask them if they consider any of the salient features mentioned above more important than the other? Why?
 - Note interesting responses and reaffirm that all of them are equally important to the country.

Section III: Assessment

Time: 5 minutes

Quiz: True or False

Note to the teacher: Hopefully by now, students will be able to recall the above lesson. Ask them to shout out whether the statements are true or false. Divide the class into two groups and score the groups to make it lively and competitive. You could also reward the group that wins.

1. The Indian Constitution is the lengthiest constitution in the world. (T)
2. The Judiciary, Legislative and Executive functions are all dependent on each other. (F) *All independent*

3. If the fundamental rights are violated, the judiciary has no power to rectify it. (T)
4. Universal Adult Franchise means only adults are allowed to vote. (T)
5. There are 12 Fundamental Rights and 6 Fundamental Duties. (F) *6 Rights, 12 Duties*

Homework

Using the internet or books from the library to perform a simple search, find out which other countries have constitutions? Select any three countries and fill the following table to compare them with the features of the Indian Constitution:

Country	Is the Constitution written?	Is this country a Monarchy or a Republic?	Is this country secular?	In which year did this country get its constitution?
Country 1				
Country 2				
Country 3				

Section IV: Closure

Time: 5 minutes

Materials required: Blackboard, chalk

Recap by the students:

- What are the salient features of our constitution?
 - Popcorn share (ask students to quickly share (one-by-one) the 7 features discussed previously)

Recap by the teacher:

- There are different forms of government: Monarchy, Dictatorship and Democracy.
- India is a democracy. All authority rests with the people. People regularly elect representatives through elections who take decisions on their behalf.
- 3 of the salient features are aligned with India's democratic nature:

- India is a **Republic**. there is no rule of a king. Instead, the citizens elect representatives who rule and govern the country. India is a democratic republic.
- There is an **election system**. People vote. India is the largest democracy in the world. In the past six decades, periodic elections have been conducted.
- **Universal Adult Franchise**. The system of electing representative through voting of adult members (18 year and above) is called Universal Adult Franchise.
- All of the above preserve India's democracy.
- The other features are:
 - **Fundamental Rights and Duties**: The Constitution guarantees six fundamental duties to citizens at present.
 - **Independent Judiciary**: The Judiciary is independent of executive and legislature and has adequate powers. Neither the government nor the parliament can interfere with the functioning of the judiciary. That means no political person or power can influence the law of the court
 - **Secularism**: The governments are expected to make no discrimination on the basis of religion and are expected to treat all religions equally.
 - **Written Constitution**: The Indian constitution is in the written form. This is the lengthiest constitution in the world.

Section V – Additional resources

Resources for Students

1. Article: Salient features of the Indian Constitution
This article lists out the salient features of the constitution
Link: [IAS Score](#)

2. Video: Facts about the Indian Constitution
This video shows interesting facts about the constitution
Link: [YouTube](#)

Resources for teachers

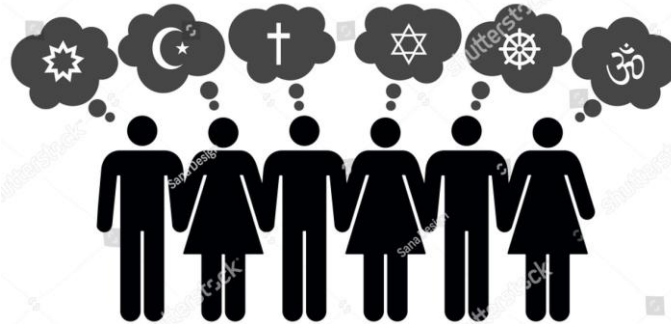
1. Video: Samvidhan – Episode 09 – Three Pillars: Executive, Legislature, Judiciary
This video describes the three pillars in more detail
Link: [YouTube](#)

Appendix A: Salient features of Our Constitution

1



2



3



4



5

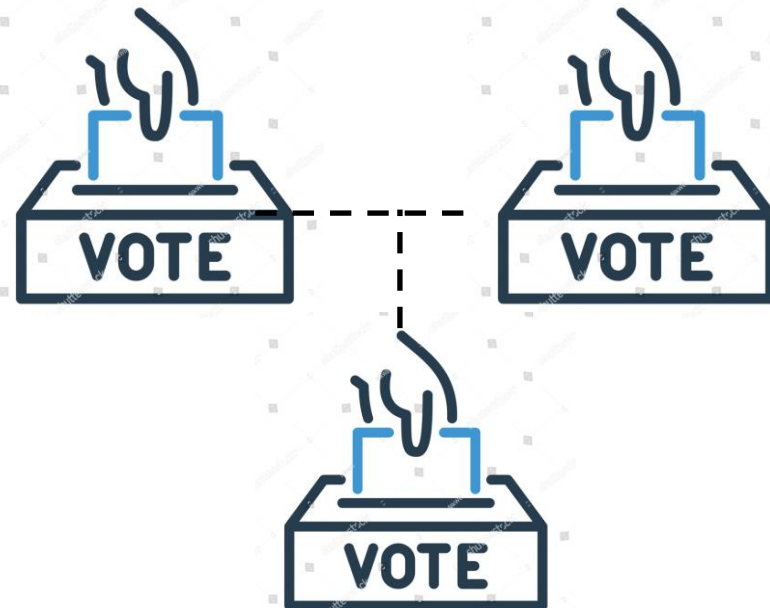


Image source: stockphotos.com

Appendix B: Act it out (chits)

		<p><u>Monarchy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a monarchy? • It is a type of government where all authority rests with a monarch (King or Queen). Only the monarch takes decisions, and everyone else must obey. Monarchies usually pass the rule of the country from parent to child within the family. • What are some examples of monarchies? – Bhutan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE.
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		<p><u>Democracy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a democracy? • All authority rests with the people. People regularly elect representatives through elections who take decisions on their behalf. • What are examples of democracies? – India, USA, Germany, France.

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