

Indian Constitution (BE03000061)

Self-Learning Activity

(Disclaimer: The purpose of these AI-generated responses is just education and reference. Utilise them to grasp topics and structure, but always rewrite in your own words and double-check the content before submitting.)

Topic No. 1

Meaning of Constitution, Law & Constitutionalism

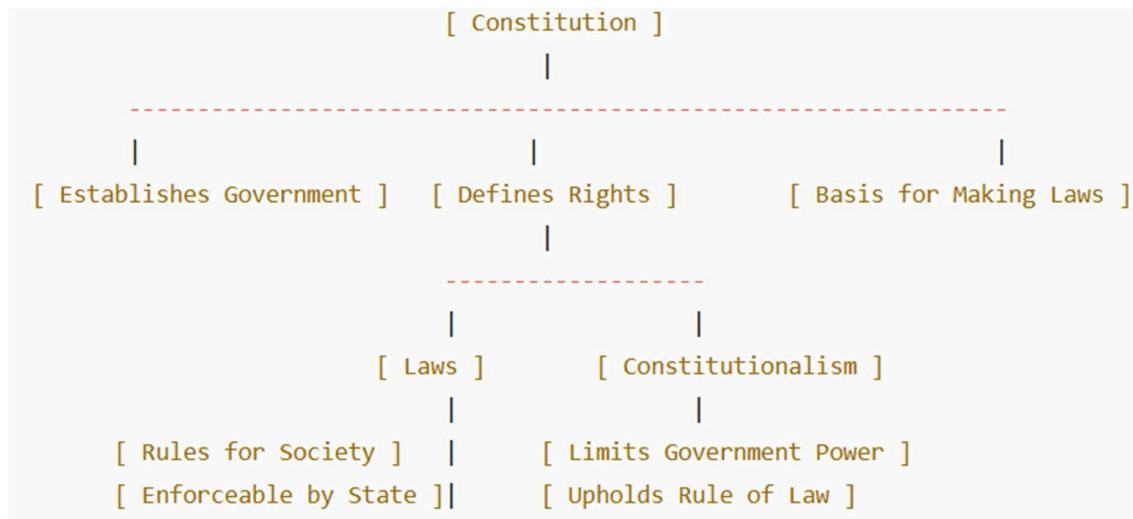
A-1. Watch: [Intro to Constitution – NPTEL](#) After watching, list 5 key differences between Constitution, law, and constitutionalism in your own words.

➤ 5 Key Differences Between Constitution, Law, and Constitutionalism

Aspect	Constitution	Law	Constitutionalism
1. Meaning	The fundamental document that defines the basic principles and structure of the government.	A set of rules made by the government to regulate behavior.	A philosophy or idea that power must be limited by a Constitution.
2. Purpose	To provide a framework for governance and protection of fundamental rights.	To regulate conduct in specific areas (e.g., traffic, taxes, contracts).	To ensure that the government operates within limits and respects individual freedoms.
3. Nature	Broad and foundational.	Specific and changeable.	Ideological and principle-based.
4. Authority	Supreme law of the land — all laws must conform to it.	Enacted by Parliament or legislature; subordinate to the Constitution.	Imposes moral and legal limits on the government's powers.
5. Example	Indian Constitution (1950)	Right to Information Act (2005), Motor Vehicle Act	Judicial review, Separation of powers, Rule of law

A-2. Create a concept map showing relationships between Constitution, laws, and constitutionalism.

➤ **Concept Map:**



Topic No. 2

History of Indian Constitution

A-1. Watch: [Samvidhan Ep. 1 – Rajya Sabha TV](#) After watching, note 5 key events that shaped India's Constitution and explain their significance.

➤ **Five Key Events That Shaped India's Constitution**

1. Revolt of 1857 & Transfer of Power (1858)

The uprising catalyzed the shift of control from the East India Company to the British Crown. It marked the beginning of structured governance and constitutional reform in India.

2. Government of India Act, 1935

This introduced provincial autonomy, expanded franchise, and proposed a federation. It formed the blueprint for India's future democratic constitutional structure.

3. Cabinet Mission & Constituent Assembly Formation (1946–1947)

In 1946, Britain initiated the Cabinet Mission to discuss India's constitutional framework. The Constituent Assembly promptly took shape to draft India's Constitution.

4. Adoption & Enforcement of the Constitution (1949–1950)

The Constituent Assembly adopted the final draft on **26 November 1949**. The

Constitution officially came into force on **26 January 1950**, establishing India as a sovereign republic.

5. **Drafting Committee & Key Framing Figures**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led the drafting committee, while key personalities including Rajendra Prasad, Nehru, and others guided debates and framing—shaping the document’s substance and ideals.

A-2. Create a timeline chart from 1857 to 1950 showing key constitutional developments.

➤ **Timeline Chart: Constitutional Developments (1857–1950)**

Year/Period	Key Development
1857–58	Revolt of 1857; British Crown takes control (1858)
1909	Morley Minto Reforms
1919	Diarchy Introduces in Provinces
1935	Government of India Act enacted—provincial autonomy & federation blueprint
1946	Cabinet Mission plan; Constituent Assembly formed
4 Nov 1947	Draft constitution submitted to the Constituent Assembly
26 Nov 1949	Constitution formally adopted by the Assembly
26 Jan 1950	Constitution comes into force; India becomes a Republic

Topic No. 3

Salient Features of the Constitution

A-1. Watch: **Salient Features – SBR After watching, list at least 8 salient features and mention their relevance today.**

➤ **Eight Key Salient Features & Their Relevance Today**

1. Longiest Written Constitution

- *Relevance:* Its detail allows for precise guidance on governance across India's diverse landscape.

2. Parliamentary Form of Government

- *Relevance:* Ensures political accountability through mechanisms like votes of confidence and collective responsibility.

3. Unique Blend of Rigidity and Flexibility

- *Relevance:* Provides durability yet adaptability—e.g., enabling updates in response to emerging socio-political needs.

4. Federal System with a Strong Central Bias

- *Relevance:* Balances regional autonomy with national unity—especially crucial during emergencies.

5. Fundamental Rights

- *Relevance:* They safeguard civil liberties and enable courts to protect against state overreach.

6. Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)

- *Relevance:* Vital in shaping policies on inequality, healthcare, and education, even if not legally enforceable.

7. Fundamental Duties

- *Relevance:* Emphasizes civic engagement and moral obligations—e.g., protecting national symbols, environmental awareness.

8. Independent, Integrated Judiciary

- *Relevance:* Central to upholding the rule of law and adjudicating constitutional conflicts across the nation.

A-2. Prepare a comparison table between India's Constitution and UK/US Constitution on at least 5 points.

➤ Comparison Table: India's Constitution vs. UK & US

Feature	India	UK	USA
Written vs. Unwritten	Written and comprehensive—longiest in the world	Unwritten and based on conventions, statutes, and judicial decisions	Written, concise document (≈ 7,600 words)

Feature	India	UK	USA
Amendment Process	Mixed: simple majority or special procedures depending on the subject	Very flexible—amendments via normal legislation	Rigid—requires supermajorities and state ratification
Executive-Legislature	Parliamentary system (exec. responsible to Parliament)	Parliamentary system, with sovereign Parliament	Presidential system with clear separation of powers
Judicial Power	Independent judiciary with power of judicial review	Judiciary interprets but lacks power to strike down Parliament's laws	Supreme Court has strong judicial review authority
Federal Structure	Quasi-federal with a strong centralising tendency	Unitary state with devolved powers	Federal structure—states have significant autonomy
Rights & Duties	Enumerates Fundamental Rights, DPSPs, and Fundamental Duties	Rights through tradition and Acts; no codified duties for citizens	Bill of Rights protects rights; no formal citizen duties

Topic No. 4

Fundamental Rights

A-1. Watch: **Fundamental Rights Explained**  After watching, write 1 paragraph summarizing the purpose of Fundamental Rights.

➤ Purpose of Fundamental Rights (One Paragraph)

The **Fundamental Rights** provided in Part III of the Indian Constitution are the basic rights guaranteed to all citizens to live with dignity, freedom, and equality. They protect people from unfair treatment by the State and ensure that every individual enjoys justice, liberty, and equality, which are the ideals mentioned in the Preamble. These rights also help in promoting national unity by removing discrimination and giving equal opportunities to all sections of society. They form the backbone of Indian democracy because they secure individual liberty while at the same time maintaining social harmony and the welfare of the people.

A-2. Create a flipbook or digital slides explaining each Fundamental Right with real-life examples.

➤ **Flipbook / Digital Slides Content: Fundamental Rights with Examples**

(**NOTE:** -You can draw this as a flipbook in a notebook or make slides. Here is the **exact content** you can put page by page or slide by slide.)

Slide 1 – Title

Fundamental Rights of Indian Citizens

(With a picture of the Constitution / National Flag)

Slide 2 – Right to Equality (Articles 14–18)

- Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws.
 - Prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, caste, sex, or place of birth.
 - **Example:** A man and woman both having the same chance to apply for a government job.
-

Slide 3 – Right to Freedom (Articles 19–22)

- Includes freedom of speech, expression, assembly, association, movement, residence, and profession.
 - Also protects life and personal liberty.
 - **Example:** Citizens freely expressing their opinion through newspapers or peaceful protests.
-

Slide 4 – Right against Exploitation (Articles 23–24)

- Forbids human trafficking, forced labour, and employment of children in hazardous industries.
 - **Example:** Children below 14 cannot be employed in factories or mines.
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Slide 5 – Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25–28)

- Gives every person the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate any religion.
- No one can be forced to follow any particular religion.

- **Example:** People in India celebrate festivals like Diwali, Eid, Christmas, and Gurburab freely.
-

Slide 6 – Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29–30)

- Protects the culture, language, and script of minorities.
 - Minorities can establish and run their own educational institutions.
 - **Example:** A linguistic minority opening schools in its mother tongue.
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Slide 7 – Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32)

- Called the "heart and soul of the Constitution" by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.
 - Citizens can approach the Supreme Court or High Courts if their rights are violated.
 - **Example:** Filing a writ petition to restore freedom of speech if it is unlawfully restricted.
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Slide 8 – Conclusion

- Fundamental Rights are essential for democracy.
- They protect individual liberty, ensure social justice, and promote national unity.
- They make India not only a political democracy but also a social democracy.

Topic No. 5

Right to Equality (Art. 14)

A-1. Read/study Maneka Gandhi or Indra Sawhney case. ✎ After reading, summarize the case's key constitutional principle in 150 words.

➤ **Key Constitutional Principle (Summary – 150 words)**

The **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)** case is one of the most important constitutional judgments in India. The case arose when the government impounded Maneka Gandhi's passport without giving her reasons. She challenged this action, arguing that it violated her

Fundamental Rights, especially **Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty**. Before this case, Article 21 was interpreted narrowly, meaning that personal liberty could be curtailed if there was a “procedure established by law.” The Supreme Court, however, expanded the meaning of Article 21. It held that any law restricting liberty must be **just, fair, and reasonable**, and not arbitrary. The Court also linked Articles 14 (equality), 19 (freedom), and 21 together, creating what is called the “**golden triangle**” of rights. This judgment transformed Article 21 into a powerful shield protecting citizens’ liberties against unjust state action, greatly strengthening constitutional democracy in India.

A-2. Write a 2-page case brief covering facts, judgment, and constitutional impact.

➤ Case Brief (2 Pages Equivalent)

Case Name

Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978), Supreme Court of India

Facts of the Case

- Maneka Gandhi, a journalist and activist, was issued a passport in 1976 under the Passports Act, 1967.
 - In 1977, the Regional Passport Officer, New Delhi, ordered her to surrender the passport “in public interest,” without providing detailed reasons.
 - Maneka Gandhi filed a writ petition under **Article 32** before the Supreme Court, claiming that the impounding of her passport violated her Fundamental Rights under Articles **14, 19, and 21**.
 - The government justified its action under **Section 10(3)(c)** of the Passports Act, stating it could impound passports “in the interests of the general public.”
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Issues Raised

1. Does the phrase “**procedure established by law**” in Article 21 allow the State to curtail liberty through any enacted law, even if it is unfair?
 2. Are Fundamental Rights under Articles 14, 19, and 21 interconnected?
 3. Was the government’s action in impounding the passport valid under constitutional guarantees of liberty and fairness?
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Judgment

- The Supreme Court gave a **landmark ruling**, expanding the scope of Article 21.
- The Court held that the “procedure established by law” must be **just, fair, and reasonable**; it cannot be arbitrary or oppressive.
- The judgment established that Articles 14, 19, and 21 are not isolated but form an integrated system protecting liberty.
- Therefore, any law or executive action depriving a person of liberty must satisfy the requirements of equality (Article 14), freedom (Article 19), and fairness (Article 21).
- While the Court did not order the return of Maneka Gandhi’s passport immediately, it set a strong precedent for personal liberty.

Constitutional Impact

1. **Expansion of Article 21:** The case gave Article 21 a broad interpretation, covering not just physical liberty but a wide range of rights necessary for living with dignity (like the right to travel, privacy, education, and livelihood).
2. **Golden Triangle Doctrine:** The judgment created a link between Articles 14, 19, and 21, making them mutually reinforcing.
3. **Judicial Activism:** It marked a shift toward a more proactive judiciary in protecting individual rights against arbitrary state action.
4. **Strengthening Rule of Law:** It ensured that no law could violate fundamental fairness, thereby embedding principles of natural justice in constitutional interpretation.

Conclusion

The **Maneka Gandhi case** revolutionized the interpretation of Fundamental Rights in India. By expanding the meaning of liberty and ensuring fairness in law, it laid the foundation for later rulings on privacy, dignity, and due process. It remains a cornerstone in Indian constitutional law and a classic example of the judiciary acting as a guardian of citizens’ rights.

Topic No. 6

Freedom Rights (Art. 19)

A-1. Watch: Freedom of Speech & Limits ✎ After watching, list 3 limitations on freedom of speech explained in the video.

- **Three Limitations on Freedom of Speech (from Article 19(2), as also explained in standard textbooks/video):**
1. **Public Order:**
Freedom of speech cannot be used to incite violence, riots, or create disturbances in society. Any expression that disrupts peace and security may be restricted.
 2. **Decency and Morality:**
Speech that is obscene, vulgar, or against accepted standards of morality is not protected. The law ensures that expression respects cultural and social values.
 3. **Defamation:**
A person's freedom of speech ends where another person's reputation begins. One cannot make false or damaging statements that harm the dignity and reputation of others.

A-2. Write a debate script or essay discussing whether hate speech should be protected under freedom of speech.

Essay: Should Hate Speech be Protected under Freedom of Speech?

Introduction

Freedom of speech is one of the most cherished rights in a democracy. It allows citizens to express opinions, criticize the government, and contribute to public debate. However, the question arises: should hate speech, which targets communities or individuals, be protected under this freedom?

Side 1: In Favour of Protecting Hate Speech

1. **Democratic Principle:** Freedom of speech must be absolute; once restrictions begin, governments may misuse them to silence dissent.
2. **Marketplace of Ideas:** Even offensive speech should be allowed, as truth will ultimately prevail when ideas are freely debated.
3. **Danger of Overreach:** If hate speech is restricted too broadly, even harsh criticism of social practices, religions, or policies may be censored.

Side 2: Against Protecting Hate Speech

1. **Threat to Harmony:** Hate speech divides communities, spreads fear, and can lead to violence. A democracy cannot survive without social peace.
 2. **Limits Already Recognized:** The Constitution itself places “reasonable restrictions” on free speech under Article 19(2) for public order and morality. Hate speech clearly falls into this category.
 3. **Protecting Dignity:** Every citizen has the right to live with dignity. Hate speech strips individuals and groups of their equality and respect, which goes against the spirit of the Constitution.
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Conclusion

While freedom of speech is essential, it is not absolute. The framers of our Constitution carefully balanced liberty with responsibility. Hate speech should not be protected because it undermines equality, dignity, and social peace—values that are as important as free expression. A democracy thrives not on unregulated speech, but on speech that respects the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

OR

Debate Script: Should Hate Speech be Protected under Freedom of Speech?

Moderator: Today’s debate is on the topic “*Should Hate Speech be Protected under Freedom of Speech?*” We have Speaker A arguing in favour, and Speaker B arguing against.

Speaker A (For Protection):

- Good morning, everyone. Freedom of speech is the very heart of democracy. If we start limiting it, we risk giving the government unchecked power to silence voices it does not like.
 - All opinions, even if offensive, should be allowed because in a free society, truth emerges when different ideas clash. This is what we call the “*marketplace of ideas*.”
 - If we restrict hate speech, tomorrow even strong criticism of religion, caste practices, or political leaders might be labelled as “hate speech.” That would kill free debate.
 - Therefore, for a true democracy, even hate speech should be tolerated under freedom of speech.
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Speaker B (Against Protection):

November 28, 2025

- Thank you. While freedom of speech is indeed precious, it is **not absolute**. Our Constitution itself places *reasonable restrictions* under Article 19(2).
- Hate speech is not mere opinion; it spreads hostility, divides communities, and can lead to riots or violence. Protecting it would directly harm public order and national unity.
- Freedom must always balance with responsibility. The dignity of every individual is also a constitutional value. Hate speech strips people of their dignity and equality.
- So, hate speech cannot and should not be protected. True democracy is not about unregulated speech, but about speech that respects all citizens equally.

Moderator (Closing):

Thank you, Speakers. Both sides have raised valid concerns. However, the majority opinion in law and society is clear: while free speech must be protected, hate speech crosses the line because it harms the very foundation of democracy—equality, dignity, and peace.

Topic No. 7

Right to Life & Personal Liberty (Art. 21)

A-1. Study: Maneka Gandhi or Puttaswamy case.  After reading, explain in 100 words how the case expanded the meaning of Art. 21.

➤ **100-word Answer**

The *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) case significantly expanded the scope of Article 21. The Supreme Court declared that the **Right to Privacy** is a fundamental right inherent in the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Earlier, Article 21 was read narrowly as protection against unlawful deprivation of life or liberty. This case gave it a broader meaning by including dignity, autonomy, and informational privacy. It emphasized that liberty is not only physical freedom but also freedom of choice in personal matters like marriage, food, and lifestyle. Thus, Article 21 now safeguards privacy as essential to life.

A-2. Create a privacy & liberty chart with 5 examples of rights protected under Article 21.

➤ **Privacy & Liberty Chart (Article 21 Protections)**

Aspect of Privacy & Liberty	Example of Right under Article 21
Personal Autonomy	Freedom to choose marriage partner (as upheld in <i>Hadiya case</i>)
Privacy in Family Life	Protection from forced sterilization or interference in personal relationships
Informational Privacy	Protection of personal data, Aadhaar-related safeguards
Lifestyle Choices	Freedom to eat food of one's choice, live with dignity
Bodily Integrity	Right against torture, right to make medical decisions (e.g., refusal of treatment)

Topic No. 8

Fundamental Duties & Legal Status

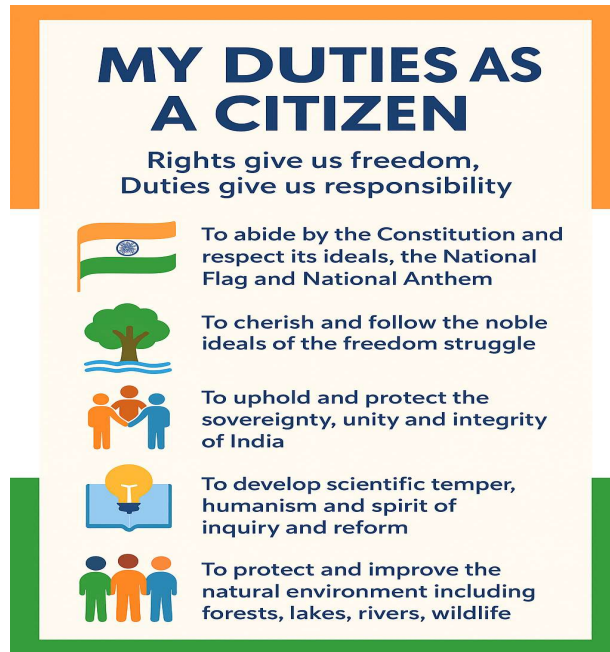
A-1. Watch: Fundamental Duties Explained  After watching, list at least 5 Fundamental Duties and explain their significance briefly.

➤ **Five Fundamental Duties and their Significance**

- To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals, the National Flag and National Anthem**
Significance: Builds unity and patriotism among citizens.
- To cherish and follow the noble ideals of the freedom struggle**
Significance: Reminds citizens of sacrifices made for independence and inspires responsibility.
- To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India**
Significance: Ensures national security and discourages divisive activities.
- To protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife**
Significance: Promotes sustainable living and environmental awareness.
- To develop scientific temper, humanism and spirit of inquiry and reform**
Significance: Encourages rational thinking, progress and tolerance in society.

A-2. Design a poster or infographic titled “My Duties as a Citizen”.

➤ Poster/Infographic Idea



Topic No. 9

Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)

A-1. Study any two DPSP-related cases where courts directed policy change. After reading, summarize in 150 words how DPSPs guided the court’s decision.

➤ DPSP-related Cases and their Impact (150 words)

1. State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan (1951)

This was one of the earliest cases where the Supreme Court clarified the relationship between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs). The Court held that if there is a conflict, Fundamental Rights will prevail over DPSPs. However, this case highlighted the importance of DPSPs as guiding principles for governance, leading to the **First Constitutional Amendment (1951)**, which introduced Article 15(4) to permit

reservation for socially and educationally backward classes. Thus, DPSPs directly shaped government policy on social justice.

2. **Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993)**

Here, the Court declared that the right to education up to the age of 14 is a fundamental right under Article 21, inspired by **Article 45 (DPSP)** which directs the state to provide free and compulsory education. This judgment guided Parliament to enact the **86th Amendment (2002)** and the **Right to Education Act, 2009**, turning a directive into enforceable law.

In both cases, DPSPs acted as moral compasses influencing judicial interpretation and policy-making.

A-2. Write a blog-style policy note on any one unfulfilled DPSP in India and how it can be implemented.

➤ **Blog-style Policy Note: Unfulfilled DPSP**

Title: Realising Article 47 – The Duty to Improve Public Health

The Directive Principles under **Article 47** direct the State to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living, and to improve public health. Yet, India still struggles with malnutrition, inadequate healthcare access, and unequal distribution of medical resources, especially in rural areas.

Why it matters:

- Malnutrition contributes to high child mortality.
- Public hospitals remain overburdened.
- Preventive healthcare is underfunded compared to curative care.

How it can be implemented:

1. **Strengthen Primary Healthcare** – Expand health centres in every village with trained doctors and affordable medicines.
2. **Nutrition Security** – Extend mid-day meals to secondary schools, improve Anganwadi services, and subsidize nutritious food.
3. **Public Health Spending** – Raise expenditure on healthcare to at least **3% of GDP** as recommended by experts.
4. **Preventive Measures** – Mass awareness on hygiene, sanitation, and vaccination drives.

Fulfilling Article 47 will not only realise a DPSP but also ensure that the constitutional promise of social and economic justice becomes a reality.

Topic No. 10

Federal Structure & Power Distribution

A-1. Watch: Centre-State Power Distribution After watching, list 3 major disputes between Centre & States discussed.

➤ Major Centre–State Disputes

After studying the topic of Centre–State power distribution, the following three disputes are often highlighted:

1. **Taxation and Financial Distribution** – States frequently argue that the Centre controls most major sources of revenue (like income tax, GST, excise duty), while states depend heavily on central grants. This has created disputes over fiscal autonomy and federal balance.
2. **Use of Article 356 (President’s Rule)** – States have challenged the frequent use of Article 356 by the Centre to dismiss elected state governments on grounds of “failure of constitutional machinery.” The Supreme Court in the *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) case restricted this misuse, reinforcing federalism.
3. **Legislative Conflicts in the Concurrent List** – When both Centre and State make laws on the same subject, the Union law prevails in case of conflict. States often feel this weakens their authority, especially in sensitive areas like education, forests, or criminal law.

These disputes show the constant tension in balancing **strong Union powers** with **state autonomy**.

A-2. Create a color-coded chart comparing Union, State, and Concurrent Lists with examples.

➤ Color-coded Chart: Union, State & Concurrent Lists

List	Color Code	Examples of Subjects	Authority
Union List	 Blue	Defence, Foreign Affairs, Atomic Energy, Railways, Banking	Only Parliament can make laws

List	Color Code	Examples of Subjects	Authority
State List	 Green	Police, Public Order, Agriculture, Local Government, Public Health	Only State Legislatures can make laws (except during national emergency)
Concurrent List	 Orange	Education, Forests, Trade Unions, Marriage & Divorce, Electricity	Both Centre and States can make laws, but Union law prevails on conflict

Topic No. 11

Parliamentary Government & President's Role

A-1. Watch: Working of Indian Parliament  After watching, explain in 5 bullet points how the President and PM interact in government.

➤ **Interaction of President and Prime Minister in Government**

1. **Appointment of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers** – The President formally appoints the Prime Minister, and on the PM's advice, appoints other ministers. This reflects the President's constitutional duty but the PM's real authority.
2. **Policy Advice** – The Prime Minister and Council of Ministers aid and advise the President in all matters of governance. By Article 74, the President is bound by this advice.
3. **Parliamentary Sessions** – The President summons, prorogues, and addresses Parliament, but the content of these addresses and recommendations come from the Prime Minister and cabinet.
4. **Law-Making Process** – A bill passed by Parliament becomes law only after the President's assent, but the President generally acts on the advice of the Prime Minister.
5. **Emergency Powers** – Proclamations of emergency (national, state, or financial) are issued in the name of the President but based on the PM's cabinet advice, showing cooperation between the ceremonial head and executive leader.

A-2. Prepare a role-play script or PPT depicting how decisions are made between President, PM, and Parliament.

Role-Play Script: How Decisions Are Made

Here's a simple **script format** you can present as a role-play in class or convert into a PPT.

Characters:

- President
- Prime Minister
- Speaker of Lok Sabha
- Member of Parliament (MP)

Scene 1 – Appointment

- *President*: “As the head of state, I appoint you as the Prime Minister, since you command majority in the Lok Sabha.”
- *PM*: “Thank you, Sir. I will form my Council of Ministers to assist in governance.”

Scene 2 – Policy Discussion

- *PM (to President)*: “We propose a new education reform bill. With your approval, it will be introduced in Parliament.”
- *President*: “Proceed, keeping the welfare of the people in mind.”

Scene 3 – In Parliament

- *Speaker*: “The Education Reform Bill is tabled for discussion.”
- *MPs debate and vote on the bill.*
- *Speaker*: “The Bill is passed.”

Scene 4 – Final Assent

- *PM*: “Sir, the Bill has been passed by both Houses. We present it for your assent.”
 - *President*: “By my assent, the Bill now becomes law.”
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Scene 5 – Conclusion

- *Narrator (optional in PPT):* “This shows that while the President is the constitutional head, real executive power rests with the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, always accountable to Parliament.”

Topic No. 12 Amendment Process

A-1. Watch: Amendments & Basic Structure Doctrine ✎ After watching, write a short summary explaining what “Basic Structure Doctrine” means.

➤ Short Summary: Basic Structure Doctrine

The *Basic Structure Doctrine* is a judicial principle evolved by the Supreme Court of India in the **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)** case. It means that while Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution under Article 368, it cannot alter or destroy its *basic structure*. This doctrine safeguards the Constitution’s essential features such as **supremacy of the Constitution, rule of law, judicial review, separation of powers, secularism, federalism, and fundamental rights**. The doctrine ensures a balance: it gives Parliament flexibility to adapt the Constitution to new needs, but at the same time prevents it from undermining the democratic framework. Thus, the Basic Structure Doctrine is a permanent shield protecting the identity and spirit of the Constitution.

A-2. Create a timeline infographic showing 5 major constitutional amendments and their impacts.

➤ Timeline Infographic: 5 Major Amendments

Here’s a **timeline-style explanation** (you can easily convert this into an infographic in your assignment notebook or PPT):

1. First Amendment Act, 1951

- Added restrictions to **Freedom of Speech** (Article 19) to prevent misuse.
- Inserted Ninth Schedule to protect land reform laws.

2. 42nd Amendment Act, 1976 (Mini-Constitution)

- Strengthened Parliament's power, curtailed judicial review.
- Added words "Socialist, Secular, Integrity" to the Preamble.

3. 44th Amendment Act, 1978

- Restored powers of the judiciary after the Emergency.
- Made Article 352 (National Emergency) stricter.

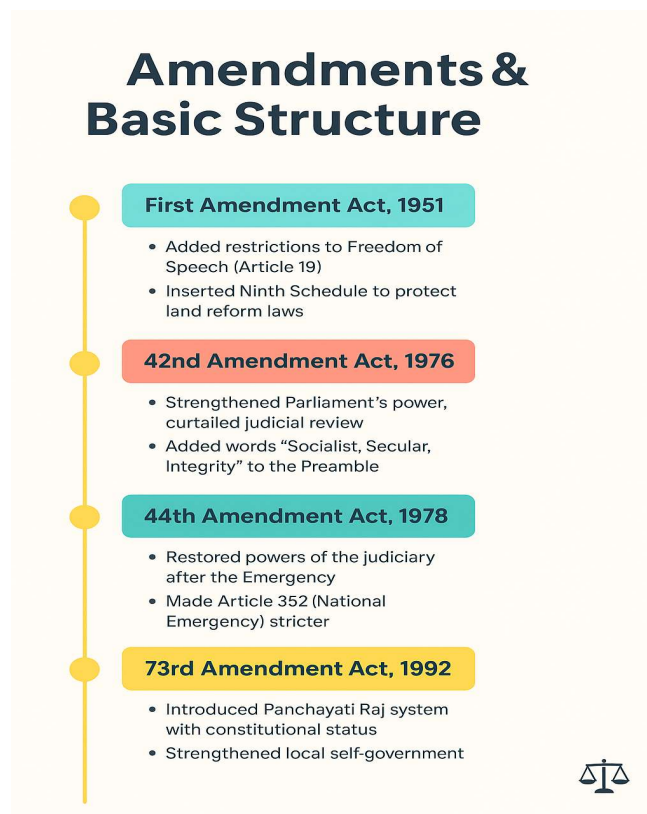
4. 73rd Amendment Act, 1992

- Introduced **Panchayati Raj system** with constitutional status.
- Strengthened local self-government.

5. 86th Amendment Act, 2002

- Made **Right to Education (Article 21A)** a Fundamental Right.
- Directed the State to provide free and compulsory education to children aged 6–14.

OR



Topic No. 13

History of Constitutional Amendments

A-1. Read about the evolution of constitutional amendments from 1951 onward.  After reading, summarize key trends and changes in one page.

➤ **Evolution of Constitutional Amendments (1951 onwards) – Key Trends and Changes**

Since its adoption in 1950, the Indian Constitution has been described as a “living document,” requiring changes to meet new political, economic, and social challenges. The journey of amendments can broadly be divided into phases:

1. Early Phase (1951–1970s):

The First Amendment (1951) set the tone by curbing judicial review on land reform laws and adding restrictions to freedom of speech. Several amendments during this period focused on socio-economic justice—abolition of zamindari, reservation policies, and placing certain laws in the Ninth Schedule beyond judicial scrutiny. The 24th and 25th Amendments (1971) affirmed Parliament’s power to amend fundamental rights, showing early tensions between Parliament and the judiciary.

2. Emergency Phase (1975–77):

The 42nd Amendment (1976), called the “Mini Constitution,” sought to centralize power, limit judicial review, and expand Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights. This period highlighted how amendments could be misused for political purposes.

3. Post-Emergency & Judicial Safeguards (1977–1990s):

The 44th Amendment (1978) reversed many of the 42nd, restoring democratic safeguards like the protection of fundamental rights and limiting emergency powers. This phase reflected a shift back to constitutional balance.

4. Coalition Era (1990s–2000s):

With rising coalition politics, amendments focused more on governance and federal issues: anti-defection (52nd), strengthening Panchayati Raj and urban local bodies (73rd and 74th), and expanding voting rights (61st lowering voting age to 18). These amendments reflected efforts to deepen democracy.

5. Contemporary Period (2000s–present):

Recent amendments include the Right to Education (86th), Goods and Services Tax (101st), and abrogation of special status under Article 370 (via 103rd). The 103rd Amendment (2019) introduced 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), marking a new dimension in social justice.

Overall Trend:

Amendments show India’s constant balancing act between individual rights and social justice,

centralization and federalism, and parliamentary supremacy and judicial review. While early amendments secured land reforms, later ones strengthened democracy, decentralization, and economic reforms, showing India's evolving political priorities.

A-2. Write a summary report explaining how amendments reflect India's political evolution.

➤ Summary Report – Amendments as Reflections of India's Political Evolution

The constitutional amendment process in India mirrors the nation's political journey since independence. In the 1950s–60s, amendments were primarily tools for implementing **socialist reforms** like land redistribution and affirmative action, indicating a focus on socio-economic equality in a newly independent country.

The 1970s, especially during the Emergency, revealed how amendments could be **politicized to concentrate power**, with the 42nd Amendment attempting to alter the Constitution's very character. This misuse led to the judicial articulation of the **Basic Structure Doctrine**, ensuring that Parliament cannot destroy core constitutional principles.

The post-1977 amendments restored democratic balance, while the 73rd and 74th Amendments in the 1990s deepened **grassroots democracy**, reflecting a maturing polity. Economic liberalization also shaped amendments, such as the GST reform, highlighting India's shift toward a more **integrated economic union**.

In recent years, amendments on reservations, education, and Article 370 reflect the **changing priorities of society and governments**, where both social justice and nationalism play a central role.

Thus, constitutional amendments are not merely legal changes but **a mirror of India's political evolution**—from a socialist welfare state to a federal democracy adapting to globalization and modern challenges.

Topic No. 14

Emergency Provisions

A-1. Watch: **The 1975 Emergency Documentary** ✎ After watching, explain in 150 words why Emergency provisions are considered controversial.

➤ **Why Emergency Provisions are Considered Controversial (150 words)**

The Emergency declared in 1975 under Article 352 remains one of the most debated events in Indian constitutional history. Emergency provisions are controversial because they grant the Union Government extraordinary powers, suspending normal democratic processes. During this period, fundamental rights under Article 19 were curtailed, the press was heavily censored, and political opponents were imprisoned without trial. Parliament functioned under the influence of the executive, weakening the system of checks and balances. Although the Constitution permits such provisions to safeguard national security and integrity, their use in 1975 was widely criticized as politically motivated rather than based on genuine external threat. The suspension of judicial remedies under Article 32 further undermined the citizens' constitutional protections. Hence, Emergency provisions are seen as controversial because they create space for authoritarianism, concentrating power in the hands of a few while eroding the democratic and federal character of the Constitution.

A-2. Write a reflective essay discussing the long-term impact of the Emergency on democracy.

➤ **Reflective Essay – Long-Term Impact of the Emergency on Democracy**

The 1975–77 Emergency left a deep and lasting imprint on India's democratic fabric. It served as both a warning and a lesson. In the immediate aftermath, it exposed how fragile constitutional safeguards could be when concentrated political power overrides institutional independence. Citizens experienced firsthand the consequences of suspended liberties, restricted press freedom, and weakened judiciary.

However, the long-term impact was paradoxically constructive. The excesses of the Emergency prompted constitutional and judicial reforms to prevent recurrence. The **44th Amendment (1978)** diluted the grounds for imposing Emergency, restored civil liberties, and ensured that Articles 20 and 21 could not be suspended even during crises. The judiciary also evolved the **Basic Structure Doctrine**, making clear that democracy, rule of law, and fundamental rights are inviolable.

On the political front, the Emergency strengthened people's faith in electoral accountability, as demonstrated by the 1977 elections where voters decisively rejected authoritarian rule.

Thus, while the Emergency period is remembered as a "dark chapter," it ultimately reinforced India's democratic resilience by embedding stronger safeguards and cultivating greater awareness among citizens about their rights.

Topic No. 15

Local Self Government

A-1. Interview/visit a local Panchayat/Corporator or watch a video on Panchayati Raj functioning. After the activity, write 3 key observations about challenges faced by local self governments.

➤ **Three Key Observations on Challenges Faced by Local Self-Governments**

1. **Financial Dependence:** Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) often lack adequate financial resources. They rely heavily on grants from State Governments, which delays project execution and restricts independent decision-making.
2. **Capacity & Manpower Shortages:** Many Panchayats face administrative challenges due to shortage of trained staff, technical experts, and digital infrastructure. This reduces efficiency in implementing welfare schemes.
3. **Political Interference & Limited Autonomy:** Although empowered under the 73rd and 74th Amendments, local bodies often face interference from higher political authorities, which dilutes their autonomy in planning and governance.

A-2. Write a field report with improvement suggestions for the Panchayat or ULB system.

➤ **Field Report with Suggestions for Improvement**

Title: Report on the Functioning of Panchayati Raj / ULB System

During the observation of the Panchayati Raj system, it was found that while the institution serves as the closest tier of governance to the people, several operational hurdles restrict its effectiveness. Financial limitations often force Panchayats to depend on State funds rather than their own revenue. Administrative staff is insufficient, causing delays in implementing development programs such as water supply, sanitation, and housing. Additionally, lack of coordination between elected representatives and officials weakens accountability.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. **Financial Empowerment:** Local bodies should be given greater taxation powers (e.g., property tax, service fees) to ensure steady revenue.

2. **Capacity Building:** Training programs and recruitment of technical staff should be prioritized to strengthen grassroots governance.
3. **Digital Governance:** Introducing e-Panchayat systems, online grievance redressal, and digital monitoring tools can improve transparency and efficiency.
4. **Devolution of Powers:** States must implement true “functional devolution,” allowing Panchayats and ULBs to plan and execute schemes without excessive external interference.
5. **Citizen Participation:** Regular Gram Sabhas and ward meetings should be institutionalized to ensure people’s voices are included in decision-making.

Conclusion: Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions is essential for deepening democracy at the grassroots. With better financial independence, skilled staff, and citizen involvement, they can truly become the foundation of self-reliant and participatory local governance.
