

# Bequeathed to us 71 years ago today, the Constitution is India's bedrock of stability and growth



Om Birla

After Independence, India adopted its Constitution on November 26, 1949. Today is the 71st anniversary of this important historical event that laid the foundation of independent India. The juncture of India's Independence was an extremely challenging moment. A nation had just been formed after a painful separation of one part of the erstwhile unified territory.

The challenges came from multiple directions. On the one hand was a newly formed nation with myriad of problems like poverty, large scale illiteracy and the agonising suffering of a long colonial rule. But on the other hand was the aspiration of the new Indian polity, the deep desire to take the newly formed nation to great heights.

Our great leaders who steered us through the struggle of Independence had foresight of what our polity should be. The Constitution was expected to shape a nation, nurture a society and guide future generations for times to come. The Drafting Committee of the Constitution held 141 meetings over a period of

2 years 11 months and 17 days, and gave us the basic draft comprising a Preamble, 395 Articles and 8 Schedules. This was indeed the foetus from which the polity of our great nation was born.

Since its adoption, the Constitution of the country has stood firmly to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation, and at the same time has shown flexibility to ensure the much required socio-economic transformation. Several amendments have also been made in the Constitution according to the times. At present, our Constitution has more than 400 Articles and 12 Schedules.

Today, Indian democracy not only stands strong in the face of many challenges time throws in its way, but has also carved out a

unique identity for itself at the global level - credit for which goes to the strong structure and institutional set up provided by our Constitution. The Constitution of India provides for socio-economic and political democracy. It underlines the commitment of

progress and prosperity.

Even with a large number of voters and an ongoing continual election process, our democracy has never fallen prey to instability, instead the successful conduct of elections proves that our democracy has withstood the

legislature, executive and judiciary have their own distinct and independent identity, and they are sovereign in their respective sphere.

The Constitution of India lays special emphasis on the interests of citizens and the provisions of fundamental rights, as enshrined from Article 12 to Article 35 in Part III of the Constitution, are a major evidence of this. These provisions ensure that all the citizens of India are treated equally thus work as a unifying force. Today, our Constitution guarantees six fundamental rights: right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and right to constitutional remedies.

Our Constitution along with the fundamental rights also impose a number of fundamental duties on its citizens. Citizens should also adhere to certain basic norms of democratic conduct and behaviour, as rights and duties go hand in hand. We have our rights and they will always remain with us, but if we as citizens are able to adhere to our duties and act accordingly, this century will certainly be the century of India.

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the people of India to achieve various national goals with a peaceful and democratic approach.

As a matter of fact, our Constitution is not just a legal document, but it is an important instrument that protects the freedom of all sections of society and provides every citizen the right of equality without discriminating on the basis of caste, creed, sex, region, sect or language and ensures that nation remains on the path of

test of time. During this democratic journey spread over seven decades, 17 Lok Sabha and more than 300 state assembly elections have taken place in the country. Indian democracy has demonstrated to the world, how political power can be transferred in a peaceful manner.

The separation of powers among the state components has been well defined in Indian Constitution. The domains of the three organs of the state namely

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