The term ‘Preamble’ refers to the introduction or preface to

the Constitution. The significance of the Preamble lies in its

components. It embodies the source of the Constitution i.e.,

the people of India. The terms sovereign, socialist, secular,

democratic and republic in the Preamble suggest the nature

of the state. The ideals of justice, liberty, equality and

fraternity reflect the objectives of the Constitution. It also

contains November 26, 1949 as the date of adoption of the

Indian Constitution.

The philosophy of the Indian Constitution is reflected in the

Preamble. The independence of India earned through

struggle for independence is sought to be emphasized by the

use of the word ‘Sovereign’ in the Preamble. The Gandhian

ideals are aimed to be secured by the incorporation of the

word ‘Socialist’ in the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment.

The same amendment inserted the word ‘Secular’ to reflect the secular nature of Indian society. The word ‘Republic’ in

the Preamble indicates that India has an elected head, though

indirectly elected, the Indian President is the choice of the

people of India. These values are further strengthened by the

word ‘Democratic’ in the Preamble. To emphasize these

values the Constitution framers have resorted to the use of

the concepts like justice, liberty, equality and fraternity.

Social, economic and political justice are to be secured

through the provisions of Fundamental Rights. Liberty is

guaranteed to the individuals through the provision of

Fundamental Rights, which are enforceable in the court of

law.

The unity and integrity of the nation is sought to be secured

by the use of the word ‘Fraternity’ in the Preamble and by

the provisions of fundamental duties and single citizenship

in the Constitution. The use of these words in the Preamble

shows that it embodies the basic philosophy and

fundamental values on which the Constitution is based. It

very well reflects the dreams and aspirations of the founding

fathers of the Constitution. The claim that the constitution is

derived from the people is justified because of its broad- based popular acceptance ever since it came into force.

The very first sentence of the preamble declares India

to be a Sovereign Socialist Democratic Republic. The term‘sovereign’ implies that India is internally supreme and

externally free. State authority of India is supreme over all

men and all associations within India’s territorial boundary.

This is India’s internal sovereignty. The terms socialist and

secular were added to the Preamble by 42nd amendment in 1976. Secularism is a glaring necessity in India’s socio- political context. Inhabited by people of all faiths, it is

imperative that India does not accept any religion as the

state-religion. India’s secularism ensures that religious

minorities do not suffer from a sense of inferiority as do the

minority communities in Pakistan or Bangladesh. The terms

‘Democratic’ and ‘Republic‘ in the Preamble are very

important. India’s aim is to build up not only a democratic

political system but also a democratic social system.

India joined the Commonwealth by her “free will.” In

India popular elections give legitimacy to our rulers. Asystem is republican where no office of the state is held on

the basis of hereditary prescriptive rights. In India every

office of the state from the highest to the lowest is open to

every citizen. Any citizen may occupy any office on the basis

of merit. Thus, headship of the state is not hereditary as in

England, nor is it based on military power as in dictatorial

regimes.

To build up an ideal democracy, the Preamble

emphasizes justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as

political ideals. These ideals listed in the Preamble are,

according to Prof. Barker, the quintessence of western

democracy. The ideal of justice implies a system where

individuals can realize their full potentialities. In the view of

our founding fathers it is not enough that there is political or

legal justice. Political and legal justice is a myth unless

accompanied by social and economic justice. Social justice

implies that all social discriminations like caste

differentiation must be ended. Economic justice implies that economic exploitations should be ended. However, social

and economic justice still remain unrealized dreams. The

ideal of liberty aims at ensuring these freedoms which make

men really free. Liberty to be meaningful must mean liberty

of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

The idea of equality is aimed at removing

discriminations between citizens. This is particularly

important in the Indian society, vitiated by caste system and

untouchability. But here again one should remember that

equality in the social arena is bound to be empty unless

accompanied by economic equality. Finally, fraternity as an

ideal is sought to be fostered to ensure the dignity of the

individual and unity of the nation. One should however note

that a fraternal feeling among Indians would grow only in

proportion to the realization of the ideals of justice, liberty

and equality.