**Unit -2**

**Philosophy of the Indian Constitution- Preamble Salient Features**

The **Indian Constitution** is a remarkable and unique document that lays down the framework for governance in India. It was adopted on **26th November 1949** and came into force on **26th January 1950**. The Constitution is often described as a blend of **borrowed ideas** from various countries, adapted to the specific context of India. Let's dive into two essential aspects of the Indian Constitution:

**1. Philosophy of the Indian Constitution**

The philosophy of the Indian Constitution is primarily rooted in the **concept of justice**, **democracy**, and **secularism**. It is inspired by various intellectual movements, including the freedom struggle and the ideals of the **Indian National Congress**, which emphasized equality, liberty, and fraternity. The Constitution reflects the **values** and **principles** that were sought to be achieved post-independence.

* **Democratic Ideals**: The Constitution envisions India as a democratic republic, where sovereignty rests with the people.
* **Social Justice**: Ensuring a society based on justice, equality, and fairness, aimed at uplifting marginalized sections.
* **Secularism**: The Constitution declares India as a secular state, ensuring freedom of religion for all.
* **Sovereignty**: India is a sovereign nation free from external interference.
* **Rule of Law**: The Constitution establishes the rule of law, with everyone, including the government, being subject to the law.
* **Dignity of the Individual**: It aims at securing the dignity of individuals and promoting their well-being.

**2. Preamble of the Indian Constitution**

The **Preamble** serves as an introduction to the Constitution and outlines its underlying principles and the aspirations of the people of India. It is a reflection of the values that the Constitution seeks to promote. Here's the text of the Preamble:

*"We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation."*

**Key Words and Their Significance:**

* **Sovereign**: India is independent and free to make its own decisions without external interference.
* **Socialist**: The state aims to reduce income inequality and provide welfare benefits to all citizens.
* **Secular**: India does not favor any religion and guarantees freedom of religion to all its citizens.
* **Democratic**: The people have the power to elect their leaders through free and fair elections.
* **Republic**: The head of the state is elected, and there is no monarchy.

The Preamble also highlights the goals of securing **Justice**, **Liberty**, **Equality**, and **Fraternity**.

**3. Salient Features of the Indian Constitution**

The Indian Constitution is a comprehensive document that combines the best of various constitutions around the world. Some of its key features are:

1. **Length**: The Indian Constitution is the **longest** written constitution in the world, with detailed provisions and schedules.
2. **Federal System**: India follows a **federal** system of governance, with a clear division of powers between the **Central Government** and the **State Governments**. However, it is also **unitary in nature** in times of emergency.
3. **Parliamentary System**: India follows a **parliamentary system** of government, where the executive is drawn from the legislature, ensuring accountability to the legislature.
4. **Single Citizenship**: Unlike other federal systems, India provides for **single citizenship**, meaning that all citizens owe allegiance to India as a whole, not to any particular state.
5. **Independent Judiciary**: The Constitution establishes an independent judiciary with the **Supreme Court** at its apex, which ensures the protection of fundamental rights and can strike down laws that are unconstitutional.
6. **Fundamental Rights**: The Constitution guarantees **Fundamental Rights** (Part III) to all citizens, which include the right to equality, freedom of speech and expression, and protection from discrimination.
7. **Directive Principles of State Policy**: The **Directive Principles of State Policy** (Part IV) guide the government in making laws and policies aimed at promoting social and economic welfare. These are non-justiciable, meaning they are not enforceable in a court of law.
8. **Secular State**: India does not have an official religion. The state treats all religions equally and allows freedom of religion.
9. **Amendment Process**: The Constitution can be amended by the Parliament (Article 368), allowing it to adapt to changing times. However, certain provisions cannot be amended without the consent of the states.
10. **Securing Justice**: The Constitution aims to secure **social, economic, and political justice** to all citizens.
11. **Emergency Provisions**: The Constitution provides for the declaration of **National, State, and Financial Emergencies** under specific conditions, allowing the government to take special measures during crises.
12. **Universal Adult Franchise**: The right to vote is granted to every citizen of India who is 18 years or older, regardless of religion, caste, or gender, ensuring **universal adult suffrage**.

In conclusion, the Indian Constitution is a living document designed to protect the values of democracy, justice, and equality. Its Preamble sets forth the philosophical foundation for its provisions, while its salient features ensure that India is governed by the rule of law, respects the dignity of its citizens, and promotes unity in diversity.