

## **MEANING OF THE TERMS SOVEREIGN, SECULAR AND DEMOCRATIC IN THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

### **India is a Sovereign State**

The Preamble defines India as a Sovereign State. This proclamation indicates that sovereignty is taken to mean the end of foreign rule and that India has an independent authority to determine its own fate. It also means India is not bound or under the forceful influence of any foreign nation while framing its domestic policies and laws. It implies that India is not a dependent or dominion of any other country and that there is no authority above it in the conduct of its internal and external affairs. In the country, the laws passed by the legislature are subjected to scrutiny by the courts and this serves as the only limitation to the law making powers of the Indian State. India has a free government directly elected by the people and it makes laws and policies that govern its people and its territories without any external interference. However there are certain instances whereby this Sovereignty of India has come into questioning. In the early 1990s the era of Coalition politics highlighted the role, influence and importance of regional parties to dictate terms and influence policy making at the national level. Laws were enacted not independently but as per the interests of these regional parties thereby questioning the Indian State being Sovereign internally. Similarly the instances of external sovereignty came into questioning about the same time when due to domestic compulsions in the economy, India was forced to push for the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization reforms (LPG). India was bound to accept the conditions of the IMF and World Bank and in the process had to initiate economic reforms in order to arrest the Balance of Payment crisis and save its economy. The recent sanctions imposed on Iran by the Us has forced India to reduce its energy imports from Iran .The CAATSA sanctions imposed by the US has made India to conform to the US pressure thereby shifting and modifying its foreign relations with Iran. Despite these challenges India has stood its ground on several occasions. For Example, The case of India not joining the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Non Alignment Movement in the face of severe cold war hostility between the major powers, having a mixed economy approach, its stance on the Two State solution with regard to Israel. It would not be fair therefore to generalize India's sovereignty as one that is completely dependent or free from the influence or interplay of foreign and domestic factors.

## **India is a Secular State**

The word 'Secular' was inserted into the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment Act of 1976. At the time of independence India inherited various problems owing to its sociological variety and cultural diversity, some of which posed as challenges to a liberal, egalitarian democratic system. In this context the idea of a secular state was enshrined for achieving social harmony, social peace and preserving the unity and fraternity of the people of India professing numerous faiths. Though the word 'Secular' was initially not mentioned in the Preamble, the original framers of the Constitution adopted articles 25, 26 and 27 to further the idea of Secularism. The Indian Constitution embodies the 'Positive' concept of Secularism. This is taken to mean that there is no official religion of the State as in other Constitutions, that no special preference or treatment is given to any particular religious community rather promotion of all religions in Indian equally. It is also taken to mean that India is not a Theocratic State yet the State is not completely separated from religion as in the case of the western secular countries. The Indian Constitution guarantees to its people under Articles 25 to 28 the freedom of religion manifested in the form of the individual's freedom of Conscience and freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion. This has been one of the glowing achievements of Indian Democracy when compared with its neighbours such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh that uphold a State religion.

## **India is a Democratic State**

Democracy is a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as a parliament. It is also referred as "rule of the majority". Here the power can't be inherited. People elect their leaders. India's government is loosely modelled on the British Westminster system. It consists of a president as head of state; an executive headed by the prime minister; a legislature consisting of a parliament with an upper and lower house (the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha); and a judiciary with a supreme court at its head. 543 members are elected to the Lok Sabha through a first-past-the-post general election, held every five years. State representatives are indirectly elected to the Rajya Sabha on staggered six-year terms, so every two years around one-third are changed, elected by state legislatures. India's constitution sets out the country's political code, federal structure, powers of government and guarantees Indians' rights, including to equality before the law and freedoms of speech, assembly, movement and others.