

Constituent Assembly Debates

The Constituent Assembly first assembled on 9th December 1946 and initiated the process of drafting the Indian constitution. Through several Constitutional Assembly Debates held for over 165 days, the constitution draft was finally made. The draft existed for almost three years before it was formally adopted in November 1949.

Along with the understanding of debates on the con of India, it is important to go through the Historical Background of Indian Constitution to get the complete picture of how the final law of the land came to being.

Constituent Assembly Debates Summary

The **Constituent Assembly Debates** are an excellent way of gaining insight into the real process that went on while drafting the constitution of India. The debates also played a significant role in making useful amendments to the various clauses of the draft constitution.

The Constituent Assembly Debates can be classified into four stages as follows.

Constituent Assembly Debates	Dates	Debate on Constitution of India Notes
Preliminary Stage	9th Dec 1946 - 27th Jan 1948	Union Powers Committee & the Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minorities gave recommendations for the guidelines to be followed. A drafting committee was also formed.
First Reading after Debate on Constitution of India	4th Nov 1948 - 9th Nov 1948	The draft constitution was introduced in the Assembly.
Second Reading	15th Nov 1948 - 17th Oct 1949	The draft constitution was discussed with each of its clauses given attention to.
Third Reading of Constituent Assembly Debates	14th Nov 1949 - 26th Nov 1949	The Constituent Assembly was done with all the readings. The Constitution of India was brought into force on 26th November 1949.

Important Facts on Constituent Assembly Debates

Based on the information provided through the Constituent Assembly Debates; it took over 165 days to frame all the guidelines in the draft of the Indian constitution. It consisted of several clauses that were discussed one by one for almost 100 days.

- As per the Constituent Assembly Debates, around 36 lakh words were spoken while framing the constitution.
- Dr. B.R Ambedkar, who played the most important role in forming the Indian constitution, has the credit of speaking the maximum number of words.
- The Fundamental Rights mentioned in Part III of the constitution were discussed for almost 16 days.
- Sadly, women could only form 2% of the total number of participants in the Constituent Assembly Debates as 15 women were only elected to the Constituent Assembly, out of whom just 10 women participated in the debates.
- G.Durgabai, who was a female freedom fighter & a Congress member, has been attributed to maximum spoken words among all females.
- Part IV containing the Directive Principles of State Policy was discussed for around 6 days.

Debate Topics on Constitution of India

Based on the information garnered from the Constituent Assembly Debates, and several discussions were held to form the constitution of India. The constitution was intended to be a guide for the government workers as well as the citizens of India. It also meant to provide equal fundamental rights while giving certain duties to the Indian citizens that they need to perform as responsible citizens.

Various topics were discussed during the Constituent Assembly Debates that touched every subject related to creating an equal and unbiased society in independent India. Let us look at a few of the points discussed.

- Constituent Assembly debates on Untouchability
- Federalism Debate on Constitution of India
- Constituent Assembly debate on Uniform Civil Code
- Debates on Fundamental Rights
- Preamble Debate on Constitution of India
- Constituent Assembly Debate on Ordinance Making Power of the President
- Constituent Assembly Debate on Abolition of Death Penalty

Constituent Assembly Debates on Untouchability

Untouchability has been a delicate subject in India, and therefore the framers of the constitution took enough care & intended to remove this system altogether. They argued that social equality

should be achieved & untouchability should be completely wiped off. They also expressed their belief & support for the views of Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Raja Ram Mogan Roy, etc.

Constituent Assembly Debates on Federalism

As per the Constituent Assembly Debates, it was argued that India should be a federal country and major authority should be provided to the states. Although the word “federal” was not used even once in the Preamble or in any other constitutional provision, the word “union” was used in Article 1.

A union or Unitary form of government was not favored and all were in favor of a Federal kind of government. Learn more about How is Federalism Practiced in India?

Constituent Assembly Debates on Preamble

There were many points on which the drafting committee members argued while framing the constitution of India, while the use of the words God & Gandhi in the Preamble was opposed. The major point of dispute was when deciding the name of India.

Constituent Assembly Debates on Uniform Civil Code

The Constituent Assembly Debates indicate a conflict among the committee members with respect to the Uniform Civil Code being relevant and useful in the draft of Article 35 of the constitution. There was opposition by the Muslim members of the committee, but they were further silenced by B.R Ambedkar, saying that the civil code would not apply to anyone who did not agree with it.

Likewise, there were other topics, such as ‘reservations’ for the poor and needy and the death penalty, which were discussed in the Constituent Assembly Debates.