



BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

Tiruchirappalli- 620024,

Tamil Nadu, India

PROGRAMME: FIVE-YEAR INTEGRATED M.A. HISTORY

COURSE TITLE: MODERN GOVERNMENTS

COURSE CODE: A1C01

UNIT-I

**Constitution – Meaning, Purpose and Contents of Constitution-
Classification of Constitution: Written and Unwritten
Constitution**

Dr. T. ASOKAN,

Professor & Head

Department of History

Meaning of the Constitution

A constitution is a set of fundamental legal-political rules that:

- (1) are binding on everyone in the state, including ordinary lawmaking institutions;**
- (2) concern the structure and operation of the institutions of government, political principles and the rights of citizens;**

(3) are based on widespread public legitimacy;

(4) are harder to change than ordinary laws (e.g. a two-thirds majority vote or a referendum is needed)

(5) as a minimum, meet the internationally recognized criteria for a democratic system in terms of representation and human rights.

Contents of Constitution

- **Preamble**
- **Citizenship**
- **Fundamental rights**
- **Fundamental duties**
- **Social and economic rights**
- **Head of state**
- **Parliament or legislature**

- **Government (Presidential or Parliamentary)**
- **Judiciary (Attorney general)**
- **Federal system**
- **Local bodies**
- **Provisions for referendums**
- **Election commission**

- **Audit system (Comptroller and Auditor General of India)**
- **Miscellaneous (special provisions for particular groups, language laws, particular institution, etc.)**
- **Amendment procedures**

Classification of Constitution

Written Constitution

- A written constitution has been written and contains all of the facts in a book form that can be consulted at any time.
- It includes government and citizen responsibilities and rights, the type of constitutional order, and the laws governing and controlling the system.

Unwritten Constitution

- The unwritten Constitution is described as one where the nation's legal choices, fundamental laws, and norms are not systematically written down or combined into one document.
- Unwritten constitutions might be rigid, flexible, or a combination of the two.

Countries with written constitution

- **India**
- **USA**
- **France**
- **Australia**
- **Denmark**
- **Finland,**
- **Brazil, etc.**

Flexible Constitution

- **A flexible constitution is a type of constitution that can be easily amended or changed through ordinary legislative processes.**
- **The government can alter constitutional principles without needing special amending procedures.**

Rigid Constitution

- **It is a constitution with a special laid down procedure for effecting any alteration of its provisions.**
- **A rigid Constitution safeguards legislative violation, fundamental rights effectively and protects the rights of minorities.**