

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA BY DR. DURGA DAS BASU: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The present piece of review critically scrutinizes the nuance of the *Introduction to the Constitution of India* by Dr. D.D. Basu, which is a commendable book written in the field of the Constitution, serves as a foundational basis for academicians, students, scholars, and practitioners, either for competitive exams or for reference for their cases. The book provides a significant insight into the different arenas of the political structure of the government, philosophy, functioning of different organs, and their powers. It covers key areas such as the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, Centre-State relations, emergency provisions, and the role of the judiciary, all backed by landmark precedents and a comprehensive and exhaustive explanation, which is easily understandable by everyone.

The review highlights the strengths of the book, including its clarity, systematic structure, case-based approach, and relevance to competitive examinations. At the same time, it points out limitations such as the lack of critical analysis and minimal engagement with interdisciplinary or comparative perspectives. But its strength has overshadowed all its negative aspects and made it an exceptional piece among all the textbooks. Lastly, it was an indispensable resource for understanding the Indian Constitution, its nuances, and different shades. The review affirms the relevance and application of the book in the legal field and education, and constitutional discourse in India.

Keywords: *Constitution of India, Grundnorm, Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, Directive Principles of State Policy, Federalism, Union Legislature, State Legislature,, Emergency Provisions, Amendment Procedures, Constitutional Bodies, Doctrine of Severability, Doctrine of Eclipse*

INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India, one of the longest and exhaustive constitutions of the world, with so many provisions and legal doctrines, is considered as the supreme law of the land or the “Grunt Norm”, through which different other legislation and organs derive their powers and validity. Because of its length, it became more complex and difficult to understand.

One book that has stood the test of time in explaining the Indian Constitution in a simplified and easy way is *Introduction to the Constitution of India* by Dr. D.D. Basu. This book explains the

complex constitutional doctrines, structures, and functions, offering clarity and lucidity while maintaining scholarly depth. It has a widespread use in universities, judicial services exams, practices, and civil services preparation, which highlights its significance in the legal field.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The entire book is divided into 40 chapters, arranged chronologically to mirror the structure of the Constitution. It starts with the Historical Background, detailing the legislative developments during British rule and the

Constituent Assembly debates. The remaining chapters deal with the other provisions of the Constitution, such as:

- The **Preamble**
- **Union and its Territory**
- **Citizenship**
- **Fundamental Rights and Duties**
- **Directive Principles of State Policy**
- **The Union and State Executives and Legislatures**
- **The Judiciary**
- **Federalism and Centre–State Relations**
- **Emergency Provisions**
- **Amendment Procedures**
- **Miscellaneous and Constitutional Bodies**

The most important thing that needs to be considered is the uniformity among the chapters, as each chapter follows a similar format; introduction to the constitutional provision, explaining its purpose and significance, and often including judicial interpretations and relevant commentary, which makes it a more authentic and reliable source.

HIGHLIGHTS

Basu well defined and explained the key themes of the Constitution, like an explanation of the Preamble, not just as an introductory statement, but as the guiding light of the Constitution. He explores many landmark cases for every topic to make it clearer and more understandable, and also explains different judicial doctrines like: Doctrine of Severability, Doctrine of Eclipse, Doctrine of Proportionality, and Doctrine of Post-Decisional Hearing, which are very vital to go through for any exams and constitutional knowledge.

A balanced comparison is drawn between justiciable Fundamental Rights and non-justiciable Directive Principles. Basu emphasizes their role in governance, welfare legislation, and socio-economic justice, while citing many cases such as *Minerva Mills* and *Kesavananda Bharati*, *AIIMS Students' Union v. AIIMS*, *Naz*

Foundation v. Govt. of NCT Delhi, and *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, and many more such cases.

Another strength of the book lies in its well-structured examination of the quasi-federal nature of India's Constitution. The division of the legislative powers via the Union, State, and Concurrent Lists is covered comprehensively and also critically analysed the Emergency provisions with examples from the 1975 Emergency, highlighting misuse, judicial approval (e.g., *ADM Jabalpur case*), and subsequent constitutional safeguards. Basu also covers Judicial Activism and Public Interest Litigation (PIL), one of the most magnificent tools in the hands of the judiciary to regulate the working of the system and ensure that effective and timely justice will be provided to the victims.

STRENGTHS OF THE BOOK

To begin with, the book covers the vast scope and provisions, but despite this, manages to keep explanations simple and manageable.

In addition to this, the book includes many landmark cases and judicial precedents which helps in evolving and shaping the structure of the Constitutional doctrines.

Furthermore, it is exam-oriented as it structured in a way that's easy to follow for students and aspirants.

Lastly, its neutral tone and updated content (The 2023 edition) make it more ideal for academic studies. It has a broad coverage as it includes many new topics such as Abrogation of Article 370 (2019), Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 103rd Amendment (EWS Quota), Judicial decisions like *Sabarimala*, *Right to Privacy*, and *Ayodhya Verdict*, etc. Basu's approach throughout the book is descriptive rather than critical, and a perfect blend of theory and practicality makes it more seamless and flawless.

WEAKNESSES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

As every coin has two sides, similarly, in the present book, on the one hand, we can see the positive aspects, on the other hand, we can see the negative aspects, like a lack of comparative perspective and analysis with the Constitution of the other country, which provides the person with the critical enrichment. Modern constitutional issues are not deeply explored. The book also avoids graphical or tabular presentations, which could enhance visual learning.

CONCLUSION

D.D. Basu's Introduction to The Constitution of India became one of the principal texts in the Indian legal literature. It goes beyond delineating the legal text and enables the reader to understand the thought process and the evolution of the dynamic forces which shaped the constitution. While critiques of the work do speak about the need for fresh and critical additions, the work's clarity, depth, and authenticity render it indispensable.

For law students like myself, this book is not just a resource, but it is a guiding companion that simplifies the intimidating complexity of constitutional law. Its wide adoption across universities and coaching institutes is a testament to its enduring value.

