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Q7(b)

The main goal of the Fundamental Duties in the Indian Constitution is to generate civic responsibility among the citizens. Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Salient Features of the Indian Constitution

Salient Features of the Indian Constitution: The Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties, Directive Principles; Parliamentary System and Amendment Procedures; Judicial Review and Basic Structure doctrine.

Core demand of the question

- The main goal of the Fundamental Duties in the Indian Constitution is to generate civic responsibility among the citizens. Explain. (15 marks)

Revision summary

Article 51A, added in 1976, states Fundamental Duties of citizens.

The main goal is civic responsibility to match Part III rights, in the line of **Ambedkar's** constitutional morality.

The list covers respect for the Constitution, unity, harmony, environment, scientific temper, public property, and, after the 86th Amendment, children's education.

Duties are mostly non-justiciable but guide interpretation and civic education.

They must not be used to cancel protest and liberty under Part III.

Introduction

Fundamental Duties in **Article 51A**, inserted by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, on the **Swaran Singh Committee's** line, tell citizens what the republic asks of them. Their main goal is civic responsibility: a habit of public obligation to match the justiciable rights in Part III.

Body

What civic responsibility means here

- Rights without duties produce a claimant who will not sustain the institutions that make rights possible, which is **Ambedkar's** constitutional morality in a duties register.
- **Article 51A lists obligations:** to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem; to cherish noble ideals of the freedom struggle; to uphold sovereignty and unity; to defend the country; to promote harmony and renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity; to protect the environment; to develop scientific temper; to safeguard public property; and to strive toward excellence.
- **The 86th Amendment added 51A(k):** a parent or guardian shall provide education opportunities to a child between six and fourteen, pairing **Article 21A**.
- **Civic responsibility is republican more than Mill's purely negative liberty:** the citizen is a member who owes the public realm, in the sense **Sandel** defends against an unencumbered

self.

- **Gandhi's** constructive programme is an Indian ancestor: swaraj as duty in sanitation, spinning, and communal peace, not only as a right against the Raj.

How the Constitution generates that responsibility

- Duties are not generally justiciable as a sword against the citizen in the same way as Part III is a sword against the state.
- Courts still use **Article 51A** to interpret statutes and to uphold reasonable restrictions, as in environmental and flag cases, which educates through law.
- Education, the Flag Code, and civic textbooks are the administrative means; 51A is the higher-law statement of the goal.
- **Austin's** nation-as-cornerstone needs citizens who will not treat the text as only a catalogue of claims against the Union.

Limits

- Duties can be rhetorically used to shame protest that is itself a constitutional right under **Articles 19 and 21**.
- **Foucault** would note that civic duty is also a government of conduct; the explanation must keep Part III as the limit on that government.
- Generating responsibility succeeds only if the state itself keeps duties of legality; hypocrisy of officials empties **Article 51A** as civic education.
- The main goal remains civic responsibility. The test is whether citizens protect public goods and equal dignity, not whether dissent is silenced.

Flow diagram

Article 51A -> Civic responsibility

Civic responsibility -> Institutions flag unity

Civic responsibility -> Environment education scientific temper

Part III rights -> Limit on using duties against dissent

Conclusion

- **Fundamental Duties aim to generate civic responsibility:** respect for the Constitution, unity, scientific temper, environment, women's dignity, and education of children. They complete **Ambedkar's** and Austin's citizen, beside Mill's liberty. They must not be read as a cancellation of Part III.

Facts & figures

42nd Amendment, 1976

Inserted Part IVA, **Article 51A**, during the Emergency, following the **Swaran Singh Committee**.

86th Amendment, 2002

Added **Article 21A** and duty 51A(k) on elementary education.

Swaran Singh Committee

Recommended fundamental duties; the enacted list is broader than some of its original items.

Article 51A(e) and (g)

Harmony and dignity of women; protection of the natural environment, including forests and wildlife.

Ambedkar

Constitutional morality as the citizen's and leader's habit of respecting forms; duties are one textual face of that habit.

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