BLOGS

Important Constitutional Amendments Every CLAT PG Aspirant Must Know

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The Constitution of India has been amended over a hundred times since 1950, yet only a handful of these amendments truly shape most exam questions. Getting a firm grip on these important constitutional amendments can be the difference between guessing and scoring in your CLAT PG paper.

This article breaks down the most significant amendments in Indian constitutional history, explaining what each one changed and why it still matters today. We have kept the language simple and added context so these important constitutional amendments actually stick in your memory.

How Does the Constitution Get Amended?

Before diving into individual amendments, it helps to understand the process itself. Article 368 in Part XX of the Constitution gives Parliament the power to amend the Constitution by way of addition, variation, or repeal of any provision.

The Constitution can be amended in three distinct ways. Some provisions can be amended by a simple majority, others require a special majority of Parliament, and certain provisions additionally need ratification by at least half of the state legislatures.

However, Parliament cannot touch the "basic structure" of the Constitution. This limitation was laid down by the Supreme Court in the landmark *Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala (1973)* case, a ruling every CLAT PG aspirant must know by heart.

First Amendment Act, 1951

This was the very first of the important constitutional amendments, introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru's government in response to ***State of Madras v Champakam Dorairajan***, where courts struck down caste based reservation in government colleges.

It empowered the state to make special provisions for socially and economically backward classes, added the **Ninth Schedule to protect land reform laws from judicial review**, and added three new restrictions on free speech, namely public order, friendly relations with foreign states, and incitement to an offence.

Seventh Amendment Act, 1956

This amendment implemented the **recommendations of the State Reorganisation Committee** . It abolished the earlier Part A, B, C, and D classification of states, reorganising the country into 14 states and 6 union territories based primarily on linguistic lines.

Ninth Amendment Act, 1960

Following a dispute with West Bengal over the Nehru Noon agreement, the **Supreme Court held that ceding Indian territory to a foreign country requires a constitutional amendment** under Article 368. This amendment facilitated the cession of the Berubari Union to Pakistan under the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of 1958.

Twenty Fourth Amendment Act, 1971

This amendment was a direct response to the Golaknath ruling of 1967, where the Supreme Court had held that Parliament could not amend fundamental rights at all. The 24th Amendment affirmed Parliament's power to amend any part of the Constitution, including fundamental rights, and made it compulsory for the **President to give assent to a Constitutional Amendment Bill.**

Twenty Fifth Amendment Act, 1971

This **amendment curtailed the fundamental right to property and inserted Article 31C**, providing that laws made to implement Directive Principles under Article 39(b) or (c) could not be challenged on the ground of violating Articles 14, 19, or 31. This provision was central to the arguments in Kesavananda Bharati.

Twenty Sixth Amendment Act, 1971

This amendment **abolished the privy purses** and privileges that had been paid to former rulers of princely states since independence, ending payments that had continued for over two decades after India became a republic.

Thirty Eighth and Thirty Ninth Amendment Acts, 1975

These two amendments came during the period of internal emergency. The 38th Amendment made the President's declaration of emergency non-justiciable, while the 39th Amendment, enacted after the Allahabad High Court voided Indira Gandhi's election, placed disputes relating to the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Speaker beyond judicial scrutiny entirely.

Forty Second Amendment Act, 1976

Often called the **"Mini Constitution,"** this is one of the most heavily tested important constitutional amendments in any exam. Based on recommendations of the Sardar Swaran Singh Committee, it made sweeping changes across the Constitution.

Key changes included adding the words socialist, secular, and integrity to the Preamble, introducing Fundamental Duties under a new Part IVA, making constitutional amendments beyond judicial scrutiny, raising the tenure of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies from five to six years, and shifting five subjects including education and forests from the State List to the Concurrent List.

Forty Third and Forty Fourth Amendment Acts, 1977 and 1978

These amendments were enacted by the Janata Government to undo several excesses of the emergency era. The **43rd Amendment restored powers of the Supreme Court and High Courts curtailed during the emergency**, while the **44th Amendment deleted the right to property** from Part III altogether, converting it into a mere legal right under Article 300A, and replaced the term "internal disturbance" with "armed rebellion" for declaring a national emergency.

Fifty Second Amendment Act, 1985

Commonly known as the **Anti Defection Law**, this amendment added the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution, providing for the disqualification of members of Parliament and state legislatures on the ground of defection from their political party.

Sixty First Amendment Act, 1989

This amendment reduced the **voting age from 21 years to 18 years** for elections to the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies, significantly expanding the electorate almost overnight.

Sixty Ninth Amendment Act, 1991

Based on the recommendations of the Balakrishnan Committee, this amendment inserted Articles 239AA and 239AB, giving **Delhi special status as the National Capital Territory** with its own 70 member legislative assembly and council of ministers.

Seventy Third and Seventy Fourth Amendment Acts, 1992

These twin amendments transformed local governance in India. The 73rd Amendment granted constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions by adding Part IX and the Eleventh Schedule, while the 74th Amendment did the same for urban local bodies through Part IXA and the Twelfth Schedule.

Eighty Sixth Amendment Act, 2002

This amendment made elementary education a fundamental right by inserting Article 21A, guaranteeing free and compulsory education for children between six and fourteen years of age. It also added a corresponding fundamental duty under Article 51A.

Ninety First Amendment Act, 2003

This amendment strengthened anti defection provisions by capping the size of the Council of Ministers at **15 percent** of the total strength of the Lok Sabha or a state Legislative Assembly, and removed the earlier exemption that protected defectors in cases of a one third party split.

Ninety Seventh Amendment Act, 2011

This amendment gave constitutional status to cooperative societies, made the right to form cooperative societies a fundamental right under Article 19, and added a new **Part IXB** to the Constitution.

Ninety Ninth Amendment Act, 2014

This amendment attempted to replace the collegium system of appointing judges with the **National Judicial Appointments Commission**. However, the Supreme Court struck down this amendment as unconstitutional in 2015, restoring the collegium system, making it a rare example among important constitutional amendments to be judicially invalidated.

One Hundred and First Amendment Act, 2017

This landmark amendment introduced the **Goods and Services Tax** across India, replacing a maze of central and state indirect taxes with a single comprehensive, multi stage, destination based tax system.

One Hundred and Third Amendment Act, 2019

This amendment introduced reservation for the **Economically Weaker Section** for the first time in independent India, amending Article 16 to allow a 10 percent quota in public employment based purely on economic criteria, separate from caste based reservation.

One Hundred and Fourth Amendment Act, 2020

This amendment extended the reservation of seats for **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies** for a further ten years, up to 2030, by amending Article 334. At the same time, it **abolished the separate reservation of seats for the Anglo Indian community in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies**, which had existed since the framing of the Constitution.

One Hundred and Fifth Amendment Act, 2021

This is one of the most important recent constitutional amendments. In 2021, the Supreme Court had interpreted the 102nd Amendment as taking away the states' power to identify their own

Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, or SEBCs.

This ruling threatened reservation benefits for nearly 671 OBC communities across various states. To correct this, Parliament swiftly passed the 105th Amendment, restoring the **exclusive power of states to prepare and maintain their own SEBC lists**, while clarifying that the Central List under Article 342A applies only to the Central Government and its institutions.

One Hundred and Sixth Amendment Act, 2023

Popularly known as the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**, this is currently the most recent amendment to the Constitution and one every CLAT PG aspirant absolutely must know. It reserves one third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha, in every state Legislative Assembly, and in the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

The amendment inserted new **Articles 330A and 332A**, and also amended Article 239AA, providing that one third of the seats already reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes must also go to women from those communities. Reserved seats are to rotate after each delimitation exercise, and the reservation is meant to last for fifteen years initially, extendable by Parliament.

Importantly, under the newly inserted Article 334A, this amendment does not take effect immediately. Its implementation is tied to the completion of the next census and a subsequent delimitation exercise, meaning the reservation will likely come into force only from the elections held after that process concludes.

Why These Amendments Matter for Your Preparation

Notice how many of these important constitutional amendments arose directly from Supreme Court judgments, whether reversing Golaknath through the 24th Amendment, undoing emergency excesses through the 43rd and 44th Amendments, or overturning a private college reservation ruling through the 93rd Amendment.

This connection between judgments and amendments is a favourite exam theme. Instead of memorising amendment numbers in isolation, try linking each one to the case or political event that triggered it, since this context makes recall far easier under exam pressure.

Conclusion

From the First Amendment addressing early reservation disputes to the 106th Amendment reserving seats for women in Parliament and state assemblies, these important constitutional amendments trace the evolving relationship between the judiciary, the legislature, and the people of India.

Mastering the story behind each amendment, rather than just the number and year, will help you handle even the trickiest CLAT PG questions on this subject with genuine confidence.