

Right to Equality (Articles 14 - 18)

The Right to Equality is one of the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of India. It is very important to understand what this right entails and includes. This topic is a basic topic in the polity and constitution segments of the [UPSC Syllabus](#) for the civil services exam.

In this article, you can read all about the Right to Equality and the related constitutional provisions from the IAS exam point of view. For more on Fundamental Rights, click [here](#).

Right to Equality

The right to equality provides for the equal treatment of everyone before the law, prevents discrimination on various grounds, treats everybody as equals in matters of public employment, and abolishes untouchability, and titles (such as Sir, Rai Bahadur, etc.).

Below we provide the associated articles of the Constitution under the right to equality.

Right to Equality

Article	Brief description
Article 14	The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
Article 15	The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
Article 16	There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.
Article 17	Abolition of untouchability
Article 18	Abolition of all titles except military and academic

Equality before the law (Article 14)

Article 14 treats all people the same in the eyes of the law.

- This provision states that all citizens will be treated equally before the law.
- The law of the country protects everybody equally.
- Under the same circumstances, the law will treat people in the same manner.

Prohibition of discrimination (Article 15)

This article prohibits discrimination in any manner.

- No citizen shall, on grounds only of race, religion, caste, place of birth, sex or any of them, be subject to any liability, disability, restriction or condition with respect to:
 - Access to public places
 - Use of tanks, wells, ghats, etc. that are maintained by the State or that are meant for the general public
- The article also mentions that special provision can be made for women, children and the backward classes notwithstanding this article.

Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment (Article 16)

Article 16 provides equal employment opportunities in State service for all citizens.

- No citizen shall be discriminated against in matters of public employment or appointment on the grounds of race, religion, caste, sex, place of birth, descent or residence.
- Exceptions to this can be made for providing special provisions for the backward classes.

Abolition of untouchability (Article 17)

Article 17 prohibits the practice of untouchability.

- Untouchability is abolished in all forms.
- Any disability arising out of untouchability is made an offence.

Abolition of titles (Article 18)

Article 18 abolishes titles.

- The State shall not confer any titles except those which are academic or military titles.
- The article also prohibits citizens of India from accepting any titles from a foreign State.
- The article abolishes the titles that were awarded by the British such as Rai Bahadur, Khan Bahadur, etc.
- Awards like Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, Bharat Ratna and military honours like Ashok Chakra, Param Vir Chakra do not belong to this category.

UPSC Questions related to Right to Equality

Is equality a basic human right?

The right to equality and non-discrimination is a fundamental component of international human rights law.

What are the exceptions to the right of equality of opportunity in matters of public employment?

Under Article 16, exceptions to the right of equality of opportunity in matters of public employment are provided for to protect the interests of the weaker and vulnerable sections of society such as women, children, the backward classes (SC/ST) and minorities. The Parliament may also pass a law to the effect that a certain post be filled only by people residing in a certain area, to fulfil the conditions of the post that warrants the knowledge of the locality and the local language. The Article also mentions that there can be a law which provides that the incumbent of an office in connection with the affairs of any religious or denominational institution shall be a person professing a particular religion or belonging to a particular denomination.

What does the Constitution of India say about equality?

The Indian Constitution has granted the right to equality to all citizens. All are equal before the law and there can be no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, etc.

