

Article 4 of Indian Constitution, Interpretation, Significance

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Article 4 of the Constitution of India empowers Parliament to enact laws for the formation of new states or alteration of existing ones. Historic developments like the linguistic reorganization of states in the 1950s or the creation of Telangana in 2014 were carried out using the framework laid down under Article 4. It ensures that such changes are not only legally valid but also uphold democratic processes, thereby reinforcing India's flexible yet stable federal structure. In this article, we are going to cover Article 4 of the Constitution of India, its interpretation and its significance.

Article 4 of Indian Constitution History

On November 18, 1948, Article 4 was discussed for the first time in the Assembly. The article states that the laws passed by the Parliament under Article 2 and Article 3 will not be counted as constitutional amendments. These two articles can be implemented by just a majority vote instead of opting for a special procedure. Shibban Lal Saksena, a member of the Indian National Congress from the United Provinces, voiced serious concerns during the Constituent Assembly debates about the implications of altering state boundaries. He emphasized that such decisions carried substantial national importance and should not be left to the discretion of a simple majority in

Parliament. Saksena cautioned against the instability that could arise if successive governments frequently altered state boundaries. While other members, including Pattabhi Sitaramayya from Madras, shared similar reservations, no formal amendments were introduced. As a result, Article 4 was adopted into the Constitution in its original form, without any changes.

Article 4 of Indian Constitution Interpretation

The constitution of India states the following about Article 4:

- “Any law referred to in article 2 or article 3 shall contain such provisions for the amendment of the First Schedule and the Fourth Schedule as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of the law and may also contain such supplemental, incidental and consequential provisions (including provisions as to representation in Parliament and in the Legislature or Legislatures of the State or States affected by such law) as Parliament may deem necessary.”
- No such law as aforesaid shall be deemed to be an amendment of this Constitution for the purposes of article 368.

Article 4 of the Indian Constitution can be interpreted in the following manner:

The phrase “Any law referred to in Article 2 or Article 3” signifies that Article 4 of the Indian Constitution governs laws related to the admission of new states (Article 2) and the creation or alteration of states (Article 3).

- The clause “shall contain such provisions for the amendment of the First Schedule and the Fourth Schedule” makes it mandatory for such laws to appropriately update the First Schedule (which lists states and union territories) and the Fourth Schedule (which details Rajya Sabha seat allocation), ensuring constitutional alignment with the territorial changes.
- The expression “as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of the law” underlines the need for all essential amendments that make the proposed changes legally and functionally effective.
- The provision that the law “may also contain such supplemental, incidental and consequential provisions” grants the authority to include additional provisions required for implementation such as adjustments in legislative representation, administrative arrangements, or jurisdictional boundaries—thus enabling smooth execution of the reorganisation.

Article 4 of Indian Constitution Significance

Article 4 of the Indian Constitution reflects the dynamic and adaptable nature of the Constitution by empowering Parliament to create new states or alter the boundaries of existing ones through a simple majority and ordinary legislative procedure, rather than a constitutional amendment.

- **Parliament’s Legislative Competence:** It grants Parliament the exclusive authority to reorganize states like changing their names, boundaries, or status and ensuring administrative efficiency and responsiveness to evolving regional demands.
- **Not a Constitutional Amendment:** Laws enacted under Article 4 are not treated as constitutional amendments under Article 368, which simplifies the process and avoids procedural rigidity in matters of state

reorganization.

- **Uphold Legal and Constitutional Coherence:** Article 4 ensures that necessary adjustments such as to the First and Fourth Schedules are made seamlessly to maintain constitutional consistency, enabling smooth and effective implementation of reorganization laws.

Article 4 of Indian Constitution Impact

Article 4 of the Constitution of India has been used by the Parliament to enact important acts. In this table below, we show the states that are involved in the corresponding legislative acts:

States Involved	Acts
Assam	Assam (Alteration of Boundaries) Act, 1951: Altered boundaries by ceding a strip of area from India to Bhutan.
Andhra Pradesh	Andhra State Act, 1953: Formed a new state by taking territory from Madras.
Himachal Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur (New State) Act, 1954: Merged Part C states of Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur into one state.
West Bengal	Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1956: Transferred certain territories from Bihar to West Bengal.
Kerala	States Reorganisation Act, 1956: Formed new state of Kerala; merged states like Madhya Bharat, Pepsi, Saurashtra, Travancore Cochin, etc.
Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1959: Transferred certain territories from Rajasthan to Madhya Pradesh.
Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh and Madras (Alteration of Boundaries) Act, 1959: Altered boundaries of Andhra Pradesh and Madras.
Gujarat and Maharashtra	Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960: Partitioned Bombay into Gujarat and Maharashtra.
Assam, Punjab, and West Bengal	Acquired Territories (Merger) Act, 1960: Merged territories acquired from Pakistan into Assam, West Bengal, and Punjab.
Nagaland	State of Nagaland Act, 1962: Formed a new state of Nagaland from the Naga Hills-Tuensang Area.

Punjab and Haryana	Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966: Split Punjab into Punjab, Haryana, and union territory of Chandigarh.
Andhra Pradesh and Mysore	Andhra Pradesh and Mysore (Transfer of Territory) Act, 1968: Transferred territory from Mysore to Andhra Pradesh.
Bihar and Uttar Pradesh	Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act, 1968: Altered boundaries between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
Meghalaya	Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act, 1969: Created autonomous sub-state Meghalaya within Assam.
Himachal Pradesh	State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 1970: Upgraded Himachal Pradesh from Union Territory to state status.
Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh	North Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971: Upgraded Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya to states; Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to Union Territories.
Sikkim	35th Amendment Act, 1974: Admitted Sikkim as a state; 36th Amendment Act, 1975: Introduced Article 371F for special protections.
Haryana and Uttar Pradesh	Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (Alteration of Boundaries) Act, 1979: Altered boundaries between Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
Mizoram	State of Mizoram Act, 1986: Elevated Mizoram from Union Territory to state status.
Arunachal Pradesh	State of Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986: Upgraded Arunachal Pradesh from Union Territory to state status.
Goa	Goa, Daman, and Diu Reorganisation Act, 1987: Formed the state of Goa, separating it from Daman and Diu.
Chhattisgarh	Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000: Created new state of Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh.
Uttaranchal	Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000: Separated Uttaranchal from Uttar Pradesh.

Jharkhand	Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000: Created a new state of Jharkhand from Bihar.
Telangana	Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014: Separated Telangana from Andhra Pradesh.

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Article 14 of indian constitution	Article 18 of Indian Constitution
Article 23 of Indian Constitution	Article 24 of Indian Constitution
Article 3 of Indian Constitution	Article 38 of Indian Constitution
Article 43 of Indian Constitution	Article 48 of Indian Constitution
Article 143 of Indian Constitution	Article 326 of Indian Constitution
Article 124 of indian constitution	Article 45 of Indian Constitution
Article 41 of Indian Constitution	Article 160 of Indian Constitution
Article 340 of Indian Constitution	Article 43b of Indian Constitution
Article 156 of Indian Constitution	Article 144 of Indian Constitution
Article 365 of Indian Constitution	Article 201 of Indian Constitution
Article 140 of Indian Constitution	Article 35 of Indian Constitution
Article 166 of Indian Constitution	Article 102 of Indian Constitution
Article 83 of Indian Constitution	Article 88 of Indian Constitution
Article 28 of Indian Constitution	Article 103 of Indian Constitution
Article 36 of Indian Constitution	Article 62 of Indian Constitution
Article 82 of Indian Constitution	Article 97 of Indian Constitution
Article 224 of Indian Constitution	Article 251 of Indian Constitution

Article 13 of Indian Constitution	Article 29 & 30 of Indian Constitution
Article 15 of Indian Constitution	Article 4 of Indian Constitution
Article 85 of Indian Constitution	Article 27 of Indian Constitution
Article 238 of Indian Constitution	Article 312 of Indian Constitution
Article 137 of Indian Constitution	Article 118 of Indian Constitution
Article 353 of Indian Constitution	Article 111 of Indian Constitution
Article 113 of Indian Constitution	Article 76 of Indian Constitution
Article 44 of Indian Constitution	Article 50 of Indian Constitution
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Article 20 of Indian Constitution	Article 16 of Indian Constitution
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