



**CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY
DEBATES**

Read, Search and Explore India's Constitutional Origins

Indian Constitutional History Workshop

The Constituent Assembly Debates (CADs) are a record of the debates and proceedings in the Constituent Assembly of India which sat for 165 days from December 9, 1946, to January 24, 1950. These debates which are organised in 12 volumes are an essential guide to the process of drafting and creating the Constitution of India, 1950. This Constitution also drew on a longer history of antecedents documents – Historical Constitutions - drafted either as legislation governing British India or aspirational political documents.

These materials are invaluable to understanding India's constitutional and political history and provide insights into contemporary political controversies from cow slaughter to the death penalty.

While the CADs are available in print and on the web, both expert and lay users find these existing sources complex and difficult to access and understand. The Centre for Law and Policy Research (CLPR) has curated, coded and tagged the CADs and Historical Constitutions. This human-tagged database has been integrated into a website powered by a unique intelligent search engine. The website allows users to search Indian constitutional history materials through filters – keyword, speaker name, speaker referred to, article number etc. – and obtain relevant portions of the CADs and Historical Constitutions in a quick, easy and systematic manner.

CLPR will conduct workshops with different groups including students and professionals that will have the dual purpose of orienting them to the CADIndia website while also facilitating a critical approach to towards thinking about contemporary issues through the lens of constitutional history.

The workshop will pick a contemporary topic (for e.g. cow slaughter, freedom of speech, local government) and demonstrate how the CADIndia website could be used in deconstructing and analysing these issues. Students will engage with specially designed worksheets that will test and push their ability to engage with Indian constitutional and political history materials and illuminate contemporary political and constitutional developments.

We believe that such an understanding of Indian constitutional and political history could greatly add to the depth and rigour with which citizens tackle pressing legal, political and social challenges of the day.