

Composition of the Constituent Assembly.

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In 1935 ~~the~~ the Indian National Congress, for the first time, officially demanded a Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution of India. In 1938 Jawaharlal Nehru ~~on~~ ~~the~~ behalf of the INC declared that the Constitution of free India must be framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult-franchise.

After a long period the Constituent Assembly was in November 1946 under the scheme formulated by the Cabinet Mission plan.

The features of the scheme were

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- ① The total strength of the Constituent Assembly was to be 389. Of these, 296 seats were to be allotted to British India and 93 seats to the Princely States. Out of 296 seats allotted to the British India, 292 members were to be drawn from the eleven (11) governors' provinces and four from four chief commissioners' provinces, one from each.
- ② Each province and princely state were to be allotted seats in proportion to their respective population and Roughly, one seat was to be allotted for every million population.
- ③ Seats allocated to each British province were to be decided among the three principal communities - Muslims, Sikhs, and general (all except Muslim & Sikhs) in ~~pro~~ proportion to their population.
- ④ The representatives of each community were to be elected by members of that community in the provincial legislative assembly and voting was to be by the method of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote.
- ⑤ The representatives of princely states were to be nominated by the heads of the princely states.

It is thus clear that the Constituent Assembly was to be a partly elected and partly

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nominated body. More over, the members were to be indirectly elected by the members of the provincial assemblies who themselves were elected on a limited franchise.

The Election to the constituent Assembly (for 296 seats allotted to the British Indian provinces) were held in July - August 1946. The Indian National Congress won 208 seats. The Muslim League 73 seats and the small groups and independents got the remaining 15 seats. However the 93 seats allotted to the princely ~~states~~ States were not filled as they decided to ~~stay~~ stay away from the Constituent Assembly.

Although the Constituent Assembly was not directly elected by the people of India on the basis of ~~Adult~~ Adult franchise, the Assembly comprised representatives of all sections of Indian Society - Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, S.C.s, S.T.s including women of all these sections. The Assembly included all important personalities of India at that time, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi and M.A. Jinnah.

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