

NCERT Notes: Poona Pact - 1932 [Modern Indian History Notes For UPSC]

The Poona Pact is an agreement between M K Gandhi and B R Ambedkar signed in the Yerwada Central Jail, Poona on September 24th, 1932 on behalf of the depressed class for the reservation of the electoral seats in the Legislature of the British Government.

This is an important topic for the UPSC Exam and these notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like bank exams, [SSC](#), state civil services exams and so on.

This Pact ended the fast that Gandhi had undertaken in the jail to protest against British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald's award of a separate electorate to the Depressed Classes.

Poona Pact – Important Facts

- Dr Ambedkar was in favour of a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes and this was laid down by him in the First Round Table Conference. He was representing the Depressed Classes in the conference.
- Gandhi was against this idea and when PM Macdonald decided to grant communal awards to minorities and the Depressed Classes, he undertook a fast whilst in jail in Poona.
- Due to public pressure to end the fast unto death, Dr Ambedkar and Gandhi made the Poona Pact which laid down reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in the provincial legislatures for which elections would be through joint electorates.
- Gandhi was against this idea because he did not want to view the untouchables as being outside the folds of Hinduism.
- Certain seats for the provincial legislatures would be reserved for the Depressed Classes. The number of seats was based on the total strength of the Provincial Councils. The number of seats reserved for the provinces were 30 for Madras, 8 for Punjab, 15 for Bombay with Sindh, 20 for the Central Provinces, 18 for Bihar and Orissa, 30 for Bengal, 7 for Assam and 20 for the United Provinces. So, in total there were 148 reserved seats.
- For each of these seats, the members of the Depressed Classes who could vote would form an electoral college. This Electoral College would elect a panel of four candidates who belong to the Depressed Classes. These candidates would be elected on the basis of a single vote. Four candidates getting the highest number of votes would be elected.
- Then these four candidates would stand in the election for the assembly along with the general candidates where the general electorate would vote. The members of the Depressed Classes hence got a 'double vote' since they could vote under the general electorate also.
- Even in the Central Legislature, the same principle of joint electorate and reserved seats was to be followed.
- In the Central Legislature, 19% of the seats would be reserved for the Depressed Classes.
- This system would continue for ten years unless a mutual agreement consents to terminate it earlier.

- Fair representation of the Depressed Classes would be ensured by all means.
- Nobody would be discriminated against on the basis of caste on matters regarding election to the local bodies or in public services appointments.
- A certain sum of money from the educational grant would be allotted for the education of the Depressed Classes in all provinces.