

INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Introduction

The **Constituent Assembly of India** was formed to draft the Constitution of independent India. The idea of an independent constitution for India was gradually evolved through various political developments during British rule.

Evolution of Constitutional Development in India

1. Regulating Act of 1773

- First step towards constitutional development in British India.
- Created the office of Governor-General and established a Supreme Court at Calcutta.

2. Pitt's India Act of 1784

- Established dual control of British Government and East India Company.

3. Charter Acts (1793, 1813, 1833, 1853)

- 1833: Centralized administration under Governor-General of India.
- 1853: Introduced open competition for civil services.

4. Government of India Act, 1858

- After the 1857 revolt, British Crown took over administration from East India Company.
- Governor-General became **Viceroy of India**.

5. Indian Councils Acts (1861, 1892, 1909)

- 1909: **Morley-Minto Reforms** - introduced separate electorates for Muslims.

6. Government of India Act, 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms)

- Introduced **diarchy** at the provincial level.

7. Government of India Act, 1935

- Laid the groundwork for the federal structure.
- Provided for an All-India Federation, Provincial Autonomy, and Federal Court.
- Became the **basis of the Indian Constitution** in many respects.

Formation of the Constituent Assembly

1. Origin of the Idea

- First proposed by **M.N. Roy** in 1934.
- Accepted by **Indian National Congress** in 1935.

- Officially adopted by the British Government through the **August Offer (1940)**.

2. Cripps Mission (1942)

- Proposed making a Constituent Assembly after the war.
- Rejected by Indian leaders due to vague provisions.

3. Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)

- Proposed a **Constituent Assembly** with 389 members.
- Members were to be **partly elected** and **partly nominated**.
- Elections were held in July 1946.

Composition of the Constituent Assembly

- **Total Members:** Initially 389 (292 from provinces, 93 from princely states, 4 from Chief Commissioner's provinces).
- After partition (1947): Reduced to **299 members**.
- Members were indirectly elected by the **Provincial Legislative Assemblies**.

Key Features of the Assembly

- **President:** Dr. **Rajendra Prasad** (elected on 11 December 1946).
- **Vice-President:** H.C. Mookherjee.
- **Constitution Advisor:** B.N. Rau.
- **Chairman of Drafting Committee:** Dr. B.R. **Ambedkar**.

Important Dates

| Date | Event |
|-------------|--|
| 9 Dec 1946 | First meeting of Constituent Assembly |
| 11 Dec 1946 | Dr. Rajendra Prasad elected President |
| 14 Aug 1947 | Assembly met as Sovereign body |
| 26 Nov 1949 | Constitution was adopted |
| 26 Jan 1950 | Constitution came into effect (Republic Day) |