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Question: When and how was the Constituent Assembly established?

Answer:

The Constituent Assembly of India was established with the aim of drafting a democratic and independent Constitution for the country. It was formed in 1946 under the Cabinet Mission Plan proposed by the British. We will understand this in detail and step-by-step:

1. Cabinet Mission Plan and Formation of the Constituent Assembly:

The Cabinet Mission Plan was introduced by the British Government in March 1946. Its primary objective was to set up a Constituent Assembly to draft the Constitution for India.

This plan was initiated under the leadership of British Prime Minister Clement Attlee.

The plan ensured representation from both British India and the princely states.

2. Election of Members of the Constituent Assembly:

The members of the Constituent Assembly were elected through an indirect election process.

The elected members of the provincial legislatures elected the representatives to the Constituent Assembly.

The Assembly initially consisted of 389 members:

292 members from British India.

93 members from princely states.

4 members from Chief Commissioner's provinces.

The Assembly ensured representation from all communities, regions, and sections of Indian society.

3. First Meeting of the Constituent Assembly:

The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held on 9th December 1946 in New Delhi.

A total of 207 members attended this meeting.

Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha was elected as the temporary president.

On 11th December 1946, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected as the permanent president of the Assembly.

4. Objectives of the Constituent Assembly:

The primary goal of the Constituent Assembly was to draft a Constitution that would:

Provide equal rights to all citizens.

Be based on the principles of justice, liberty, and equality.

Ensure the unity and integrity of the country.

Promote social and economic justice.

Establish India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic republic.

5. Impact of Partition on the Constituent Assembly:

In 1947, the partition of India led to the creation of Pakistan.

Following the partition, Pakistan formed its own Constituent Assembly.

As a result, the total number of members in the Indian Constituent Assembly was reduced to 299.

6. Process of Constitution-Making:

The Constituent Assembly held 11 sessions in total.

It took 2 years, 11 months, and 18 days to complete the drafting of the Constitution.

Several committees were formed to handle specific aspects of Constitution-making:

Drafting Committee: Chaired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, it was responsible for finalizing the draft of the Constitution.

Other important committees included the Fundamental Rights Committee, Union-State Relations Committee, and Financial Management Committee.

The Constitution was debated for 165 days.

7. Adoption of the Constitution:

The Indian Constitution was adopted on 26th November 1949.

It came into effect on 26th January 1950, a date chosen to commemorate the declaration of Purna Swaraj in 1930.

8. Key Members of the Constituent Assembly:

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Chairman of the Drafting Committee, often called the “Architect of the Indian Constitution.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru: Presented the “Objectives Resolution” outlining the basic philosophy of the Constitution.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Permanent President of the Constituent Assembly.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel: Played a key role in integrating princely states into the Indian Union.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: Contributed significantly to education and cultural policies.

9. Achievements of the Constituent Assembly:

The Constituent Assembly successfully drafted the world's longest written Constitution.

It ensured equality and justice for all sections of Indian society.

The Assembly became a symbol of India's democratic aspirations and laid the foundation for a robust democratic system.

It incorporated diverse views to reflect India's pluralistic society.

10. Historical Significance of the Constituent Assembly:

The Constituent Assembly marked a significant milestone in India's journey towards democracy and social justice.

It represented all sections of society and laid the groundwork for a democratic and inclusive nation.

It provided India with a Constitution that is still the guiding document for the nation.

Conclusion:

The Constituent Assembly not only gave India a Constitution but also laid the foundation for a democratic, secular, and inclusive society. Its establishment and functioning remain a landmark achievement in Indian history. The Constitution continues to serve as the backbone of Indian democracy, upholding the values of justice, liberty, and equality.