

## **Making of the Constitution**

### **DEMAND FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY**

It was in 1934 that the idea of a Constituent Assembly for India was put forward for the first time by M. N. Roy, a pioneer of communist movement in India. In 1935, the Indian National Congress (INC), for the first time, officially demanded a Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution of India. In 1938, Jawaharlal Nehru, on behalf the INC declared that ‘the Constitution of free India must be framed, without outside interference, by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise’

The demand was finally accepted in principle by the British Government in what is known as the ‘August Offer’ of 1940. In 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the cabinet, came to India with a draft proposal of the British Government on the framing of an independent Constitution to be adopted after the World War II. The Cripps Proposals were rejected by the Muslim League which wanted India to be divided into two autonomous states with two separate Constituent Assemblies. Finally, a Cabinet Mission<sup>1</sup> was sent to India. While it rejected the idea of two Constituent Assemblies, it put forth a scheme for the Constituent Assembly which more or less satisfied the Muslim League.

### **Major Committees**

1. Union Powers Committee – Jawaharlal Nehru
2. Union Constitution Committee – Jawaharlal Nehru
3. Provincial Constitution Committee – Sardar Patel
4. Drafting Committee – Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
5. Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas – Sardar Patel.

This committee had the following five sub-committees:

- (a) Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee – J.B. Kripalani
  - (b) Minorities Sub-Committee – H.C. Mukherjee
  - (c) North-East Frontier Tribal Areas and Assam Excluded & Partially Excluded Areas Sub-Committee – Gopinath Bardoloi
  - (d) Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (Other than those in Assam) Sub-Committee – A.V. Thakkar
  - (e) North-West Frontier Tribal Areas Sub-Committee<sup>8a</sup>
6. Rules of Procedure Committee – Dr. Rajendra Prasad
  7. States Committee (Committee for Negotiating with States) – Jawaharlal Nehru
  8. Steering Committee – Dr. Rajendra Prasad

## **Minor Committees**

1. Finance and Staff Committee – Dr. Rajendra Prasad
2. Credentials Committee – Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar
3. House Committee – B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
4. Order of Business Committee – Dr. K.M. Munshi
5. Ad-hoc Committee on the National Flag – Dr. Rajendra Prasad
6. Committee on the Functions of the Constituent Assembly – G.V. Mavalankar
7. Ad-hoc Committee on the Supreme Court – S. Varadachari (Not an Assembly Member)
8. Committee on Chief Commissioners' Provinces – B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
9. Expert Committee on the Financial Provisions of the Union Constitution – Nalini Ranjan Sarkar (Not an Assembly Member)
10. Linguistic Provinces Commission – S.K. Dar (Not an Assembly Member)
11. Special Committee to Examine the Draft Constitution – Jawaharlal Nehru
12. Press Gallery Committee – Usha Nath Sen
13. Ad-hoc Committee on Citizenship – S. Varadachari