

## UNIT 12 – UPSC - Third Round Table conference, Poona Pact

India's History : Modern India : Third Round Table Conference, The Communal Award, Poona Pact : 1932

### Third Round Table Conference



The third session began on November 17, 1932. It was short and unimportant. The Congress was once again absent, so was the Labor opposition in the British Parliament. Reports of the various committees were scrutinized. The conference ended on December 25, 1932.

The recommendations of the Round Table Conferences were embodied in a White Paper. It was published in March 1933, and debated in parliament directly afterwards, analyzed by the Joint Select Committee and after the final reading and loyal assent, the bill reached the Statute Book on July 24, 1935.



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## Poona pact



During the first Round Table Conference, when Ambedkar favoured the move of the British Government to provide separate electorate for the oppressed classes, Gandhi strongly opposed it on the plea that the move would disintegrate the Hindu society. He went for an indefinite hunger strike from September 20, 1932 against the decision of the then British Prime Minister J. Ramsay MacDonald granting communal award to the depressed classes in the constitution for governance of British India.



In view of the mass upsurge generated in the country to save the life of Gandhi, Ambedkar was compelled to soften his stand. A compromise between the leaders of caste Hindu and the depressed classes was reached on September 24, 1932, popularly known as Poona Pact. The resolution announced in a public meeting on September 25 in Bombay confirmed -" henceforth, amongst Hindus no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and they will have the same rights in all the social institutions as the other Hindus have". This landmark resolution in the history of the Dalit movement in India subsequently formed the basis for giving due share to Dalits in the political empowerment of Indian people in a democratic Indian polity.

The following is the text of the agreement arrived at between leaders acting on behalf of the Depressed Classes and of the rest of the community, regarding the representation of the Depressed Classes in the legislatures and certain other matters affecting their welfare

1. There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of general electorate seats in the provincial legislatures as follows: - Madras 30; Bombay with Sind 25; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central Provinces 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30; United Provinces 20. Total 148. These figures are based on the Prime Minister's (British) decision.
2. Election to these seats shall be by joint electorates subject, however, to the following procedure ♦ All members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll of a constituency will form an electoral college which will elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats by the method of the single vote and four persons getting

the highest number of votes in such primary elections shall be the candidates for election by the general electorate.

3. The representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in clause above for their representation in the provincial legislatures.