

International Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal

*Indian Streams  
Research Journal*

Executive Editor  
Ashok Yakkaldevi

Editor-in-Chief  
H.N.Jagtap

---

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial board. Readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

### **Regional Editor**

Manichander Thammishetty  
Ph.d Research Scholar, Faculty of Education IASE, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Mr. Dikonda Govardhan Krushanahari  
Professor and Researcher ,  
Rayat shikshan sanstha's, Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu College, Kolhapur.

### **International Advisory Board**

Kamani Perera Regional Center For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Mohammad Hailat Dept. of Mathematical Sciences, University of South Carolina Aiken	Hasan Baktir English Language and Literature Department, Kayseri
Janaki Sinnasamy Librarian, University of Malaya	Abdullah Sabbagh Engineering Studies, Sydney	Ghayoor Abbas Chotana Dept of Chemistry, Lahore University of Management Sciences[PK]
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania
Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ilie Pinteau, Spiru Haret University, Romania
Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Xiaohua Yang PhD, USA
Titus PopPhD, Partium Christian University, Oradea,Romania	George - Calin SERITAN Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi	.....More

### **Editorial Board**

Pratap Vyamktrao Naikwade ASP College Devrukh,Ratnagiri,MS India	Iresh Swami Ex - VC. Solapur University, Solapur	Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur
R. R. Patil Head Geology Department Solapur University,Solapur	N.S. Dhaygude Ex. Prin. Dayanand College, Solapur	R. R. Yalikal Director Managment Institute, Solapur
Rama Bhosale Prin. and Jt. Director Higher Education, Panvel	Narendra Kadu Jt. Director Higher Education, Pune	Umesh Rajderkar Head Humanities & Social Science YCMOU,Nashik
Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University,Kolhapur	K. M. Bhandarkar Praful Patel College of Education, Gondia	S. R. Pandya Head Education Dept. Mumbai University, Mumbai
Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain	Alka Darshan Shrivastava Shaskiya Snatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Dhar
Chakane Sanjay Dnyaneshwar Arts, Science & Commerce College, Indapur, Pune	G. P. Patankar S. D. M. Degree College, Honavar, Karnataka	Rahul Shriram Sudke Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
Awadhesh Kumar Shirotiya Secretary,Play India Play,Meerut(U.P.)	Maj. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director,Hyderabad AP India.	S.KANNAN Annamalai University,TN
	S.Parvathi Devi Ph.D.-University of Allahabad	Satish Kumar Kalhotra Maulana Azad National Urdu University
	Sonal Singh, Vikram University, Ujjain	



# Indian Streams Research Journal



## THE POONA PACT (1932): A CRITICAL RE-APPRAISAL



Dr. Mugali. S. Y.<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Rayannavar B. D.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.A Ph.D., Professor, Dept. of History and Archaeology, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Dept. of History and Archaeology, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

### ABSTRACT

The Poona Pact of 1932 was a historical understanding between the Depressed Classes led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and caste Hindus led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Poona Pact was signed in a hurry had left many things undefined. The vagueness and confusion of the clauses of the Pact caused delay and lapse in the implementation of reservation in employment, services, education and economic sector. Though the Pact accepts the reservation in politics, employment, and education and economic to the Depressed Classes but this became mere formal and theoretical recognition of the same. The scholars as well as laymen even to this day believe that, reservation is the contribution of Gandhiji and Congress. But they don't know why and by whom its implementation was delayed. The complete enactment of reservation policy in Toto even to this day is a big challenge to the Government and policy

makers. The keen study of the clauses of the Poona Pact reveals that there are two types reservation embodied in it, the Political reservation and the non-Political reservations. Further it reveals that political reservation is time bond i.e. temporary, where as non-political reservation is permanent, it means it exist as long as caste based discrimination exist. Though there is a clarity regarding political reservation i.e. reservation in



Central and Provincial Legislatures but regarding non-political reservations viz: reservation in local self government, education and employment there is vagueness in the very clauses of the Pact.

**KEYWORDS** : *Separate Electorate, Communal Award, Reservation, Depressed Classes, Clause, Pact, Grants, Franchise, Caste discrimination.*

### INTRODUCTION :

The Poona Pact of 1932 was a historical understanding between the Depressed Classes led by

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and caste Hindus led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Poona Pact was signed in a hurry had left many things undefined. The vagueness and confusion of the clauses of the Pact caused delay and lapse in the implementation of reservation in employment, services, education and economic sector. Though the Pact accepts the reservation in politics, employment, and education and economic to the Depressed Classes but this became mere formal and theoretical recognition of the same. The scholars as well as laymen even to this day believe that, reservation is the contribution of Gandhiji and Congress. But they don't know why and by whom its implementation was delayed. The complete enactment of reservation policy in Toto even to this day is a big challenge to the Government and policy makers. The keen study of the clauses of the Poona Pact reveals that there are two types reservation embodied in it, the Political reservation and the non-Political reservations. Further it reveals that political reservation is time bond i.e. temporary, where as non-political reservation is permanent, it means it exist as long as caste based discrimination exist. Though there is a clarity regarding political reservation i.e. reservation in Central and Provincial Legislatures but regarding non-political reservations viz: reservation in local self government, education and employment there is vagueness in the very clauses of the Pact. There was a difference of opinion between Dr. Ambedkar and Congress leaders regarding panel of four to be elected at the primary election imply four as a maximum or minimum? Then question of method of voting in the final election? Even regarding the fixation of electoral constituencies nothing was mentioned in the Pact. Later to redress these problems Hammond Committee came to India, which accepted the panel of four as maximum and cumulative voting system suggested by Dr. Ambedkar. But it was opposed by the caste Hindu leaders<sup>1</sup>. So there were many confusions and vagueness in the very Poona Pact. In view of this paper attempts an analytical and critical re-appraisal of the clauses of the Poona pact. The study involves both historical and analytical methods of research. The scope of the paper is confined to the critical analysis of the text of the Poona Pact, thus it aims the textual criticism of the Pact.

Dr. Ambedkar initially demanded Joint Electorates with reserved seats. But due to the opposition of Gandhiji and Congress to the separate political entity of the Depressed Classes then he stood for the separate electorates. He successfully argued demanding the same in the Second Round Table Conference. As a result Communal Award was announced by the British Prime Minister Ramsey Mac Donald, in which Separate Electorates was given to Depressed Classes. As per this they got two votes, by one vote they shall elect their own representative by voting themselves and by another vote jointly with the caste Hindu voters they shall elect reserved candidates. Against this award Gandhiji started fast unto death stating that, it will divide the Hindu society. As a result serious negotiations began by the Congress leaders and they pressurized the Depressed Classes' leader Dr. Ambedkar to give up the Separate Electorates and to save the life of Gandhiji. Against this Dr. Ambedkar counter argued that Hindu society is already divided, and the Depressed Class people got separate colonies, they got separate socio-religious and political entity. Regarding the approach of Gandhi-Ambedkar particularly with this issue, A.M.Rajashekharaiiah opinioned that 'Gandhiji was making a religio-political approach to the problem. Gandhiji and Congress conceived the Depressed Classes as a religious caste-group. But Ambedkar did not consider his people as a religious caste-group. He demanded their recognition as a distinct political minority in the national life of the country and was entitled to safeguards in any constitutional arrangement.<sup>2</sup> Further he wants to resolve this from the political and constitutional means. Finally on 24th September 1932 Poona Pact was signed between Dr. Ambedkar and Congress leaders as per this joint electorates accepted with reserved seats for the Depressed Classes. The following paragraphs discuss the clauses of the Poona Pact.

### The Clause wise analysis of the Poona Pact:

The first clause of the Pact is simple and there is no confusion in it, which states that, there shall be seats served for the Depressed classes out of the general electorate seats in the Provincial Legislatures as follows:-

Madras 30; Bombay with Sind 15; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central province 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30; United Province 20; total 148.

These figures are based on the total strength of provincial councils, announced in the Prime Minister's decision<sup>3</sup>. Thus this first clause clearly mentions the number of seats reserved to depressed classes in the various Provinces of the British India.

The second clause mentions that, election to these seats i.e. above said Provincial Legislatures shall be by joint electorates however subject, to the following procedure: "All the members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general roll in a constituency will form an electoral college, which will elect panel of four candidates belonging Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats, by the method of single vote: the four persons getting the highest number of votes in such primary election, shall be candidates for election by the general electorate<sup>4</sup>". This clause speaks about the Joint Electorate, under which election is conducted in a two stages namely primary and final or general election. It is provided that in primary stage of election only depressed class voters were to vote and elect four candidates. Thus the highest voted four candidates were to contest the final or general election in which, Depressed Classes along with the caste Hindu voters jointly vote and elect representative of each reserved constituencies. Further it was mentioned that if the candidates for the primary election are less than four than there is no need to conduct primary election and directly final or general election with the joint voting could take place. Due to this provision of the clause Depressed Classes are unable to elect their true and genuine representatives. The analyses this clause reveals two things, firstly, though in the primary election only Depressed Classes voters elect four candidates to contest the final or general election, but among these in the final stage of election a submissive or illiterate or innocent candidates got elected, who in turn act in accordance with the will and wish of the caste Hindus. Secondly, if less than four candidates were there, there is no need hold the primary election at all. As a result in the final or general election there is joint voting is followed in which, the caste Hindus usually elect the submissive or innocent or illiterate or slave mentality representative. He was under the mercy of caste Hindus because in the general or final (Joint electorates) election caste Hindu voters are decisive and dominant. Thus under the very system of joint electorate with or without primary election the caste Hindu voters are in majority. Only in the primary election Depressed Classes' voters are decisive but in the final or general elections they are helpless and powerless. Again under the system of only final or general election i.e. joint voting (if less than four candidates) Depressed Classes are made completely dependent on majority voters and since they are minority.

The third clause refers that, "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 two above, for their representation in the Provincial Legislatures."<sup>5</sup> As that of the second clause this Clause (third) of the Pact mentions about the two stages of election primary and final or general under the joint electoral system to the Central Legislature. Like the second clause the third Clause is also had anomalies and got far reaching consequences on electoral politics of the Depressed Classes. This made Depressed Class voters powerless and dependent on caste Hindus and the elected reserved representatives' remains under the mercy of caste Hindus, and as a loyal, obedient and dependant.

The fourth Clause states that, "In the Central Legislature, eighteen per cent of the seats allotted



to the General Electorate for British India in the said Legislature shall be reserved for the Depressed Classes”<sup>6</sup>. This Clause clearly mentions about the 18% reservation of seats in the Central Legislature. But it did not mention about the proportionate representation in accordance with population of the Depressed Classes. The present proportionate population of the Depressed Classes is more than 18% and about 25%. Thus provision is unjust and lacks the foresightedness.

The fifth Clause mentions about the “system of primary election to a panel of candidates for election to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, as herein before mentioned, shall come to an end after the first ten years, unless terminated sooner by mutual agreement under the provision of Clause six below”<sup>7</sup>. This Clause specifies the ten years period for the primary system of election. It means after expire of ten years this system for primary election shall be terminated. But unfortunately the leaders, intellectuals and caste Hindus misinterpreted and misunderstood that the whole system of reservation is for only ten years period including non-political reservation i.e. reservation in employment, services, education and economic sectors. The opponents of reservation make the false propaganda regarding the reservation policy. Even today there is much confusion regarding this particular Clause. In reality the only political reservation is time bond but not to the non-political reservations. The non-Political reservation means reservation in employment, services, education and economic. And this non-political reservation exists at as long as caste based discrimination exists. Regarding this issue there is full clarity in the forgoing sixth Clause of the Pact.

The sixth Clause mentions about “the system of representation of the Depressed Classes by reserved seats in the Provincial and Central Legislatures as provided for in Clause 1 and 4 shall continue until determined by mutual agreement between the communities concerned in the settlement”<sup>8</sup>. The Clauses 1 and 4 specifically mentions only about the political reservation and not about the non-political reservations like reservation in services, employment, education and economic. It means the non-political reservation is not time bond. So the question of terminating of the same doesn’t arise. But the opponents of reservation, making unnecessary controversy over the whole reservation issue.

The seventh clause mentions that “franchise for the Central and Provincial Legislatures for the Depressed Classes shall be as indicated in the Lothian Report”<sup>9</sup>. This clause is simple and very clear.

The eighth Clause of the Pact refers as follows, “there shall be no disability attaching to anyone on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Classes in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to the Public Services. Every endeavor shall be made to secure fair representation of the Depressed Class in these respects, subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to the Public Services”<sup>10</sup>. But this Clause didn’t fix the per cent of reservation allotted to the Depressed Classes in the public services, education and economic sectors. Thus it only mentions the endeavor to secure fair representation. Due to this vagueness and non-fixation of percentage there was delay and lapse in the recruitment of Public Services. On the other hand Clause 4 of the Pact clearly mentions about the 18% reservation to the Central Legislature. On the eve of Gandhi’s fast Dr. Ambedkar in his Charter of Demands, especially the second was that, in all the public services recruitments of the Central and Provincial and Local administration there shall be reservation to the Depressed Classes based on the population ratio. And also there shall be minimum qualification for the recruitment. But when the Poona Pact was signed this demand didn’t included by the Congress leaders. But till today people believe that 18% reservation in employment and services is the gift of Gandhiji and Congress. In fact, both the political and non-political reservations got recognized by the British administration mainly because of the efforts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. When Dr. Ambedkar was Labor Minister (1942-46) in the Viceroy Executive Council he was successful in implementing the reservation in Public Services. Due to his struggle the Scheduled Castes got 8.33% reservation on 11th August 1943

,and on 15th June 1946 it was increased to 12.5%<sup>11</sup>.

The ninth Clause mentions that, “in every province, out of the educational grant an adequate sum shall be earmarked for providing educational facilities to the members of the Depressed Classes”<sup>12</sup>. It only refers about the educational grants i.e. earmarking of adequate money for the educational benefit of the Depressed Classes. It did not mention a statutory reservation in education. Even didn't specify the grant either to the primary-secondary or to the higher and abroad education.<sup>13</sup> Thus, this Clause is also vague and undefined in nature.

## CONCLUSION:

The Poona Pact is much debated issue, and its Clauses and other related issues are influenced the socio-political life of the Depressed Classes. Lord Winterton (1947) observed that, ‘the Depressed Classes would have enjoyed a much better franchise than they did under joint electorates of the Poona Pact’. Similar observation was made by Mr. Bucher, who said that, unfortunately the decision of the Franchise Committee were abrogated by the Poona Pact.<sup>14</sup> Thus there were confusions as well as lack of clarity in the very text of the Poona Pact. Due to this there is delay and lapse in the implementation of reservation policy. Presently unfilled reserved quota especially in service sectors i.e. backlog vacancies in the Central, the State and Local services are piling. But superficially the reservation related issues are debated and there are pro and against the very reservation policy. The opponents of the reservation claiming that reservation is time bond i.e. for ten years period. But the critical analysis of the every Clauses of the Poona Pact reveals the truth, and in reality only political reservation is time bond but not the Non-Political reservations.

## REFERENCES:-

- 1.Mankar Vijay: Poona Pact: Historical Harms by Gandhi, Gandhism and Congress- An Inquiry, Blue World Series, Nagapur, 2010, P. 136.
- 2 Rajasekhariah.A.M : B.R.Ambedkar-The Quest for Social Justice, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi,1989,pp.48-50.
- 3 Moon Vasant(Ed.): Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches Vol. 8, Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1990, P. 464.
4. Ibid.
- 5.Ibid.
- 6.Ibid.
- 7.Ibid.
- 8.Ibid.p.465
- 9.Ibid.
- 10.Ibid.
- 11.Mankar Vijay: Poona Pact,p.316.
- 12.Moon Vasant(Ed.): Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writing and Speeches Vol. 8, p.465
13. Mankar Vijay: Poona Pact,p. 316.
14. Babasaheb Ambedkar- Writings and Speeches Vol. 17, Part-2, 2003, pp- 520-21.



**Dr. Mugali. S. Y.**

**M.A Ph.D.,Professor, Dept. of History and Archaeology, Karnatak University, Dharwad.**

# Publish Research Article

## International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal

### For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper, Summary of Research Project, Theses, Books and Book Review for publication, you will be pleased to know that our journals are

## Associated and Indexed, India

- ★ International Scientific Journal Consortium
- ★ OPEN J-GATE

## Associated and Indexed, USA

- Google Scholar
- EBSCO
- DOAJ
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Database
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database
- Directory Of Research Journal Indexing

Indian Streams Research Journal  
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005, Maharashtra  
Contact-9595359435  
E-Mail-[ayisrj@yahoo.in](mailto:ayisrj@yahoo.in)/[ayisrj2011@gmail.com](mailto:ayisrj2011@gmail.com)  
Website : [www.isrj.org](http://www.isrj.org)