

Indian Administration during the British Period

During the establishment of British Rule, India was divided into two parts in view of Administration – First British India and the second Princely States of India.

In the British period, India was divided in Centrally Governed and 11 Regions. All the regions had individual Governors who were responsible towards the Governor General.

After the revolution of 1857, the Rule of East India Company was finished and in lieu of that, the control of Indian Administration came under the direct control of British Crown and Parliament. Now, Canning was appointed as Governor General and Viceroy both. To establish methodical administration system in India, Indian Government Act 1858 was passed, with that a new system commenced. On Peel Commission's report which was constituted to reorganize the military, the British Government increased the percentage of British soldiers in the military force as compared to Indians. Following the policy of 'Divide and Rule' the regiments of army were divided on the basis of caste, community and religion. Attuned with the policies of the Government, the police, court and the other position holders took favour of wealthy bankers and land lords. Some of the Acts passed by the British Government are as follows:

Indian Council Act of 1861 (Bharat Parishad Adhiniyam)

British Council has passed an Indian Council Act 1861. The aim to pass the bill was an effort to satisfy the soft-faction (naram-dal). Some of its rules are as follows:

According to this Act, the number of member of Governor's Executive Council was increased to 5, instead of 4. Governor General was made empowered to form rules and orders for the smooth conduct of Executive Council. Legislative Council was now made empowered to form the laws and rules for the entire India. Governor General's permission was mandatory to make law from a Bill. Any legislation passed by the legislative Council can be cancelled by the British Crown in consultation with the council and the Indian Secretary. Governor General was vested with a privilege. Governor had the prerogative to cancel or amend any law, formed by the Regional Governments.

Indian Council Act of 1892

After the inception of Indian National Congress, the demand for Constitution reforms was raised; consequently, Indian Council Act 1892 was passed by the British Parliament. The most important provision of the Act was to start election system. Election system was completely indirect and the elected members were treated as nominated members. Through this Act, the number of members was increased in central and regional legislative councils.

Indian Council Act of 1909

This was the next step in the direction of Indian Constitutional development. Indian Secretary Marle and Governor General Lord Minto were its originators. This Act is known as Marle-Minto reforms. Under the Marle-Minto reform Act, 1909 a special provision was made for Muslims, according to this separate voting and separate constituencies were made for Muslims. For this reason Marle and Minto are known as the originators of Communal Election System. The British has started the policy of 'Divide and Rule', for their administration in India.



Marle



Minto

Indian Government Act, 1919

Provisions of Administration, made through this Act are known as dual Administration enforced in the Regional areas. Thus, partially responsible Government was established in the regions.

By enforcing this Act, the British Government's intention was to obtain the support of influential people in their favour. The Indian Secretary, whose salary was released from the Indian Government, was now, through this Act, was decided to be granted from the British Treasury. Subjects were divided into central and regions as mentioned below –

Main subjects of the Central List: Foreign Affairs, Defense, Post, Telegraph and Public Debt etc.

Main subjects of the Regional List: Local Self-Government, Education, Medical, Land Tax, Drought Relief, Agriculture etc.

This Act is known as Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms.

Indian Administration Act of 1935

Through this Act, federal Government was formed for the first time in India. Dual administration was terminated from the regional level and the same was enforced at the central level. Through this act, a federal court was established; and the Burma had been made isolated from India through this Act. The executive council of the central government was under the control of Governor General. There were two houses of Legislative Assembly.

1. Rajya Sabha (Council of States) – This was known as 'Uchcha Sadan' (Upper House). This institution was permanent. Rajya Sabha had a provision of 260 members in total; out of which 104 from the Princely States and rest 156 representatives from British regions. 1/3rd members of the Rajya Sabha retires after every 3 years and other members were elected in lieu of the retirement.

2. Federal Assembly (Sanghiya Sabha) – This was called Lower House. Tenure of this assembly was 5 years. But it could be dismissed before its tenure.

Total number of the members of this house was 375: out of which 125 seats were allotted to the Princely States and out of the rest 250 seats, 246 seats were for communal and other classes and 4 seats were from other than regions. These seats were given to business, industry and labour sector. The subjects of this Act were divided into three categories- Federal List, Regional list and Concurrent list. In Federal list 59 subjects, in Regional list 54 subjects and in concurrent list 36 subjects were included. For example-

1. **Federal List-** This includes Military, Foreign Department, Post, Telegraph, Union Public Service, Communication, Insurance etc.
2. **Regional List-** Education, Land Revenue, Local Self Government, Law and Order, Public Health, Agriculture, Irrigation, Canals, Forest, Mines, Business, Industry, Justice, Road, Regional Public Service etc.
3. **Concurrent List-** Civil & Criminal matters, Law, Marriage, Divorce, Succession, Adoption, Trust, Factories, Labour welfare etc.

Change in Education and Social System

Initially, the aim to implement English education was to make arrangement of Indian workers for the Company on low salaries, to propagate Christian religion, to get assistance of Indians for administrative works. But this created an other impact also on the society that through the English language, people started knowing about the Western Civilization, culture & politics and started adopting it as well. On the criticism, made by the British, on Indian religion, traditions and customs, this educated class people protested against it rationally.

Charles Wood's Despatch 1854 was set to be the Magna Carta of Indian education. Under this, the medium of higher education was English and the regional languages were also encouraged. Indian Government's education advisor Sir John Sargent had presented a Plan. He proposed to establish Primary and Higher Secondary Schools and also made a wider provision for children of age VI-XI for their free and compulsory education.

Impact of British Administration on Newspapers

The Government formed many laws to restrict newspapers. One such law was Vernacular Press Act, 1878. This Act granted the power to District magistrate, that by virtue of his power he was capable to get the bond paper signed with any of the newspapers of Indian language that they will not print any material which goes against the government. This Act was so dangerous that it snatched the liberty of the local Language Press.

Dispute pertaining to the Ilbert Bill

According to the Bill presented in the period of Lord Ripon, all the judges irrespective of Indian and British would possess equal rights. According to this, Indian Justice can give punishment to a British also. But the Britishers protested this Bill very strongly.

Some Major Administrative changes in the Princely States of Rajasthan in British Period

Before Freedom, there were 19 Princely States in Rajasthan other than Ajmer which was ruled by the central government. The administration of these states functioned under the observation of the British Resident. Eventually, many states started to adopt British judicial system partly. In 1839, when the Jaipur Rajmata was removed the position of Abhibhavak (Guardian) then an 'Administrative Council' was constituted under the supervision of a British agent. On this occasion, Civil and Criminal Courts were established in the States. The British agent Thursby separated the Law department from the administration department. This arrangement continued till 1852 A.D. in Jaipur. In due course appeal-courts comprising of four members were established; out of which two judges were for Appeal hearing, and two for Criminal hearings. After some time this law-council was divided into two, First- Session Court and Second- Special Court. The Special court was the Supreme Court of the State.

After 1858, under the supremacy of British government, Raja, Maharaja, Maharana, Maharawal, all remained the rulers in the name only. In fact these Rulers were merely the servants of the British Government. These Rulers were not free even to maintain their relations according to their wish to the neighbouring states. They could be compelled to visit foreign countries on the instructions of the British Government; as the Ruler of the Alwar State was compelled to go to England. They had to obtain permission for the marriage alliances also. If a minor succeeds to throne, then a Guardian Council is formed by the British Government under the Chairmanship of political agent. Through this policy, the entire control of the State ultimately would come to the British Government. The British government had this opportunity to do so in the Udaipur in 1861. After Jaipur, the British laws were implemented in Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Bikaner. In Bikaner State the Judicial system was implemented on the basis of 'Power Isolation Principle'. In 1922 Main Court (Mukhya Nyayalya) was founded in conformation of High Court in Bikaner.

Until 1930, in all the states of Rajasthan the Judicial system was implemented in conformation to the British Judicial System. It was declared that every one would be treated at par in the eyes of law. No discrimination would be made on the basis of Caste, Religion, Lineage, position and on the personal prestige. Now the all works related to Justice were started in writing.

No changes were made in Gram Panchayats by British government, but the unit Pargana which was higher to Gram Panchayat was converted into districts and it was ruled by a Collector. Now, the Collector was the whole and sole in-charge of the district. Nazim, Tehsildar, Nyayik Tehsildar, Girdavar, Patwari, all worked under him. They had to collect levy and to solve land related issues. The work of law by the Magistrate and the work to maintain peace were done by the Police officers. In Rajasthan, the English education was started from Ajmer. To educate the Princes, Mayo College was started in Ajmer.

Power Isolation Principle: To divide power of Government in different institutions so that none of the institution can overpower and go against the Law.

Glossary

Pargana	:	An administrative unit, higher to Gram Panchayat
Concurrent List	:	List of the subjects, on which Centre and State both can form Law
Power Isolation	:	Split of Power

Exercise

Write the correct answers of question no. one in the bracket-

- Who was the first Viceroy of India?
 (a) Lord Canning (b) Lord Dalhousie
 (c) Sir John Laurens (d) Lord Mayo ()
- Federal Court was formed under which Act?
- What is known as the commercialization of Agriculture?
- Why the Lord Minto is called the originator of Communal Election System?
- What do you mean by the Dual Administration?
- What was the aim of the Britishers in attracting the society in their favour by doing social-reforms and education?
- Write a brief note on Vernacular Press Act.
- What changes took place in the Military department on the recommendations of Peel Commission?
- Why the 'Guardian Council' was formed by British Government in the Princely States of Rajasthan?

Activity-

What changes were done in the British Period, which are still continuing? Find these?

