

Development of Indian Constitution

Indian System of Administration

Indian democracy is a Parliamentary form of democracy where the executive is responsible to the Parliament. The Parliament has two houses – Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Also, the type of governance is Federal, i.e. there is separate executive and legislature at Center and States. We also have self-governance at local government levels. All these systems owe their legacy to the British administration. Let us see the historical background of the Indian Constitution and its development through the years.

Regulating Act of 1773

- The first step was taken by the British Parliament to control and regulate the affairs of the East India Company in India.
- It designated the **Governor** of Bengal (Fort William) as the **Governor-General (of Bengal)**.
- Warren Hastings became the first Governor-General of Bengal.
- Executive Council of the Governor-General was established (Four members). There was no separate legislative council.
- It subordinated the Governors of Bombay and Madras to the Governor-General of Bengal.
- The Supreme Court was established at Fort William (Calcutta) as the Apex Court in 1774.
- It prohibited servants of the company from engaging in any private trade or accepting bribes from the natives.
- Court of Directors (the governing body of the company) should report its revenue.

Pitt's India Act of 1784

- Distinguished between commercial and political functions of the company.
- Court of Directors for Commercial functions and Board of Control for political affairs.
- Reduced the strength of the Governor General's council to three members.
- Placed the Indian affairs under the direct control of the British Government.
- The companies' territories in India were called "the British possession in India".
- Governor's councils were established in Madras and Bombay.

Indian Councils Act of 1909

1. This Act is also known as the Morley- Minto Reforms.
2. Direct elections to legislative councils; first attempt at introducing a representative and popular element.
3. It changed the name of the Central Legislative Council to the Imperial Legislative Council.
4. The member of the Central Legislative Council was increased to 60 from 16.
5. Introduced a system of communal representation for Muslims by accepting the concept of 'separate electorate'.
6. **Indians for the first time in Viceroy's executive council.** (Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, as the law member)

Government of India Act of 1919

- This Act is also known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.
- The Central subjects were demarcated and separated from those of the Provincial subjects.
- The scheme of dual governance, 'Dyarchy', was introduced in the Provincial subjects.
- Under the dyarchy system, the provincial subjects were divided into two parts – transferred and reserved. On reserved subjects, Governor was not responsible to the Legislative council.
- The Act introduced, for the first time, **bicameralism at the center.**
- **Legislative Assembly** with 140 members and **Legislative council** with 60 members.
- Direct elections.
- The Act also required that the three of the six members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (other than Commander-in-Chief) were to be Indians.
- Provided for the establishment of the Public Service Commission.

Government of India Act of 1935

- The Act provided for the establishment of an All-India Federation consisting of the Provinces and the Princely States as units, though the envisaged federation never came into being.
- Three Lists: The Act divided the powers between the Centre and the units into items of three lists, namely the Federal List, the Provincial List and the Concurrent List.
- The Federal List for the Centre consisted of 59 items, the Provincial List for the provinces consisted of 54 items and the Concurrent List for both consisted of 36 items
- The residuary powers were vested with the Governor-General.
- The Act abolished the Dyarchy in the Provinces and introduced 'Provincial Autonomy'.
- It provided for the adoption of Dyarchy at the Centre.
- Introduced bicameralism in 6 out of 11 Provinces.

- These six Provinces were Assam, Bengal, Bombay, Bihar, Madras and the United Province.
- Provided for the establishment of Federal Court.
- Abolished the Council of India.

Indian Independence Act of 1947

- It declared India as an Independent and Sovereign State.
- Established responsible Governments at both the Centre and the Provinces.
- Designated the Viceroy India and the provincial Governors as the Constitutional (normal heads).
- It assigned dual functions (Constituent and Legislative) to the Constituent Assembly and declared this dominion legislature as a sovereign body.