



IIT ROORKEE



NPTEL ONLINE
CERTIFICATION COURSE

Partition of India in Print Media and Cinema

LECTURE 03 - HISTORY OF THE PARTITION OF INDIA

DR. SARBANI BANERJEE
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Rowlatt Act 1919

- The Rowlatt Act was **passed in March 1919** by the Central Legislative Council to control the militant nationalist struggles and curtail the liberty of the people.
- The bill was meant for speedy trial of offences by a special court and had no room for appeal.
- Rowlatt Act caused a wave of anger across the country and resulted in M K Gandhi's agitation that culminated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement**.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919)

- M K Gandhi organized the **Satyagraha on 14 February 1919** and was arrested on 8 April 1919.
- On **13 April 1919**, a large peaceful crowd had gathered at an open space known as the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab to protest against the arrest of pro-Indian independence leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Pal.
- **Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer** ordered his soldiers to open fire on a crowd of unarmed Indians.
- National leaders condemned the act unequivocally. Responses polarised both the British and Indian peoples. Anglo-Indian author Rudyard Kipling declared at the time that Dyer “did his duty as he saw it”. Rabindranath Tagore renounced the **“knighthood”** conferred on him, whereas Gandhiji signed away the **‘Kaiser-e-Hind’** title bestowed to him by the British for his service during the Boer War in South Africa.
- The level of casual brutality, and lack of any accountability, stunned the entire nation, resulting in a wrenching loss of faith of the general Indian public in the intentions of the United Kingdom.



Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- The reforms draw their name from **Edwin Samuel Montagu**, the Secretary of State for India during the later parts of WWI and **Lord Chlemsford**, Viceroy of India between 1916 and 1921. It is also known as **Montford Reforms**.
- Montagu's **August 1917 Declaration** announced the British Governments intention to grant **self-government** to Indians.
- Montagu promised the gradual development of self-governing institutions in India.
- Montagu headed a delegation during 1917-18 in which he held his discussions with Viceroy Lord Chelmsford.

Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- The reforms were delineated in the **Montagu-Chlemsford Report** prepared in 1918 and formed the theoretical basis of the **Government of India Act, 1919**.
- The report's primary proposal was that control of some areas of provincial governance be transferred to Indian ministers who are accountable to an Indian electorate.
- The key features of this report :-
- **Increasing association of Indians** in every branch of administration.
- **Gradual development of self-governing institutions** with a progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.

Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- **'End of benevolent despotism'** and introduction of responsible government in India.
- A **decentralized yet unitary system of government** was proposed based on a steady decentralization of authority and the loss of the central government's supremacy.
- Partial responsibility in provinces to Indians, but no change in the character of the central government.
- The Indian Legislative Council at the centre was replaced by a **bicameral system** - Council of a states + Legislative Assembly.

Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- The principle of separate communal electorates were **further extended for Sikhs, Christians and Anglo Indians**, in addition to Muslims.
- Indians were labelled in terms of their communal identification in order to fill seats in the lower and higher houses. For example, the Central Legislative Assembly had 52 general seats, 30 Muslim seats, 2 Sikh seats, and 20 Special seats, but the Council of State had 20 general seats, 10 Muslim seats, 3 European seats, and 1 Sikh seat.
- With Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms, there was a dyarchy or rule of two classes of administrations, the **Executive councillors** comprising bureaucrats and the **Legislative councillors** comprising ministers.



Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- The size of Provincial legislative assemblies was increased. Now about 70% of the members were elected.
- Direct Elections of members but restricted franchise.
- Some women could also vote. Legislators enjoyed **freedom of speech**.
- The Governor's assent was required to pass any bill.
- The central government contained executive body. The chief executive authority was the Governor General, or Viceroy.
- The administration was divided into two lists: Central and Provincial. Out of eight members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, **three would be Indians**.

Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- It also created an **office of High Commissioner** of India to act as the agent of Governor General of India in London.
- The act provided for the first time, the establishment of **Public Service Commission** in India.
- For the first time, the elections created a political consciousness among the people, and some Indian women also had the right to vote.
- It was suggested that the yearly percentage of recruitment made in India be increased by 1.5 percent. Finance, on the other hand, remained a reserved issue under the supervision of the executive councilor. As a result, due to a shortage of funding, Indian ministers were unable to perform much work in the area of local self-government.

Montagu-Chlemsford Reforms (1919)

- The **major limitations** of this act-
- This act extended and **consolidated communal representation**.
- The franchise he was very limited. Only those people who had the property taxable income and paid high Land revenue are entitled to vote.
- The Governor General and Governors had a lot of power to undermine the legislature at the centre and the provinces, respectively.
- The significance of the provinces in the perspective of the British was used to allocate seats for the central assembly, rather than population.
- The Indians were enraged that the British administration had sole authority over the nature and timing of the transition to responsible governance.



Simon Commission (1927)

- The Government of India Act stated that after ten years, a statutory Commission would be set up to study the working of the government. This resulted in the **Simon Commission (1927)**.
- Simon Commission - The Conservative party-led government in the UK feared a defeat at the hands of the Labour Party in the elections due, and expedited the appointment of Commission in 1928, which was composed entirely of British members with not a single Indian member included in it. This was perceived as an insult to Indians who stated that their destiny could not be determined by a few British people.
- The Congress Party decided to boycott the commission at their session at Madras in 1927. The Muslim League led by M. A. Jinnah also boycotted it.
- When the Commission landed in February 1928, there were mass protests and black flag demonstrations all over the country with the slogan, 'Simon Go Back.'
- The police resorted to lathi charges to suppress the movement. Even senior leaders like Pandit Nehru were spared.
- In Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai, who was leading the demonstration against the Simon Commission, was brutally lathi charged. He died later that year due to injuries sustained then.



Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award 1932

- The Communal Award, based on the conclusions of the Indian Franchise Committee, commonly known as the Lothian Committee, was issued on August 16, 1932 by **British Prime Minister Ramsay McDonald**.
- It intends to establish separate electorates in India for the Forward Caste, Scheduled Caste, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, and the Depressed Classes (now known as the Scheduled Caste).
- A white paper on the future of India's constitution was released by the government. The constitution proposed the creation of multiple Muslim-majority provinces as well as the institution of parliament with different electorates.



Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award 1932

- This McDonald award was clearly an attempt to purposely destroy India's unity by encouraging caste and religious awareness, as well as religion regionalism.
- It was a plot to divide India into several smaller states in order to strengthen colonialism, which had been sweeping the globe. The British did not want any sense of national unity to be introduced since it would jeopardise their own status.
- Provisions of the Communion Award include doubling the number of seats in provincial legislatures and creating separate electorates in Bombay for Muslims, Europeans, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians, the Poor, and Marathas.



Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award 1932

- In Punjab, Sikhs were assigned 32 seats out of 175 total seats, with 3% of seats designated for women except in the NWFP, and seats allocated to laborers, landowners, traders, and industrialists.
- As a result, Gandhi Ji began his fast on September 20, 1932.
- It aroused strong emotions among Hindu caste leaders and depressed classes, who came together in Poona (now Pune) to rescue Gandhi Ji's life as well as the Hindu community's unity.
- Dalit leaders, especially **Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**, supported the proposal, believing it would allow Dalits to advance their interests.

Poona Pact 1932

- Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, objected to the provision of an electorate for the Dalits separate from the Hindu electorate, which in his view would weaken India in its bid for independence.
- Negotiations with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar began, with the **Poona Pact of 1932** being the result.
- The Poona pact was signed on September 24, 1932, at Yerwada Central Jail in Poona, India, by B. R. Ambedkar and M. K. Gandhi about the reservation of political seats for the poor.
- Madan Mohan Malviya, B. R. Ambedkar, and other leaders signed it to terminate Gandhi Ji's fast.

Poona Pact 1932

- Poona Pact declined separate electorates but gave increased representation to the Dalits within the Hindu electorate for a 10-year period. The pact marked the start of the movement against “untouchability” within the Indian nationalist movement.
- According to Poona Pact, instead of the 71 seats granted in the Communal Award, 148 seats were allocated to the underprivileged classes.
- Depressed Classes would adhere to the **Joint Electorate** idea, and they would be given appropriate representation in the civil service.
- This event caused Gandhi to recognise the problems of the poor and the need to integrate them into society, so on September 30, he founded the **All India Anti-Untouchability League**, which was later renamed the **Harijan Sevak Sangh**, also known as the **Servants of Untouchable Society**, to eliminate untouchability in society.



Government of India Act (1935)

- The Government of India Act of 1935 was passed on the basis of-
- The report of **Simon Commission**.
- The outcome of round table conferences.
- The White Paper, issued by British Government in 1933.
- It provided the provision for the establishment of an **All India Federation** consisting of provinces and princely states as units.

Government of India Act (1935)

- It divided the powers between the centre and units in terms of three lists- **Federal list, Provincial list** and **the Concurrent list**. Residuary powers were given to the Viceroy. However, this federation never fructified since princely states did not join it.
- It abolished dyarchy in the provinces and introduced '**provincial autonomy**' in its place.
- The act introduced responsible government in provinces, that is, the governor was required to act with the advice of ministers responsible to the provincial legislature.

Government of India Act (1935)

- It called for the establishment of **dyarchy** in the center. This clause, however, did not take effect at all.
- In the six provinces of Bengal, Bombay Madras, Bihar, Assam, and the United Provinces, **bicameralism** (a form of administration in which the legislature is divided into two chambers) was implemented.
- The Governors were **not bound** to accept the advice of ministers.



Government of India Act (1935)

- In the provincial elections in 1937, Indian National Congress came to power in seven provinces.
- Separate electorates was further extended to depressed classes, women and labour.
- Council of India which was established as per the 1858 act was abolished. The secretary of state was instead provided with a team of advisors.
- The establishment of a **Federal Court** at Delhi with the Chief Justice and 6 judges.
- Establishment of **Reserve Bank of India**, RBI in the year 1935 recommended by **Hilton Young Commission**.

Government of India Act (1935)

- The act provided for setting up- Federal Public Service Commission, Provincial Public Service Commission, Joint Public Service Commission.
- A partial reorganization of the provinces-
- Sindh was separated from Bombay.
- Bihar and Orissa was split in two separate provinces
- **Burma was completely separated from India.**
- The introduction of direct elections, thus increasing the franchise from 7 million to 35 million people.
- No mention of dominion status or future concessions.

Government of India Act (1935)

- The Indian National Congress unanimously rejected the 1935 Act. Instead, it called for a Constituent Assembly to be chosen based on **Universal Adult Franchise** to frame the Indian Constitution.
- The acceptance of the role was challenged by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and the Congress socialists. They believed that by collaborating with colonialism's oppressive machinery, they would be able to achieve nothing for the people by creating provincial administrations at the Indian National Congress.
- Despite their restricted powers, right-wing pro-office-acceptance politicians thought that provincial ministries might encourage beneficial activities such as rural and Harijan upliftment.



Government of India Act (1935)

- **Ayesha Jalal:** The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms (1919) and the Government of India Act (1935) were responsible for the creation of “regional particularisms”. These colonial enterprises fragmented Indian politics in terms of caste, class and communal manipulations.

THANK YOU

