

History Part – 28.3

28.3] Rule Of The English East India Company

Notes

Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835)

- Lord William Bentinck assumed the office of the Governor-General in 1828.
- Born in 1774 he commenced his career as a soldier and later at the young age of twenty two he became a Member of Parliament.
- He was appointed the Governor of Madras in 1803. He supported Sir Thomas Munroe on revenue administration.
- The Vellore Mutiny of 1806 had resulted in Bentinck's recall. However, his appointment again to the higher office as Governor-General shows his real greatness.
- As Governor-General, Bentinck had initiated an era of progress and reforms.
- He was undoubtedly the first Governor-General of British India who acted on the dictum that 'the welfare of the subject peoples was a main, perhaps the primary, duty of the British in India'.

Reforms of Lord William Bentinck

Financial Reforms

- When Bentinck assumed the Governor-Generalship in 1828, the financial position of the Company was poor.
- It became necessary on the part of the Governor-General to take effective steps to improve the financial condition. To achieve this he adopted the following measures:

✓ He reduced the salaries and allowances of all officers and additional staff were removed.

✓ In the military department, he abolished the system of double batta.

Judicial Reforms of William Bentinck

- At the time of Lord Cornwallis, the provinces of Bihar, Bengal & Orissa were divided into 4 divisions.
- In each of these divisions a Circuit court was established. Besides there were 4 Provincial Courts of appeal at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dhaka and Patna.
- The new territories acquired in last 3 decades expanded the territorial jurisdiction of the Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta, but it was now too far away from them.
- The language of the courts was Persian and it was not easy for the litigants to fight in this language.

Following reforms were introduced by Lord William Bentinck:

- The first reform done was to abolish the Provincial Courts of Appeal and Circuit Courts altogether. This was done by a regulation passed in 1829.
- In place of the Provincial courts of appeal and Circuit, the Commissioners of Revenue and Circuit were appointed to do this job.
- For this purpose, the Bengal Presidency was divided into 20 divisions and each division was placed under a separate commissioner.
- For revenue cases these commissioners worked directly under the Board of Revenue and for Criminal cases they worked under Sadar Nizamat Adalat.
- Separate Diwani and Sadar Nizamat Adalat were opened at Allahabad.

- In 1831, another regulation was passed by which the “Respectable Indians” were to be appointed in the Zilla or City Courts. They were called “Munsifs“. Munsifs were to be appointed on a salary and they could decide the cases worth less than Three Hundred Rupees.
- Then, in a separate regulation, it was decided the Governor General in Council would appoint respectable Indians to the post of Sadar Amins. The Sadar Amins would hear appeals from the Zilla and city courts.
- Sadar Amin was now the highest Judicial Indian authority. However, neither Munsifs nor Sadar Amins could trial the Europeans.
- In 1832, a sort of Jury was introduced in Bengal, which was like Indian Jury (Panchayat) that could help the European Judges.

Social Reforms

- The social reforms of William Bentinck made his name immortal in the history of British India.
- These include the abolition of Sati, the suppression of Thugs and the prevention of female infanticide.

Abolition of Sati

- The practice of sati, the age old custom of burning of widows alive on the funeral pyre of their husbands was prevalent in India from ancient times.
- He determined to abolish this practice which he considered an offence against natural justice. Therefore, he became a crusader against it and promulgated his Regulation XVII on 4 December 1829 prohibiting the practice of sati.

- Those who practiced sati were made liable for punishment by law courts as accessories to the crime. The Regulation was extended to the Madras and Bombay Presidencies in 1830.

Suppression of Thugs

- The most commendable measure which Bentinck undertook and which contributed to the material welfare of the people was the suppression of the 'thugs'. They were hereditary robbers.
- They went about in small groups of fifty to hundred posing as commercial gangs or pilgrims 'strangling and robbing peaceful travellers'. They increased in number in central and northern India during the 18th century when anarchy reigned after the disintegration of the Mughal Empire.
- A campaign was systematically organised by Colonel Sleeman from 1830 against the thugs. During the course of five years nearly 2000 of them were captured.
- A greater number of them were exterminated and the rest were transported to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. For his role in the suppression of thugs, Sir William Sleeman was known as 'Thuggee Sleeman'.

Female Infanticide

- Female infanticide was one of the horrible and heartless deeds committed even by civilized people.
- This practice killing female infants was very much prevalent in places like Rajputana, Punjab, Malwa and Cutch. Bentinck took effective steps to prevent the ritual of child sacrifice at Saugar Island in Bengal.
- He not only prohibited female infanticide but declared them as punishable crime.

Estimate of William Bentinck

- Bentinck was a 'straightforward, honest, upright, benevolent, sensible man'.
- His social reforms such as abolition of sati and prevention of child sacrifice eradicated age old evils from Hindu society.

Charter Act of 1833

The Charter Act of 1833 was passed in the British Parliament which renewed the East India Company's charter for another 20 years. This was also called the Government of India Act 1833 or the Saint Helena Act 1833.

Features of the Charter Act of 1833

- The company's commercial activities were closed down. It was made into an administrative body for British Indian possessions.
- The company's trade links with China were also closed down.
- This act permitted the English to settle freely in India.
- This act legalised the British colonisation of the country.
- The company still possessed the Indian territories but it was held 'in trust for his majesty'.

Provisions of the Charter Act of 1833

- India became a British colony
- The Governor-General of Bengal was re-designated as the Governor-General of India. This made Lord William Bentinck the first Governor-General of India.
- Thus, the country's administration was unified under one control.

- The Governors of Bombay and Madras lost their legislative powers.
- The Governor-General had legislative powers over entire British India.
- The Governor-General in council had the authority to amend, repeal or alter any law pertaining to all people and places in British Indian territories whether British, foreign or Indian native.
- The civil and military affairs of the company were controlled by the Governor-General in council.
- The Governor-General's council was to have four members. The fourth member had limited powers only.
- For the first time, the Governor-General's government was called Government of India and the council was called India Council.

Indian Law Commission

- The act mandated that any law made in India was to be put before the British Parliament and was to be called 'Act'.
- As per the act, an Indian Law Commission was established.
- The first Law Commission had Lord Macaulay as its chairman.
- It sought to codify all Indian law.

Split in Bengal Presidency

- The act provided for the Presidency of Bengal to be divided into the Presidencies of Agra and Fort William.
- But this never came into effect.

Indians in Government service

- This was the first act that gave permission for Indians to have a share in the country's administration.
- It stated that merit should be the basis of employment to government service and not birth, colour, religion or race.

Slavery

- The act provided for the mitigation of slavery existing in India at that time.
- The British Parliament abolished slavery in Britain and all its possessions in 1833.

Tilt towards Christianity

- Since the number of British residents in the country was increasing, the act allowed for having three Bishops in India.
- It also sought to regulate the establishment of Christian institutions in India.

Significance of the Charter Act of 1833

- It was the first step in the centralisation of India's administration.
- The ending of the East India Company's commercial activities and making it into the British Crown's trustee in administering India.
- Codification of laws under Macaulay.
- Provision for Indians in government service.
- Separation of the executive and the legislative functions of the council.
- Apart from the Permanent Settlement, there were other kinds of land revenue system under the British in India. These were the Ryotwari and the Mahalwari system.

Lord Dalhousie 1848-1856

- Shifted the headquarters of Bengal Artillery from Calcutta to Meerut
- Simla was made the permanent headquarters of the army & summer capital
- formation of Gurkha regiments took place in his reign
- Youngest Governor General of India (36 Years), & also known as
 - ✓ Father of Indian Telegraph
 - ✓ Father of Indian Railways
 - ✓ Father of Indian Postal system
 - ✓ Father of Indian Engineering Services
 - ✓ Maker of modern India

Followed Policy of Annexation

- Annexed Burma via. second Burmese war
- Annexed Avadh → Offended Muslims & Indian soldiers (Mostly from Avadh)
- Doctrine of Lapse
- Annexed Punjab (2nd Anglo Sikh war)
- Lord Dalhousie annex punjab

Doctrine of Lapse

- This policy was based on difference in principle b/w right to inherit property & right to govern
- Alliance King without heir can not adopt an heir for kingdom
- Lapsed Satara, Jaitpur and Sambhalpur, Udaipur, Nagpur, Jhansi, & Awadh in given order

- Annexed states were monitored by chief commissioners with introduction of centralized control called non-regulation system for modern centralized states.

Reforms & Developments

Telegraph

- In 1852, Under superintendence of O'Shaughnessy 4000 miles of lines were laid down
- Connected Calcutta, Peshawar, Bombay & Madras telegraphically
- Proved to be a boon for Britishers in revolt of 1857

Railway

- Started “guarantee system” by which the railway companies were guaranteed a minimum interest of five percent on their investment
- Government retained the right of buying the railway
- Mainly for Defense, Commercial & Administrative reasons
- 1st railway line – Bombay to Thane 1853
- 2nd Calcutta to Raniganj coal fields 1854
- 3rd Madras to Arakkonam 1856

Postal System

Laid down foundation of Modern postal system in 1854 with introduction of postal stamps

→Postal system started in 1837)

IES

- Created separate public work departments

- Allotted more funds for cutting canals & roads
- Upper Gangatic panel was cut in 1854
- Many bridges were constructed
- Hence laid foundation of Indian engineering services

Social & Educational

- Passed widow Remarriage Act (1856)
- Recommended the setting up of universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras
- In 1853, competitive examination for the Indian Civil Services began – Written exam started in 1854 in India
- Educational reforms of Sir Charles wood (1854) are considered intellectual charted of India which provided an outline for Primary, Secondary & Collegiate levels of education.

Woods Dispatch, 1854

- Sir Charles Wood was the President of the Board of Control of the company in 1854 when he sent a despatch to the then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie.
- This is called the ‘Magna Carta of English education in India.’
- Recommendations of the Wood’s Despatch:
 - Regularise education system from the primary to the university levels.
 - Indians were to be educated in English and their native language.
 - Education system was to be set up in every province.
 - Every district should have at least one government school.
 - Affiliated private schools could be granted aids.
 - Education of women should be emphasised.

- Universities of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay were set up by 1857.
- University of Punjab – 1882; University of Allahabad – 1887
- This despatch asked the government to take up the responsibility of education of the people.
- In 1835, the Elphinstone College (Bombay) and the Calcutta Medical College were established.

Military Reforms

- Gurkhas were encouraged in the army. The army headquarters were shifted from Calcutta to Shimla.
- The headquarters of Bengal artillery was shifted from Calcutta to Meerut.

First Anglo Burmese War 1824-26

- The Burmese kingdoms declined from this time and finally all of Burma came under the British control in 1886. Burma was ruled as a part of India within the British Empire.
- Burma was under the Konbaung Dynasty from 1752 to 1885. This dynasty tried in vain to attack and annex Siam (Ayutthaya Kingdom) in modern Thailand during 1765-1769
- The Arakan was the eastern frontier of Bengal and it was somewhat independent since the Mughal era. The Burmese forces entered Arakan and captured modern Manipur in 1813, Assam in 1817-19.
- The result was that they were now on the border of the Bengal.
- The British tried to avoid clash with some peaceful proposals with scorn. At last Lord Amherst declared war in 1824. British attacked from 3 sides: The British forces marched

from Bengal up to Brahmaputra into Assam. Another expedition by land went through Chittagong into Arakan.

- This was because the Bengal Sepoys refused to go by sea. There was another, the strongest force of the British army sailed from Madras directly to the mouth of Irawadi.
- The prolonged war ended with a decisive victory of the British. However, they lost 20000 men from the Anglo-Indian army. In 1826, Burma signed the famous “Treaty of Yandaboo“

Second Anglo-Burmese War 1852-53

- After the First Anglo-Burmese war, the Treaty of Yandaboo was signed between Burma and East India Company on February 24, 1826. For next 20 years the relations were normal.
- In 1851, these merchants complained their overlords sitting in Calcutta about the oppression of the Burmese officials at Rangoon. The issue was taken seriously by the East India Company and the Lord Dalhousie asked Burma for compensation. No reply was sent from the other end.
- The idea was to make it a reason for an imposed war on Burma. Apart from that there were minor bilateral issues regarding the Treaty of Yandaboo.
- The war started in April 5, 1852 and as soon as the war started the port of Martaban was taken on the same day.
- On 12th April Rangoon was annexed and in June Pegu was taken. In January 1853, a proclamation of annexation was read out and thus this war ended without any treaty signed.

- The outcome of this war was that Pegu was annexed to the British Empire and it was renamed Lower Burma.
- It was he, who waged a war against Burma (Second Anglo-Burmese War) without any considerable reasons other than his desire to exclude all other European powers from Burma and expand the territory of the British Empire.
- The second Anglo Sikh war ended in the annexation of Punjab. Both of these annexations were made by Proclamations and not by any treaty.
- The Burmese could not guess in the war of 1826 (First Anglo Burmese War) that they were practically at the mercy of a very strong maritime power in the Bay of Bengal, which could occupy the whole of their seaboard and penetrate up to the Irawadi River.
- The over intelligent rulers of Burma could understand the military supremacy of Britain only after the second Anglo Burmese War, which ended with the official proclamation of annexation of Lower Burma (Pegu) on December 20, 1852.

The First Anglo-Sikh War

The first Anglo-Sikh war was fought between the British forces and the Sikh Empire in 1845-46 in Punjab.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Reign: 1801 – 1839)

- Born in 1780 to the leader of the Sukerchakia misl of the Sikh confederacies in Pakistani Punjab.
- Earned the title 'Sher-i-Punjab' (Lion of Punjab).
- After occupying Lahore in 1799, it became his capital.
- He maintained friendly relations with the British.

- After his death in 1839, there was a struggle for succession among his many relatives.
This marked the process of disintegration of the Empire.
- He was succeeded by his eldest legitimate son Kharak Singh.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845 – 1846)

- Major Broad was placed in Amritsar as the East India Company's agent in 1843.
- The British were closely watching the developments in the Punjab political front and had territorial ambitions there as in other parts of the subcontinent.
- The Sikh forces crossed the Sutlej in December 1845 and took offensive positions against the English forces.
- Subsequently, battles were fought in different places and the English victory at Sohraon led to the signing of the Lahore Treaty in 1846 which ended the war.

The Second Anglo-Sikh War

The second Anglo-Sikh war was fought between 1848 and 1849. This war led to the complete control of Punjab by the British. This area was later to become the North-Western Frontier Province.

Causes of the Second Anglo-Sikh War

- The humiliation caused by the first Anglo-Sikh war wherein the Sikh Empire had lost some territories to the British East India Company.
- The Sikh regent, Maharani Jindan Kaur was not treated properly by the British.
- She was removed from Lahore on conspiracy charges against the British resident in Lahore.

- Multan was a part of the Sikh Empire when Maharaja Ranjit Singh had captured it in 1818.
- Multan was governed by Dewan Mulraj. He resented the Lahore Court's (capital of the Sikh Empire but controlled by the British resident since the first Anglo-Sikh war) demand for increased tax assessment and revenues.
- The British Resident at that time was Sir Frederick Currie. He undermined Mulraj and imposed another governor Sardar Kahan Singh along with a British agent Patrick Vans Agnew.
- In 1848, Vans Agnew and another officer who arrived in Multan to take charge were murdered by Mulraj's troops.
- This news led to unrest in Punjab and many Sikh soldiers joined the rebel forces against the British.

Course of the Second Anglo-Sikh War

- Battles were fought in Ramnagar and Chilianwala.
- The battle at Ramnagar was indecisive whereas the Sikhs won at Chilianwala.
- The final battle was fought at Gujrat near Chenab (not the present Indian state Gujarat) in 1849. This was won by the British forces.
- The Afghan forces under Dost Mohammad Khan had joined the Sikhs' side.

Results of the Second Anglo-Sikh War

Punjab was annexed by the British in March 1849 (under Lord Dalhousie) as per the Treaty of Lahore.

Sir John Lawrence was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner of Punjab to take care of the administration.

Dalhousie was recognised for his role in the annexation of Punjab to the British and was made a Marquis.

The famous Koh-i-noor diamond went into British hands.

Education System in India during British Rule:

There were three agents of modern education in India. They were:

- ✓ The British Government (East India Company)
- ✓ Christian missionaries
- ✓ Indian intellectuals and reformers

Development of modern education

- The company wanted some educated Indians who could assist them in the administration of the land.
- Also, they wanted to understand the local customs and laws well.
- For this purpose, Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madrassa in 1781 for the teaching of Muslim law.
- In 1791, a Sanskrit College was started in Varanasi by Jonathan Duncan for the study of Hindu philosophy and laws.
- The Baptist missionary William Carey had come to India in 1793 and by 1800 there was a Baptist Mission in Serampore, Bengal, and also a number of primary schools there and in nearby areas.

- The Indian reformers believed that to keep up with times, a modern educational system was needed to spread rational thinking and scientific principles.
- The Charter Act of 1813 was the first step towards education being made an objective of the government.
- The act sanctioned a sum of Rs.1 lakh towards education of Indians in British ruled India. This act also gave an impetus to the missionaries who were given official permission to come to India.
- The orientalist preferred Indians to be given traditional Indian education. Some others, however, wanted Indians to be educated in western style of education and be taught western subjects.
- There was also another difficulty regarding the language of instruction. Some wanted the use of Indian languages (called vernaculars) while others preferred English.
- Due to these issues, the sum of money allotted was not given until 1823 when the General Committee of Public Instruction decided to impart oriental education.
- In 1835, it was decided that western sciences and literature would be imparted to Indians through the medium of English by Lord William Bentinck's government.
- Bentinck had appointed Thomas Babington Macaulay as the Chairman of the General Committee of Public Instruction.
- English education should be imparted in place of traditional Indian learning because oriental culture was 'defective' and 'unholy'.
- In course of time, education would trickle down to the masses. This was called infiltration theory.

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- In 1835, the Elphinstone College (Bombay) and the Calcutta Medical College were established.
- In 1911, illiteracy rate in British India was 94%. In 1921, it was 92%.
- Scientific and technical education was ignored by the British government.