

17. Congress Rule in Provinces

▪ **Achievement of Congress Ministries:**

1. **Civil Liberty:**

- Emergency powers related laws repealed.
- Restrictions and ban on press, certain books, newspapers, and illegal organisations was lifted.
- Failure:
- Yusuf Meherally and S.S. Batliwala were arrested for inflammatory and seditious speeches. K.M. Munshi used CID against communist and leftist.

2. **Agrarian Reforms:**

- Legislated a number of laws relating to land reforms, debt relief, forest grazing fee, arrears of rent, land tenure sect.
- Failure:
- Most of these benefits went to statutory and occupancy tenants while sub-tenants did not gain much.
- Agricultural labourers did not benefit, as they had not been mobilised.

3. **Social Welfare Reforms:**

- Measures for welfare of Harijans taken-temple entry, education, etc.
- Encouragement was given to khadi and indigenous enterprises.
- In 1938 national planning committee set up under congress president Subhash Chandra Bose.

- Reforms in education, public health, sanitation as well as in prisons were undertaken.

4. **Labour:**

- Goodwill sought to be created between labour and capital with mediation of ministries.
- Efforts were made to improve workers 'condition and secure wage increase for them.
- Failure:
- Ministries failed in Bombay as mediator.
- Leftist critics were unsatisfied.
- Ministries took recourse to section 144 and arrested the leaders.

▪ **Consequences:**

- Administrative work by Indians weakened the myth that Indians were not fit to rule.
- People were able to perceive the shape of things to come if independence was won.
- The contention that Indian self-government was necessary for radical social transformation got confirmed.
- Movement could use state power to further its ends without being co-opted.
- Congress ministries failed in Agrarian Reforms (to abolish Zamindari) because of constraints like-less powers, less financial resources, etc. but in other spheres, they did very well. Gandhi advised the Congressmen to hold the offices lightly and not tightly, to be seen as '**Crowns of Thorns**' which had been accepted to see if they quickened the pace towards the nationalist goal.