

Chapter - 20

Indian Independence Act, 1947

Background - The English Rule started in 1757 began with the battle of Plassey on Indian land, ended on August 15, 1947. In order to bring this freedom, innumerable heroes sacrificed their lives. The circumstances caused by struggles of India, the national activities and World War II forced the British government to frame this Act.

National Events - On Independence Day celebrated on January 26, 1930 every year, in the Lahore session of Congress, every Indian got a sense of freedom. The Civil Disobedience Movement (1930), the Quit India Movement of 1942 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the direct action taken against the demand of Pakistan by the Muslim League, the trial of three officers of the Azad Hind Fauj founded by Subhash Chand Bose, Indian efforts of the military revolt end, etc., did not remain possible for the British Government to stop the demand for freedom of Indians.

Changed circumstances due to Second World War

The desire not to join the battle for the common Indians in the Second World War began in 1939, efforts made by the leaders of the Congress to get the cooperation of Indians in the war and the demands of Pakistan created crisis. To solve this crisis the following efforts were made.

(1) Cripps Proposal - Because of the ever increasing influence of Japan in World War II, the British state felt the need for full cooperation of Indians. It was impossible without removing the constitutional deadlock in India's immediate circumstances. On 22 March 1942, Churchill sent the British socialist leader Sir Stiford Cripps to India. The plan which was given by him to remove the constitutional deadlock by the

Cripps is called 'Cripps Proposal'. Two proposals came after the war and at the time of after the war. But due to the lack of colonial independence that is, limited independence the provisions of British control, in place of the Sangh Pramukh, almost all politicians rejected it and on 11 April 1942 the Cripps Proposal was withdrawn.

(2) Plan presented by Cabinet Mission- In the UK general elections, there was formed Labor Party government for the first time with a positive attitude towards Indians and on 26 July 1945, Atlee became the Prime Minister. Attlee sent the three members of his ministry to the solution of the problem here (Pathik Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps, AV Alexander) to India. This commission gave three important suggestions.

1. Establishment of Union State in India
2. Formation of a Constituent Assembly for the constitution of India .
3. Establishment of an interim government till the formation of a new government under the constitution.

Congress, initially, rejected the demand of interim government but the Muslim League offered to form an interim government on its own. But the viceroy refused to form the government by separating the country's largest party. Then the Muslim League decided to adopt the path of direct struggle for Pakistan's demand. Later, the Congress Working Committee accepted the cabinet plan. The communal riots spread across the country with the direction of the Muslim League's policy.

Declaration by the British Prime Minister- The British Prime Minister announced on 20 February 1947 an important declaration that the

British Government would transfer power to India's responsible government till June 1948. If there had been a settlement earlier in India's political parties, then the power could be handed over earlier too .

Mountbatten Scheme

Lord Mountbatten was made Governor General of India at the time of the above announcement. Mountbatten talked the leaders of Congress and Muslim people. The Congress leaders were against the partition of India. "Mahatma Gandhi even told that the partition of the country would be on his dead body." Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, all the leaders were also against the partition in the beginning. But in the direct action taken by the Muslim League, they were distressed by the massacre and in the future, they accepted Mountbatten's partition plan, although Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Nationalist Muslim, Hindu member of Pakistan province, Purushottam Das Tandon continued to oppose it till the end. It is also known in the history that an agreement was signed between the Congress and the Muslim League. After the acceptance of the plan given by Mountbatten on June 3, 1947 to divide India into two dominions, the British Government announced that up to 15 August 1947 power would be transferred to India and Pakistan and the way to become India free opened up.

In this order, the Indian Independence Bill was presented in the British Parliament on July 4, 1947, which was passed by the Parliament on July 18, 1947. There were 20 streams in it.

Features of the Act:

(1) Establishment of two domains : By dividing India on August 15, 1947, India and Pakistan will be declared as two independent and sovereign states.

(2) Territory (demarcation): This Act describes the areas of both the domains. According to this, Muslim-dominated areas will be of Pakistan and Hindu-dominated areas will be part of India. Section 3 and 4

of the Act provided for partition of Bengal and Punjab. Referendum will be made in the Sylhet District of Assam and on the basis of that if it went in favor of Pakistan, it will be mixed in East Pakistan. The boundaries of the two countries will be determined only after the report of the Border Commission. The President of the Border Commission was Red Cliff. There were 2 Hindus and 2 Muslim members in it. East Bengal and Sylhet in East Pakistan and western Pakistan will include of West Punjab, Sindh, North Bilochistan and small states Bilochistan. It will be the freedom to the native states that they could join either India or Pakistan or remained independent.

(3) Transfer of authority to the Constitutional assemblies: (1) The Legislative Assembly of both the states will form the constitution of their respective states. There will be no external control over the power of making their laws. (2) The entire sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly will continue and will continue to function as a Legislative Assembly till the constitution was constituted. (3) They would have an independent decision to join or not to join the British Commonwealth. (3) It will be their own independent decision to accept amend or revoke them. (4) The rule would be governed on the basis of the Act of 1935, until the constitution is formed. It would also have the right to amend them as required. (5) The powers of the governor general's discretion and personal decisive powers would collapse after independence.

The separate governor generals for both the states

The British Emperor would appoint separate governor generals in both India and Pakistan. If both the states agreed, then only one governor general could also be appointed for both.

These governor generals and the governors of the provinces will be the only statutory rulers and they had to act according to the opinion of the cabinet.

Special power of the Governor General: -

The Governor General was given the power to implement the Indian Independence Act and split the properties in two states till March 1948.

The termination of Indian Secretary and the right to civil services - By this Act the post of Indian Secretary was terminated and gave the rights to the commonwealth secretary. Members of the Indian Civil Service working under the British Raj before August 15, 1947 would continue to serve in the same way as before. They will continue to get all the privileges, pension, remuneration and leisure facilities which they received before independence.

The end of British rulers the government and their rights - After August 15, there would be no control of the British Government on both domains and its provinces or any part thereof. The term "Emperor of India" will be removed from the post of British Emperor. With this, the right to accept or reject the laws created by the monarchs, or reserve the provincial bill for the permission of the British monarch, would also automatically end. But in the name of the British Government, the Governor General had the right to accept any bill.

End of sovereignty on princely states- With the formation of the dominions, the British emperor's supremacy over the princely states would end and all the treaties and settlements made by the British government will be finished with them. These princely states would be free to merge either with India or Pakistan in any state or remain independent.

Evaluation of the Indian independence Act

Thus, on the midnight of 14-15 August 1947, when the whole world was sleeping the new life and freedom of India became evident. Nearly a hundred years old British rule came to an end, and all powers were transferred to two new independent states, India and Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten became the first

Governor General of India. He administered Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister of independent India.

At the time of the formation of the Act, the then India Secretary Earl Listowel told that that Act was unique. Before this, such a large portion of the world's population did not get freedom by just one legislation.

Keeping in mind the transit of power in a peaceful manner, Dr. Rajendra Prasad told that the era of British dominance on India ended that day and our relations with Britain would be based on equality, harmony and mutual benefit. The Indian Independence Act was the grand and glorious departure of the Britishers.

Important Points

1. Congress celebrated its first Independence Day on January 26, 1930 in Lahore session.
2. The Cripps Mission came to India on March 22, 1942.
3. The leader of the Cripps Mission was Sir Stafford Cripps.
4. There was a provision of Colonial Swaraj in the Cripps Proposal.
5. Atlee became Prime Minister of the UK on July 26, 1945.
6. There were three members in the Cabinet Mission - Lord Mountbatten, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander.
7. Cabinet Mission mainly gave three suggestions- (1) Establishment of the Union of India in India. (2) Formation of Constitution Assembly (3) Establishment of interim government.
8. The communal riots spread throughout the country with Muslim League's direct action policy.
9. The British Prime Minister made an important announcement on 20 February 1947 that the

government would transfer power to India's responsible government till June 1948.

10. Against the partition of the country, Mahatma Gandhi even told that the partition of the country would be on his dead body.

11. India's Independence Bill passed on 18 July 1947 by the British Parliament.

12. The President of the Border Commission was Sir Redclif.

13. From Indian Independence Act the post of Indian secretary was abolished.

14. The term Emperor of India was removed from the post of British Emperor.

Important Questions

Objective questions

1. The Congress celebrated the First Independence Day on -

- (A) 22 June 1921
- (B) 26 January 1947
- (C) 26 January 1930
- (D) 15 August 1947

2. The Indian Independence Bill was presented in the British Parliament on-

- (A) 18 July 1947
- (B) 4 July 1947
- (C) 20 February 1947
- (D) 15 August 1947

3. The naval revolt took place in -

- (A) 1943 (B) 1944
- (C) 1945 (D) 1946

4. Cripps Mission came to India in -

- (A) 1940 (B) 1941

- (C) 1942 (D) 1943

5. The title of the Emperor of India was removed from the post of British Emperor-

- (A) by the Act of 1935
- (B) Act 1919
- (C) by the Act of 1947
- (D) by the Act of 1942

Very short questions

1. The Battle of Plassey was fought in
2. Which movement did Mahatma Gandhi start in 1930.
3. Why did Churchill send Cripps Mission to India in 1942.
4. When did Clement Attlee become the Prime Minister of Britain?
5. How many streams of Indian freedom act were there?

Short questions

1. Which princely states were merged in the eastern Pakistan?
2. Write the British Prime Minister's declaration of 1947 ?
3. What were the proposals of the Cripps Mission?
3. What alternatives were suggested for the princely states in the Act of 1947 ?
4. What changes occurred in the situation of India after World War II?

Essay type questions

1. Describe the scheme presented by the Cabinet Mission.
2. Describe the Mountbatten Plan.

Answer (Objective Question) :

1. (C) 2. (B) 3. (D) 4. (C) 5. (C)