



**ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AT
UNION LEVEL**

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Administrative System at Union Level (BPAC 133)

6 credits

The Course deals with the administration systems at the union level. It has a total of six Blocks designated with subject matter content. Dealing with the evolution of the administrative system since ancient times, it takes in the continuous changing character of Indian Administration in the post independence era. Further, the Course discusses the various facets of Indian federalism, legislature, executive, and judiciary that form a part of parliamentary democracy in India. Institutional framework is being dealt in, wherein cabinet secretariat, central secretariat, All India and Central Services, administrative tribunals, commissions like NITI, UPSC, SSC, election commission, finance commission; CVC, and regulatory agencies are being discussed. The Course covers topics on civil society and administrative reforms.

The first Block namely **‘Evolution of Indian Administration’** includes four Units dealing with Ancient Administrative System, Medieval Administrative System, British Administrative System, and Continuity and Change in Indian Administration- Post 1947.


The second Block namely **‘Parliamentary Democracy in India’** discusses Indian Federalism with three sub-components: Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary.

The third Block namely **‘Institutional Framework’** has four Units, namely Cabinet Secretariat, Central Secretariat, All India and Central Services, and Administrative Tribunals.

The fourth Block deals with **‘Commissions’** explaining the roles and functions of NITI, Union Public Service Commission, Election Commission, Finance Commission, Central Vigilance Commission, and Administrative Reforms Commission.

The fifth Block namely **‘Concept and Role of Civil Society’** deals with the genesis and functions of civil society and its organisations.

The sixth Block namely **‘Regulatory Bodies’** has three sub-components: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. Regulatory functions of these bodies are discussed in this Block.



BLOCK 1
EVOLUTION OF INDIAN
ADMINISTRATION

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UNIT 1 ANCIENT ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Evolution of Ancient Indian Administration
- 1.3 Mauryan Administrative System
 - 1.3.1 Central Administration
 - 1.3.2 Provincial Administration
 - 1.3.3 Local Administration
 - 1.3.4 Revenue Administration
 - 1.3.5 Judicial Administration
 - 1.3.6 Military Administration
- 1.4 Administrative System during Gupta Period
 - 1.4.1 Central Administration
 - 1.4.2 Provincial Administration
 - 1.4.3 Local Administration
 - 1.4.4 Revenue Administration
 - 1.4.5 Judicial Administration
 - 1.4.6 Military Administration
 - 1.4.7 Trade and Business
- 1.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 References and Further Readings

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the evolution of administration in ancient India,
- explain the central, provincial, local, and other fields of administration during the Mauryan period, and
- describe the central, provincial, local, and other fields of administrations during the Gupta period.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Indian administration, as we know, has its evolution that can be traced back to the 5000 years old Indus Valley Civilization wherein the King was all powerful and everything in the Kingdom was carried out in his name. He was assisted by a council of ministers, and also other functionaries and officers in administering the Kingdom. In other words, in the ancient times, powers of administering the Kingdom were centralized in the institution of King.

This was followed by the Vedic period. Early Vedic Aryans were organised into tribes rather than kingdoms. The chief of a tribe was called 'Rajan.' The main responsibility of the Rajan was to protect the tribe. He was aided by several functionaries, including the purohita (chaplain), the senani (army chief), dutas (envoys), and spash (spies).

However, a systematic model of administration came in with the coming of the Mauryan and Gupta dynasties. Both the dynasties had elaborate governmental machineries that carried out state functions in a highly organized manner. The Unit therefore tends to discuss the administrative systems that prevailed during these dynasties.

We will just have a brief discussion about the evolution of the ancient administrative system to begin with.

1.2 EVOLUTION OF ANCIENT INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

The Vedic period or Vedic age (c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE) gets its name from the Vedas¹. Early Vedic Aryans were organised into tribes rather than kingdoms. The chief of a tribe was called ‘Rajan.’ The main responsibility of the Rajan was to protect the tribe. He was aided by several functionaries, including the purohita (chaplain), the senani (army chief), dutas (envoys), and spash (spies). However, the autonomy of the Rajan was restricted by the tribal councils called ‘sabha’ and ‘samiti.’ Arthur Llewellyn Basham, a noted historian and Indologist, theorises that sabha was a meeting of great men in the tribe, whereas, samiti was a meeting of all free tribes men. The two bodies were, in part, responsible for the governance of the tribe. The Rajan could not accede to the throne without their approval.

In the later Vedic period, the tribes had consolidated into small kingdoms, which had a capital and rudimentary administrative system. The Rajan was seen as the custodian of social order and the protector of ‘rashtra’ (polity). Hereditary kingship started emerging. Rituals in this era exalted the status of the King over his people. He was occasionally referred to as ‘samrat’ (supreme ruler). The Rajan’s increasing political power enabled him to gain greater control over the productive resources. The voluntary gift offering (bali) became a compulsory tribute. There was no organized system of taxation. Sabha and samiti were still there but with the increasing power of the Rajan, their influence declined. By the end of the later Vedic age, different kinds of political systems such as monarchical states (rajya), oligarchic states (gana or sangha), and tribal principalities had started emerging.

Economy in the Vedic period was sustained by a combination of pastoralist and agricultural way of life. Economic exchanges were conducted by gift giving, particularly to chiefs and priests, and barter system was there, wherein cattle were used, as a unit of currency. The transition of Vedic society from semi-

¹ Vedas are liturgical texts containing details of life during this period that have been interpreted to be historical and constitute the primary sources for understanding the period. The Vedic period, or Vedic age (c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE), is the period in the history of the north Indian subcontinent between the end of the Indus Valley Civilisation and second urbanization, which began in the central Indo-Gangetic Plain c. 600 BCE. It gets its name from the Vedas. Around c. 1200–1000 BCE, Vedic Aryans spread eastward to the fertile Ganges Plain and adopted iron tools, which allowed for clearing of forest and the adoption of a more settled, agricultural way of life. The second half of the Vedic period was characterized by the emergence of towns, kingdoms, and a complex social differentiation distinctive to India.

nomadic life to settled agriculture in the later Vedic age led to an increase in trade and competition for resources. Agriculture dominated the economic activity along the Ganges valley during this period. Agricultural operations grew in complexity and usage of iron implements increased. Apart from copper, bronze, and gold, later Vedic texts also mentions about the usage of tin, lead, and silver. Crops of wheat, rice, and barley were cultivated. New crafts and occupations such as carpentry, leather work, tanning, pottery, astrology, jewellery, dying, and wine making arose.

Romila Thapar characterizes Vedic-era state formation, as being in a condition of “arrested development,” because ...chiefs were relatively autonomous and owing to surplus wealth they controlled, which was used for the increasingly grandiose rituals that otherwise could have been directed towards state-building (Bellah 2011). The period of the Upanishads, the final phase of the Vedic era, (was approximately contemporaneous with a new wave of state formations) was linked to the beginning of urbanization in the Ganges Valley. The growth of population and trade networks led to the social and economic changes that started putting pressure on older ways of life suggesting the end of the Vedic period and setting the stage for urbanization. (Bellah 2011), (697-98: citing the terminology of Bruce Trigger, Understanding Early Civilizations).

By the time the Mauryan dynasty came into power, the treatise of Kautilya, namely Arthashastra’ became a work on statecraft, economic policy, and military strategy. Kautilya, was a scholar at Takshashila University and was the teacher and guardian of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. Indian administration system was well developed and the treatise of Kautilya gives a very first detailed account of the same.

The Mauryan Period was the era of major development in Indian administration. Decentralization was prevalent, as the village units played a very important role, as the base of grassroots administration. Empire was divided into provinces, provinces into districts, and districts into rural and urban centers for efficient administration.

A detailed account of the administrative system in Mauryan period is given below.

1.3 MAURYAN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Indian history entered into a new era with the beginning of the Mauryan Empire, as for the first time India attained both at the political and administrative levels. The Mauryan Empire was divided into four provinces with Patliputra, as the capital. The names of the four provincial capitals were Tosali in the East, Ujjayain in the West, Suvarnagiri in the South, and Taxila in the North.

Mauryans developed an organized and an elaborate system of administration. There was central administration directly under the King. Besides there was provincial administration, local administration, revenue administration, judicial administration, and military administration.

We will now discuss the administrative systems. To begin with, is the central administration system under the Mauryas.

1.3.1 Central Administration

The King was the supreme and sovereign authority of the Mauryan administration. He had the supreme executive, legislative, and judicial powers vested in him. He was responsible for the safety and security of his kingdom. He laid down the general lines of policy that was to be followed by all officials. He appointed ministers and other officers of the royal administration. In addition, the King was the supreme commander of the army and head of the entire military entire.

The Mauryan Empire (before Ashoka) was essentially a Hindu State. According to the Hindu concept, the supreme sovereign of the State was 'Dharma' or law and the King was to be its guardian. The King could never dare to defy the laws. He was aided and advised by a 'Mantri Parishad' (Council of Ministers) and he was to be guided by it in conduct of day-to-day administration. This became more of an obligation during times of emergencies (war or a natural disaster or health epidemics). The Brahmins had a great influence on the King and the latter was required not to disobey them. Instead, he always looked towards their support. Also, as the powers of the Mauryan government was of a decentralized nature, the provincial governor and provincial ministers had the right to be consulted by the King, especially, in all provincial matters.

The number of ministers in the Council of Ministers varied and was not fixed. The ministers had to qualify by showing their ability, especially in terms of religion and money. In times of emergency, the King was always to be guided by the majority decision of the Council of Ministers.

Besides, there was a well organized hierarchy of bureaucrats, who looked after the executive, judicial, and revenue offices. The entire administration system was organized into departments, each of which was headed by a Superintendent, known as 'Adhyaksha.' The Adhyaksha was assisted by clerks, accountants, and spies. In addition, there were two posts of high officials, namely the 'Samaharta' and the 'Sannidhata.' The Samaharta was the collector general of revenue for the Mauryan Empire. He had control over the expenditure part also. The post of Sannidhata was the officer-in-charge of the treasury and store. Besides, there were other officers like Army Minister, Chief Priest, and Governor of Forts.

1.3.2 Provincial Administration

The entire Empire was divided into two parts:

- The kingdom that was under the direct rule of the King, and
- The vassal states

The Mauryan territory that was directly ruled by the King was divided into a number of provinces called 'Janapadas.' Ashoka had five provinces with capitals namely Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, Suvarnagiri, and Pataliputra. Each province was subdivided into a number of districts and each district was again subdivided into a number of units.

However, in addition to these centrally ruled Mauryan territories, there were vassal states. They enjoyed a great deal of autonomy.

The provincial administration worked on similar lines of the central administration. The Mauryan Emperor directly ruled the central and eastern parts of the Empire. The other areas were ruled by the provincial Governors. The provincial Governors were responsible for day-to-day conduct of administration of provinces. They were expected to consult on important matters. (the central administration). There were also the district officers, reporters, clerks, who helped in the smooth running of provincial administration.

1.3.3 Local Administration

The district administration was in the charge of 'Rajukas', whose position and functions are similar to today's district collectors. He was assisted by 'Yuktas' or subordinate officials. In the urban was, there was a Municipal Board with 30 members. There were six committees with five Board members in each to manage the administration of cities. The six committees were:

- 1) Committee on Industrial Arts
- 2) Committee on Foreigners
- 3) Committee on Registration of Births and Deaths
- 4) Committee on Trade and Commerce
- 5) Committee on Supervision of Manufacturers
- 6) Committee on Collection of Excise and Custom Duties

Village administration was in the hands of 'Gramani' and his superior was called 'Gopa,' who was incharge of ten to fifteen villages. Census was a regular activity and the village officials were to number the people along with other details such as their castes and occupations. They were also to count the animals in each house.

Census in towns was conducted by municipal officials, especially to track the movements of both foreign and indigenous population. The data collected were cross checked by the spies. Census appears to have become a permanent institution during the administration of the Mauryas.

1.3.4 Revenue Administration

Kautilya laid greater stress on treasury, as smooth and successful functioning of administration depended on it. Main sources of income were land revenue, taxation, and rent. Land revenue was 1/6 of the total produce, yet in reality much higher proportion was charged, as per the economic and local conditions of the farmers. In addition to land revenue, there were excise duty, forest tax, water tax, taxes on mines, tax on coinage etc., as other sources of revenue. Much of the Mauryan revenue was expended on paying the army, the officials of the royal government, charities, and different public works like irrigation projects, road construction etc.

1.3.5 Judicial Administration

The King was the head of the judiciary. He was the highest court of appeal and personally listened to appeals of the people. However, since the Mauryan Empire

was huge, it was not possible for the King to solve each and every case. So, he appointed judges for the purpose. They used to hear normal cases. However during the reign of Ashoka, many reforms were introduced in the judicial system. For example, granting of pardon was introduced in his time.

The Supreme Court was located in the capital and the Chief Justice was called 'Dharmathikarin.' There were also subordinate courts at the provincial capitals and districts under 'Amatyas.' In villages and towns, cases were settled by the 'Gramavradha' and 'Nagaravyavaharikamahamatra' respectively.

Different kinds of punishment such as fines, imprisonment, mutilation, and death were meted out to the offenders. Police stations were found at all major places in the city. Both Kautilya and Ashoka edicts mention about jails and jail officials. It was ensured that no innocent gets punished. Ashoka appointed a special class of officers known, as the Dhamma Mahamatras to look into this. Remission of sentences is also mentioned in Ashoka's inscriptions.

1.3.6 Military Administration

The King was the supreme commander of the military. The Mauryan army was well organized and it was under the control of a 'Senapati.' As per Greek author Pliny, the Mauryan army consisted of six lakh infantry, thirty thousand cavalry, nine thousand elephants, and eight thousand chariots.

There was a Board of 30 members to look into matters pertaining to war. These members were placed in six committees with five members in each. These committees were responsible to manage the following wings of the military:

- Navy
- Transport and Supply
- Infantry
- Cavalry
- War Chariots
- War Elephants

Each of the above wings was under the control of 'Adhyaksha' or Superintendents.

The Mauryan Empire had the privilege of having successful administrators such as Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka. The administration of the Empire was decentralized and the administrative powers were divided into administrative units. However, these units were under a rigid central control.

Ashoka introduced innovations and reforms in the Mauryan administrative system. He improved the functioning of the executive, legislature, and judiciary. He introduced reforms in the provincial administration. He appointed many officials to look into the tasks of public welfare. Ashoka appointed a special class of officers known, as the Dhamma Mahamatras to look after the material and spiritual well being of the people. These persons were to spread the gospel of Dhamma.

Activity

Let us know about your view points on the similarities and differences between Mauryan administrative system and contemporary administration of today.

1.4 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM DURING GUPTA PERIOD

The administrative system during the Gupta dynasty was found more or less similar to that of the Mauryan Empire. At the time of the Gupta rule, there was political harmony in ancient India. During this period, the Empire was classified into administrative divisions like Rajya, Rashtra, Desha, and Mandala. This denotes the importance being given to administrative decentralization. The administrative divisions helped the rulers to systematically control their territories. The period of Gupta's has been described, as the golden age in ancient India. There was consolidation of northern India under one political umbrella, which ushered in an era of orderly growth and development.

We will discuss Gupta administration under the following headings:

1.4.1 Central Administration

Monarchy was the form of government during the Gupta Age and it has been hailed, as a benevolent monarchy. The King adopted pompous titles such as Parameshvara, Maharajadhiraja, and Parambhattaraka. The King was the highest authority and wielded wide powers to enable smooth functioning of the Empire. He enjoyed political, administrative, military, and judicial powers. The theory of the divinity of Kings was popular during this period, which added to the royal power and prestige. They were looked upon, as Gods. Though the King possessed extensive powers, he did not rule in a tyrannical manner. Council of ministers and several other officials assisted the King in day to day performance of his duties.

The Gupta Kings appointed all governors and military and civil officials and the latter were responsible to the King. The King conferred all honors and titles. The King was the custodian of all land in the Empire. He looked into works like building of dams, imparting of justice, recovery of taxes, and provision of shelter to needy. The Kings could never afford to be selfish despots. They had to be ruled, according to the principles of 'Rajya Dharma.' There were also ministers and high officials to aid and advice him and he shared powers with them. The Emperor was assisted by a council of ministers also known, as Mantri Parishad. The Prime Minister of the state, known, as Mantri Mukhya was among the prominent ones in the council. The other portfolios such as military affairs, law and order matters, and such others were held by different officials known, as Mahasandhi Vighraha, Amatya, Mahabaladhikrita, and Mahadandnayaka. All important matters were decided in a joint sitting of the King and his ministers. The King used to respect the opinion given by his ministers.

Being a benevolent monarch, the King was always concerned with the well being of his subjects. He toured the country to keep himself abreast with the social and economic life of the people.

1.4.2 Provincial Administration

The Guptas organized a system of provincial and local administration. The Empire was divided into divisions called 'Bhukth' and each Bhukti was placed under the

charge of an 'Uparika.' The Bhuktis were divided into districts or Vishayas and each Vishaya was under a Vishayapati. The Vishayapatis were generally members of royal family. They were assisted in the work by a council of representatives.

1.4.3 Local Administration

The city was governed by a Parishad and the head was known, as Nagara-Rakshaka. Purapala Uparika was another officer and the Nagara-Rakshaka worked under him. Also, there was a special officer, known as Avasthika, who acted, as the Superintendent of Dharamsalas.

Professional bodies were given considerable attention. Artisans, merchants, and bankers organized their own guilds and managed their own affairs. The guild merchants looked after trade in the cities.

The village was the smallest unit of administration. Gramika was the head of the village. Other officials known, as Dutas or messengers, headman, and Karti were also there. Gramika was assisted by a village assembly. During the Guptas, the rural bodies like Panchayats were incharge of the welfare of villagers. These rural bodies comprised of the headman and elders of the villages. Hence, one can construe that the Guptas promoted local participation at all levels of the administration.

1.4.4 Revenue Administration

The duties of revenue administration were carried out by officials like Viniyuktaka, Rajuka, Uparika, Dashparadhika, and such others. From among the 18 sources of revenue, land revenue was the chief one. It was generally fixed at one-sixth of the total produce. Also, land revalue was an important source of income. The greater part of the revenue generated was spent on public welfare.

Land tax was levied on cultivators, who had no land rights. It was one sixth of the total produce. There were also other sources of income like income tax known, as Bhaga, custom duty, mint duty, inheritance tax, and gift tax. In addition to these taxes, fine such as Dasaparadha that was imposed on the offenders, was a source of income.

Salaries were usually paid in the form of land grants (in lieu of cash). Such land grants gave the beneficiaries hereditary rights over the land. However, the King had the power to take back the land. The lands given to the Brahmins had no tax on them.

Waste lands were brought under cultivation and pasture lands were protected. The Gupta rulers promoted irrigation facilities and this enabled increase in agricultural production.

1.4.5 Judicial Administration

Judicial system was far more developed under the Guptas than in earlier times. Several books on law were compiled during this period and for the first time civil and criminal laws were clearly demarcated. Theft and adultery came under criminal law and disputes regarding various types of property came under civil law. Elaborate laws were laid down regarding inheritance.

It was the duty of the King to uphold the law and deal with legal cases with the help of Brahman priests, judges, and ministers. The decision or the judgment of the court was based on legal texts, social customs prevailing during those times, and discretion of the King. King was the highest court of appeal. The guilds of artisans, merchants, and others were governed by their own laws.

At the lowest level of the judicial system was the village assembly or trade guild. These were the village councils, which were appointed to settle the disputes between the parties that appeared before them. It is believed that mild punishments were awarded to the guilty persons.

1.4.6 Military Administration

Gupta rulers had a huge army. They maintained a standing army and the use of cavalry and horse archery were in vogue. The territories of the Empire were kept under watchful eyes. The military officers, referred in inscriptions were the Senapati, Mahasenapati, Baladhikrita, Mahabaladhikrita, Dandanayaka, Sandhivigrahika, and Mahasandhivigrahika, They were the key functionaries in the military administration. The military had four wings namely the information wing, cavalry wing, elephant wing, and the navy. The main weapons of war were bows and arrows, swords, axes, and spears.

1.4.7 Trade and Business

The Empire carried out trade activities with countries like China, Ceylon, several European countries, and the East Indian islands. This made the Empire become economically and strategically strong, which led to annexation of new states and thereof the expansion of the territorial boundaries of the Empire.

Activity

Let us know about your view points on the similarities and differences between administrative system of the Guptas and contemporary administration of today.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The above sections have mentioned about the administrative systems prevalent in the Mauryan and Gupta kingdoms. The central, provincial, revenue, financial, judicial, and local administrative systems have been dealt with in details. This makes one to construe that both the administrative systems were monarchical yet not despotic. The King was a benevolent monarch, who was concerned with the welfare of his subjects. Both the administrations were the foundation of the ancient administrative system and proved to be pointers for our present day administration.

1.6 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 MEDIEVAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Political life in Medieval India
- 2.3 Mughal Administration
 - 2.3.1 Role of King
- 2.4 Mughal Administrative System
 - 2.4.1 Central Administration
 - 2.4.2 Provincial Administration
 - 2.4.3 District and Local Administration
- 2.5 Revenue Administration
- 2.6 Judicial Administration
 - 2.6.1 Administration of Civil Justice
 - 2.6.2 Administration of Criminal Justice
- 2.7 Army and Police
 - 2.7.1 Army
 - 2.7.2 Police
- 2.8 Conclusion
- 2.9 References and Further Readings

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the role of the King in Mughal Administration,
- describe the political and administrative structures in Mughal administration,
- explain about revenue and judicial administration in Mughal Administrative system, and
- highlight about the functioning of bureaucracy, army, and police in Mughal Administration.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Medieval India refers to a long period in the Indian subcontinent's history between ancient India and modern India. The period from 6th to the 13th century is known, as the early medieval period, and the period from 13th to the 16th century is known, as the late medieval period. The Mughal Empire, which was established in India in 1526 AD, is often referred to, as marking the end of late medieval era and beginning of the early modern era.

In this Unit, we will now begin with a discussion on the entire political and administrative systems in the Mughal era.

2.2 POLITICAL LIFE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

The period from the 8th to 12th century in political life in India was particularly dominated by the presence of large number of states. The bigger ones tried to establish their supremacy in northern India and the Deccan. The main contenders in this struggle for supremacy were the Pratiharas, Palas, and Rashtrakutas. In the south, the most powerful kingdom to emerge during this period was that of the Cholas. The Cholas brought about political unification in large parts of the country. However, the picture in northern India was of political fragmentation. It was in this period that India's contact with the new religion of Islam began. The contacts began in the late 7th century through the Arab traders.

In the beginning of the 8th century the Arabs had conquered Sind. The Turks emerged, as a powerful force in Central and West Asia in the 10th century and had conquered Persia. Their lives were greatly influenced by Persian culture and tradition. By the end of the 10th century, the Turks invaded India and took over Punjab. This was followed by series of Turkish invasions in the late 12th and early 13th century that eventually led to the establishment of the Sultanate dynasty. Within a few centuries after the rise of Islam in Arabia, it became the second most religion in India with its followers in every part of the country.

The establishment of the Sultanate marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of medieval India. Politically, it led to the unification of northern India and parts of the Deccan for almost a century. The Sultanate disintegrated towards the end of the 14th century leading to the emergence of a number of kingdoms in different parts of the country. Some of these like Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms became very powerful. Turks, Persians, Mongols, Afghans, and Arabs settled, as new social groups in India. There were important changes in economic life also. Trade and crafts received a stimulus and many new towns arose, as centres of trade and crafts.

2.3 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

The Mughal Empire, which was established in India in 1526 AD, is often referred to, as marking the end of late medieval era and beginning of the early modern era. The Mughal administration was the most organized and long lasting and has even carried on to the modern times. The reason for this stability was the long lasting (more than three centuries) rule of the Mughal Sultanate.

Akbar was the architect of this system. The Mughal administration did carry forward a lot of traditions prevailing in the political and administrative life of the Mauryan rulers. But, as compared to the Mauryan rulers, they preferred greater centralization and a rigid structure and did not pay much attention to the social aspects like health and also ethics in public life, which were areas of special concern for the Mauryan kings. Right from the principles governing the working of government, taxation rules, departmental arrangements, and titles conferred on officials- all was imported from the Caliphate¹ of Iran and Egypt. This created an Islamic state. The Mughals built up monolithic governance. The Mughal emperor was all powerful and administration was much centralized. The king

¹ Caliphate is a person considered a politico-religious successor to the Islamic prophet Muhammad and a leader of the entire Muslim community. Historically, the caliphates were polities based on Islam, which developed into multi-ethnic trans-national empires.

symbolized the state and was the source and centre of all power and authority. Provincial² governments were more in the nature of administrative agencies.

The Mughals had an efficient civil service. They recognized merit and accepted Hindu intelligentsia in the higher civil service. It was a highly urbanized institution. Recruitment to the bureaucracy was based on principles of kin and kith, heredity, and personal loyalty to the king. The officials were primarily engaged in maintenance of law and order, safeguard of the interests of the king from internal uprisings and revolts, defense and extension of the boundaries of the Empire, and collection of revenue and taxes.

2.3.1 Role of King

The Mughal administration was, as Dr. J.N. Sarkar mentions the “Perso-Arabic System in Indian setting”. King was the sovereign, whose rule was paternalistic in nature. The main functions of the officials were to maintain law and order in the kingdom, safeguard the Kings’ interest from internal uprising and revolts, defend and extend boundaries of the kingdom, and collect revenue.

The entire administrative machinery revolved round the king, who was mostly seen, as a benevolent despot, who worked for the welfare of the people. It was absolute monarchy based on the divine right to rule. The king was everything to his people. He was all powerful and supreme and the source of all authority and the fountain-head of justice.

The first Mughal ruler, that is, Babur was so much engrossed in battles that he could not spare time in bringing in reforms in the administration machinery. Similar was the case with Humayun. Sher Shah Suri, who was there for a short time did introduce certain administrative reforms, which continued to guide the future rulers. Nevertheless, the Mughal Emperors followed certain traditions and conventions, which were greatly endearing to the people. They were accessible to the masses and undertook tours in the city to be aware of the civic life.

The Mughal administration was largely the creation of Emperor Akbar and was followed by his two successors Emperor Jahangir and Emperor Shah Jahan in similar fashion. However, ruler Aurangzeb made modifications in the administrative system and adopted reactionary policies. The Mughal system of administration continued till the East India Company entered the trade and commerce sector and soon took over powers in its own hands.

In the ensuing Section, we will discuss the entire Mughal administrative system at central, provincial, and district and local levels.

To begin with is a discussion on the central administration.

2.4 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

2.4.1 Central Administration

The king had a number of ministers to advice and assist in the discharge of functions. Out of them the four important ones were the ‘Diwan,’ who was in charge of revenue and finance, ‘Mir Bakshi,’ as the head of military department, ‘Mir Saman,’ who was in charge of factories and stores, and ‘Sadr-us-Sudhar,’

² A province is also known as ‘Subah.

who was the head of the ecclesiastical and judicial departments. Though the king was absolutely free to make laws for the country but this could not be sans the Quran law.

We will now discuss some of the ministers serving under the Mughal rule. To begin with is Diwan, the revenue head.

1) **Diwan**

There was no council of ministers to assist Mughal rulers. There was a Diwan, to assist the Sultan in the administration of the country. The Diwan usually held the revenue department and represented the king at ceremonial occasions. He was assisted by Diwan-i-Tan and Diwani-Khalsn. According to Abul Fazl, the Diwan looked after royal treasury and supervised the income and expenditure of the Empire. The entire revenue system was under his control. He fixed the revenues of the newly acquired territories and granted subsidies at times of scarcity. He also decided the cases regarding compensation to be paid for the losses suffered by farmers due to the movement of army at times of war. Though the Diwan was purely a civilian officer, at times of emergency he performed military duties as well. Thus we find that most of the important matters were in the hands of the Diwan.

As the chief administrative officer of the Empire he exercised control over the provinces and the officials. The activities of all the officials right from the Governor down to the Patwari were constantly under watch. The provincial Governors used to send the accounts regarding the revenue of their province to him. He also made available necessary funds for construction of roads, buildings, parks, and such related works. He also made necessary arrangement for the transfer of funds from one province to another. Thus we find that the Diwan had very extensive powers and was always consulted by the emperors on important issues. He was paid a good remuneration.

2) **Mir Bakshi**

Mir Bakshi position was held by a minister, who was the Commander of the entire military under the king. He was the Chief Advisor to the king on military matters. All records pertaining to the Mansabdars³ were kept by him. His functions included recruitment to the army, maintenance of troops in good form, conduct of military warfare tests, inspection of horses, maintenance of muster rolls of troops at regular intervals, and equipping them for battles. He was to prepare the strategy for war.

3) **Mir Saman**

The Mir Saman was the Minister, who looked after the maintenance of royal buildings, roads, parks, 'karkhanas' (workshops) etc. He was also responsible for the provision of the stores for military and household supplies. He purchased all the goods on behalf of the State and also was responsible for trade and commercial activities. The responsibility of exports also rested with him. During the expeditions, he used to accompany the Emperor and made provisions for his stay.

³ The term Mansabdar refers to an individual holding a mansab, meaning a position or rank. It was a grading system used by the Mughals to fix rank, file, and military responsibilities. The Mansabdars were assigned with military responsibilities.

The Mir Saman was assisted by a senior official known, as Diwan-i-Beulat, who looked after the financial aspects and had a direct contact with the Finance Department.

4) Sadar

Sadar was the Chief Justice and also in-charge of ecclesiastical affairs. Sadar looked after two departments, one of justice and the other of religion. In performing the judicial functions he acted more, as a 'Qazi⁴.' We find that, as a Qazi, he decided the cases in accordance with the Muslim law and therefore enjoyed much status. He exercised the power of justice on behalf of the king and heard the appeals against the decisions of the lower courts. It may be noted that during the Mughal period the Department of Justice was quite corrupt, as Prof. J.N. Sarkar has mentioned, "All the Qazis of the Mughal period, with a few exceptions, were notorious for taking bribes".

5) Muhtasib

The office of Muhtasib combined duties of both secular as well as religious in nature. As regards his religious duties, he ensured that the principles of Islam were protected and all tenets of faith were religiously carried out. The moral principles were also advocated to the public. Prof. A.L. Srivastava stated that Muhtasib was strictly against use of wine and other intoxicants. Also, gambling was prohibited. One had to do prayers (Namaz) five times a day in accordance with the religious laws, and those who failed were punished.

Besides, he was responsible for the proper regulation of markets and for this purpose he used to inspect the weight and measures used and also ensured that the things were available to the subjects at reasonable prices. He was also concerned with maintenance of cleanliness in the city.

Other than the above officials, there was a News Writer and Daroga-i-Dak-Chauki. The News Writer was appointed by the king on the recommendation of Mir Bakshi. This office was usually held for a period of five years. The News Writer was supposed to keep the Sultan informed about the various events that were taking place in different parts of the kingdom. He was expected to ensure the authenticity of reports and the reliability of sources of news for, which at times, he used to get rewarded (otherwise, for unreliable news punishment was meted out). Usually the News Writers were expected to submit reports on a weekly basis to the king.

The Postal Department was under the charge of a Daroga-i-Dak-Chauki. It was his duty to ensure that the news from various parts of the kingdom was carried to the Sultan without any delay. For this purpose, horses were kept ready. The Daroga-i-Dak-Chauki was assisted by other officials like Additional Darogas.

Now we will discuss about provincial administration.

2.4.2 Provincial Administration

The whole kingdom was divided into provinces. However, the number of the

⁴ Qazi was the second agency of judiciary after the Sultan. He had a bigger role in the judiciary system of the state and he held the court and gave justice.

provinces differed under different Mughal rulers. For example under Akbar, there were 15 provinces while under Jahangir and Aurangzeb their number rose to 17 and 21 respectively.

There were officials, who were in charge of different areas and we will discuss them individually in the following paragraphs.

1) Subedar

Each province was under a Subedar, who was also known, as the Governor. During the times of Akbar the designation Siphasalar was also used for this official. The Subedar was a sort of mini-king within his own province and was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, control of local army, realization of State dues, and provision of justice. Usually the king used to appoint members of the royal family or confident nobles to this office. However, he was also guided by the principle of ability in appointment of the official. Some of the Subedars happened to be very young and got into the office owing to their ability⁵. The Subedar derived all authority from the Sultan and stayed in office, as long as, he enjoyed the good will of the latter.

2) Diwan

The Diwan was appointed by the Sultan and he assisted the Subedar in running the administration of the provinces. During the initial period of the Mughal rule, this office was considered, as parallel to that of Subedar. However, the former did not enjoy equal rights, as of his counterpart. The Diwan looked after the income and expenditure part of the provincial administration and made provisions for collection of revenue.

3) Sadar

Sadar was appointed by the king and was completely free from the interventions of the Diwan or Subedar in performance of his work. He was generally a scholar and religious person. He used to distribute land and charity. The Qazi and the Mir Adil also worked under him.

4) Amil

Amil was a revenue collection officer, though he performed certain other duties too. He looked after the agricultural land and helped farmers convert the barren land into cultivable land. He also assisted in maintenance of peace within the province and supervised the work of revenue collectors, besides supervising the works of Karkuns and Mukkadamas.

5) Bakshi

The office of Bakshi was identical to that of Amil. He supervised the work of the Qanungos⁶ and kept a record of various contracts entered into by the monarchy. He also kept a full record of the cultivatable and barren land, as well as, income and expenditure from those lands. He sent statement of annual income and expenditure to the king.

⁵ For example Aziz koka and Abdul Rahim were made Subedars, while they were very young.

⁶ Under the Subah sytem each district was subdivided into parganas, serving, as fiscal and police units. Each pargana had five principal officers, among them quanungo played a vital role for the revenue administration of the Mughal revenue structure.

6) Potdar

Potdar was mainly concerned with the collection of revenue from the peasants and deposit the same in the royal treasury. He was authorized to issue necessary receipt for the revenue collected and keep a full record of the same. However, he was not authorized to spend without the approval of the Diwan. All the money that was received by him was only with the approval of the Diwan.

7) Fauzdar

Fauzdar was in-charge of the provincial army. He assisted the Subedar in the administration of provinces. He was responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the province and took necessary steps to suppress possible revolts. Occasionally, he arranged for demonstration of army. He was also responsible for the arrests of the dacoits.

8) Kotwal

The Kotwal was primarily a police official, though he performed certain judicial functions, as well. He was responsible for the preservation of law and order within the province.

9) Wak-i-Navis

The Wak-i-Navis was responsible for communicating information pertaining to the provinces to the king. In fact, the king could exercise control over the provincial administration only on the basis of the information provided by the Wak-i-Navis.

On the basis of the above description, we can say that provincial administration under the Mughals was efficient. The Emperor was able to exercise sufficient control over the provinces and was also in know of the events taking place there. However, owing to work and time factors, the king was not able to devote sufficient time to the provincial administration, as required. This resulted in corrupt practices in provincial administration.

2.4.3 District and Local Administration

The Province was further divided into districts, also known as 'sarkars.' The following were the personnel, who were looking after different functions at the district level.

District Administration

1) Fauzdar

The administrative head of the district was Fauzdar, who performed same duties, as was performed by the Subedar at the provincial level. Undoubtedly, he was appointed by the Emperor but always worked under the control of Subedar. His main duties were maintenance of law and order and controlling the revolts of the local feudal lords (zamindars).

He also performed the duties of Amil that of a revenue collection officer at the district level. He worked under the direct supervision of the Diwan for this purpose and was in-charge of the Revenue Department of the District. He maintained direct contact with peasants and helped them in every possible

way to increase the production. He provided the farmers with loans for purchase of ox, pesticides, seeds, fertilizer, and such other related things. The same were realized in easy installments. He used to report to the Diwan regarding land that was under his control. He presented an annual report to the king, which contained information about the economic condition of his subjects, availability and prices of food grains, and activities of the feudal lords.

2) Kotwal

Another official at the district level was Kotwal. He was responsible for maintenance of law and order and was also the judicial head of the district. He heard criminal cases and took actions against those who were involved in activities like hoarding of food grains, use of faulty weights and measures, and such related matters. He used to have watchful eyes on all those who visited the king. He used to ensure that the namaz⁷ is offered by the Muslims on every Friday. He provided certificate of marriages. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor, used to collect 'Jazia'⁸ and 'Zakats'⁹ from the non-Muslims.

Local Administration

The districts were further divided into Parganas and further they were divided into villages. The following were the personnel, who were looking after different functions at the Pargana level and village level.

1) Mukkadam

At the local administration level, the districts were divided into 'Parganas.' These were the revenue collection units, each under the control of a Mukkadam. Mukkadam collected revenue and deposited the same in the treasury. The peasants were also allowed to deposit the revenue directly to the treasury. The other revenue officials at the Pargana level were Amil and Kanungo, who collected the land revenue. There were Qazis also, who settled local disputes. pertaining to the same.

2) Sarpanch

The village was the lowest unit of administration. It enjoyed autonomy with people's rule sans governmental interference. Each village had a Panchayat. The Panchayat was headed by Sarpanch, who was directly elected by the people. He acted, as a link between the village and the district administration. He collected the revenue from the peasants and deposited the same in the government's treasury. In case of any delay in depositing the revenue, he was held accountable for the same to the district administration.

The Sarpanch used to receive two and a half per cent of the total collection, which was construed, as his income. He was assisted by a Patwari and a Village

⁷ Namaz is the second of the five pillars in the Islamic faith, as daily obligatory standardized prayers.

⁸ Jazia is a per capita yearly taxation, historically levied in the form of financial charge on non-Muslims of a state governed by Islamic law in order to fund public expenditures of the state.

⁹ Zakat is an Islamic finance term referring to the obligation that an individual has to donate a certain proportion of wealth each year to charitable causes.

Accountant. The Patwari used to collect revenue from the farms and accountant used maintain account of the same.

The Panchayat was also responsible for making necessary arrangements for irrigation, health, education, and development programmes. It used to look after the religious duties and also was responsible for the moral upliftment of village people. It made necessary arrangements for the celebration of various festivals and was responsible for the maintenance of law and order within its jurisdiction. The Panchayat also enjoyed certain judicial powers and decided over minor disputes.

2.5 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

When we discuss about revenue administration, land revenue was the prime source of income of the Mughal State. The king's share was defined, as one-twelfth/one-eighth / one-fourth of the land revenue. This usually depended on the Emperor.

There were three types of land tenure systems. The first was the zamindari system that was prevalent in Bengal and was extended up to some parts of Madras by the Britishers. Here the zamindars acted, as intermediaries, between the Empire and farmers in settlement of land revenue. The second system was the Mahalwari system, as seen in North West Provinces, wherein the settlement of land revenue was done jointly by the zamindars and the farmers, as they both had joint proprietorship of the land. The Ryotwari¹⁰ system, as seen in North India and Deccan, did away with all kinds of intermediaries between the State and the ryots or peasants. Though the farmers were responsible for the annual payment of revenue, they did not have any proprietary rights. These were vested in the king.

2.6 JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

We will begin the discussion with administration of civil justice followed by the administration of criminal justice.

2.6.1 Administration of Civil Justice

The Mughal State, being a Muslim State, the administration of civil justice was based entirely on the precepts of Quran. The Qazi (judges) followed the Quran precepts in dispensing justice. They were also guided by the earlier judgements as well as by the ordinances issued by different Emperors in this regard. The Qazis had to hold on to the customary laws and were sought to follow the principles of equity. Though, the Emperor was the final authority in terms of both original and appellate jurisdiction, he could never defy the sacred laws of Quran in dispensation of justice.

2.6.2 Administration of Criminal Justice

Similar to civil justice, the administration of criminal justice was also based on the precepts of Quran. The criminal cases were classified under three main heads, namely crimes against God, crimes against the sovereign, and crimes against

¹⁰ Ryotwari system was a land revenue system in India.

subjects. 'Huda' or retaliation and 'Tazir' (punishment inflicted by the judge)¹¹ were meted out to the offenders.

Punishments seemed to be very harsh. Whipping to death and burning alive were common for treason and conspiracy against the Mughal State. In the reign of Aurangzeb, no Muslim could ever be convicted on an evidence of a non-Muslim but this did not happen vice-versa.

Beyond Aurangzeb, there were no other such Emperors, who could up hold the Empire. The Mughal State started withering with administration, justice, trade and commerce, revenue etc. slithering off. By 1600 AD, the East India Company made inroads that furthered the deterioration of the Empire.

2.7 ARMY AND POLICE

2.7.1 Army

The army is to be understood largely in terms of the mansabdari system. The officials of the Mughal State held a 'mansab' and were expected to supply a certain number of troops to the military service of the State. The mansabdars were classified into 33 grades. Each grade had a definite salary. Officers received their salaries either in cash or through 'jagirs.' In case the mansabdars were to get revenue from the jagirs, the amount was to be equivalent to the cash allocated for the purpose. The jagir system provided ample scope for exploitation of the masses owing to the power and independence vested with the mansabdars.

In addition, there were the supplementary troopers and a special category of 'gentlemen troopers,' who were horsemen owning exclusive allegiance to the king. The army had the cavalry, infantry, and artillery with guns. Navy was also there in the Mughal State.

As the Mughal army grew in numbers, it became too unwieldy. The soldiers were more attached to those who recruited them than the Emperor. The army on the move was like a huge moving city, with all its paraphernalia of elephants, camels, harem, bazaars, etc. Its cost was unbearable and inevitable deterioration was fully manifest in the times of Jahangir. No longer capable of swift action, the Marathas, under Shivaji could score over the Mughals in battle.

2.7.2 Police

In the rural areas, policing was undertaken by the village headman and his subordinate watchmen. In the cities, there were Kotwals, whose main job was to preserve peace and public security in urban areas. They had to arrest burglars, perform law and order duties, regulate prices, and check weights and measures. They had to employ and supervise work of spies and make an inventory of property of deceased or missing persons. In the districts, law and order functions were entrusted to Faujdars.

Activity

The Mughal administration has the Emperor at the apex. Some emperors were benevolent, as compared to the others. Let us know, as how the administration has fared under the Mughal kings.

¹¹ It included admonition, exposure before the public, scourging, and even exile.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Medieval India refers to a long period of the Indian subcontinent's history between ancient India and modern India. The Mughal administration did carry forward a lot of traditions prevailing in the political and administrative life of the Mauryan rulers. The Mughals built up monolithic governance. The Mughal emperor was all powerful and administration was much centralized. The king symbolized the state and was the source and centre of all power and authority. Provincial governments were more in the nature of administrative agencies.

The Mughals had an efficient civil service. They recognized merit and accepted Hindu intelligentsia in the higher civil service. It was mainly concerned with revenue functions and was a highly urbanized institution.

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UNIT 3 BRITISH ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Structure

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- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 East India Company-An Overview
- 3.3 British Administration
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the administrative set up of East India Company,
- highlight the reforms undertaken by the British Administration between the period from 1858 to 1935, and
- elucidate the main features of British Administration.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The British arrived in India, first, as traders under the banner of a trading Corporation. The British Crown granted a group of merchants a monopoly over trade in the eastern waters in 1600 AD, which eventually led to the establishment of the Company. The Company arrived in India, as a trading corporation and remained so till 1765.

After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the trading Company started gaining territorial grounds and powers to rule over India. Thereby, the Company re-named itself, as East India Company.

In this Unit, we shall take in to account both the constitutional and administrative aspects of British system of administration in India.

3.2 EAST INDIA COMPANY-AN OVERVIEW

The East India Company came to India with trading objectives. The entire system of governance was commercial in character. There was a Council headed by a Governor with legislative and executive powers vested in him. The Council set up Board of Trade, Military Board, Board of Revenue, and Railway Board. The Boards enabled discussions and deliberations in legislative and executive matters. Record keeping was an integral part that helped to check absolutism and uncontrolled power.

In August 1765, with the then Mughal Emperor granting powers to collect ‘diwani’ (revenue)¹ from the lands in the provinces of Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa to the East India Company, the latter got the taste of wielding power and authority. The events that started from revenue collection gradually led to the amassing of full powers pertaining to civil, judicial, and military matters. The Company’s two major goals were now conquest and consolidation.

The doctrine of subsidiary alliance was an aggressive policy that resulted in taking Company officials active interest in political and administrative affairs of local kingdoms governed by native princes. The early 1800s could be seen, as an era, where Company officials focused their strategies in gaining intervention rights in political, commercial, and military activities of local kingdoms for their own profit.

The East India Company created a vast administrative machinery. The Company to set up a well organized personnel system through, which control over territorial provinces in India could become more consolidated. Lord Cornwallis developed the civil services code. He regularized and specified the office of District Collector and established the office of District Judge. The office of the Chief Secretary was established during the rule of Lord Wellesley. The office of the Commissioner and sectional arrangement in the secretariat were done under Lord Bentinck’s rule. Under the Charter Act 1833, the Governor General of Bengal was appointed, as the Governor General of India, who was now to head the British administration in India. Doctrine of Lapse of Lord Dalhousie enabled the Company to have absolute power and control over policy matters of the Indian states. This helped the English to setup a strong base along with rights of revenue to rule even the remotest corners of India.

However, with passage of time, the Company became a corrupt ground and was frittering away with money and profits. To regulate its management, the British Parliament passed two major Acts, namely, the Regulating Act 1773, and Pitt’s India Act 1784. Subsequent Acts of 1793, 1813, 1833, and 1853 steadily deprived the Company of its authority, power, and privileges.

The Regulating Act 1773 and Pitt’s India Act 1784 determined the Company’s status. The Regulating Act 1773 remodeled the Company and subjected it to supervision of British government. Pitt’s India Act 1784 set up a Board of Control in England to look into the affairs of India that consisted of Chancellor of Exchequer, Secretary of State, and four privy councilors. The government became known for the first time, as Government of India. For administering the country,

¹ Against a premium of Rs 26 lakh per annum.

a Governor General was appointed with Warren Hastings being the first. The Governor General Council had three covenanted members of the Company. The Governor General had overriding powers over the Council's decisions. Administration of the Company's districts was vested in European district collectors, who were also made the Presidents of the Company's civil and criminal courts in the respective districts. A Board of Revenue was set up at Calcutta to supervise the district collectors.

The Revolt of 1857, also known as the Indian Mutiny, led to the end of the British East India Company's rule in India. The Government of India Act 1858 was passed in the British parliament that led to the Company's dissolution. All powers were transferred to the British Crown, which then created an India Office in the country with a Secretary of State to look into matters pertaining to its administration. The nomenclature of Governor General was replaced, as the Viceroy General of India (Chief Administrator of the British Crown in India). His role was to look into the implementation of the orders passed by the British Parliament in India. Military was reorganized and higher levels were offered to the Europeans and to some higher caste officials from the Indian side. Caste bias was adhered to with an ultimate aim to avoid and prevent another mutiny from taking place.

So, in short the British East India Company was the forerunner of the rule of British Crown in India. The governance of India came directly under the British Crown post 1857 mutiny.

3.3 BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

The outbreak of 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, as the first war of Independence² was a shock to the British Government. Economic exploitation, social deprivation, and political unrest made 1857 outburst inevitable. The British rulers had to revise their policy of conquest and annexation and adopt a cautious and calculated policy of association and cooperation. The Act of 1858 introduced various changes. It assured the native princes of their rights, dignity, and honor.

The war of 1857 was an eye opener for British rulers. The British Government enacted Indian Councils Act 1861 to include a number of members other than the official members (persons of eminence) in the Executive Council of the Governor General. The legislative powers of the Governor General increased. His prior approval was needed to introduce measures that affected public finance, religion, discipline, maintenance of military, and relations with foreign states. His consent was necessary for any Act to be passed by the legislature and his ordinances had the validity of an Act.

However, the Act 1861 could not satisfy the prevalent public opinion. In its very first session, the Indian National Congress-INC- passed a resolution to make these Councils broad based, elective, and to be bestowed with budgetary and executive powers.

While the British established a regular system of government from 1857 to 1947 in the country, yet its policy of apparent association went hand in hand with the policy of oppression. Constitutional advances were always barbed with restrictive

² Called as 'first war of Independence' by Dr. Patabhi Sitaramayya.

conditions, so that the core of executive bureaucratic responsibility would remain untouched. Such contradictions seem to be inevitable with imperialism. Imperialism is not found to be compatible with democratic theory and practices.

The Indian national movement organized itself under the Indian National Congress (INC) that was set up in 1885. Initially influenced by the Western educated upper middle class, it aimed to secure reforms through peaceful and constitutional means. The British rulers also felt that this would remove misunderstanding about the intentions of the government and would save the Empire. The moderates had faith in the British sense of justice and fair play and they looked towards gradual reforms with constitutional means. But on the other hand were also the non-moderates, who were not pacified by any kind of moderate ideology and demanded nothing short of 'Purna Swaraj' (complete independence and sovereignty).

The INC owing to its concern with the wider interests of its people, made it compulsive for the British Government to undertake reforms to make administration broad based and representative. In the political field, INC advocated the abolition of executive council, reforms in the legislative councils, more powers to local bodies, reducing official interference in the working of local bodies, and removing restrictions on press. The INC wanted governance that could represent all classes and interests that were Indian.

3.3.1 Morley - Minto Reforms 1909

The Morley Minto Reforms 1909 increased the size of the Legislative Council, Imperial Council and Provincial Council. For the Imperial Council the number was raised from 16 members to 60 members. For bigger Provincial Councils, the number was raised to 50 members, and for minor provinces it was fixed at 30 members. There was a provision of members getting elected to these Councils and also being nominated. These Reforms expanded the functions of the Legislative Councils that included discussions on annual budget, discussion on any matter of public interest, and the power of asking questions to the elected members. The Act also increased the number of Executive Councilors in the three major Presidencies of Bombay, Madras, and Bengal. Indians were now appointed, as members of the Secretary of States' Council and of the Governor Generals' Council. The Reforms introduced the system of representation for Muslims.

Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State and Lord Minto, the then Governor General of India, were not in favour of dispensing the supremacy of British administration to a representative assembly. The reforms could not establish a responsible government with now even the moderates in the INC being unhappy with them.

The association of the Indian Government with Allies in World War I, the Congress League Lucknow Pact of 1916³, the extremists rejoining the INC, and the Home Rule Movement made it a requisite for further constitutional reforms that could lead towards a good and responsible government. Montague, the Secretary of State for India declared a policy in August 1917 for increasing association of

³ Lucknow Pact, 1916 was an agreement that was reached between the INC and the Muslim League at a joint session of both the parties held in Lucknow in October 1916.

Indians in every branch of administration and gave direction and purpose for future constitutional development. Montague toured India with Lord Chelmsford and the Montague Chelmsford Report, an expression of liberal philosophy, proposed the reforms in 1919. It has been considered a milestone in the constitutional development of India.

3.3.2 Montague-Chelmsford Reforms 1919

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms 1919 was based on three important premises. First, popular control in the field of local government was to be established, Second, the provincial governments be made responsible to people, and third that control exerted by the British Parliament and Secretary of State be relaxed. The Preamble of the Reforms declared that the policy of Parliament was to provide for increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration that will eventually lead to the gradual development of self governing institutions. This was done with a need to have a progressive realization of a responsible government in British India. In response to the spirit of the Preamble, the Reforms provided for a complete popular control in various areas coming under the local governments. It exuded maximum popular representation and freedom to provincial governments. This was reflected in the system of dyarchy. The Government of India was still to be responsible to the British Parliament. But Indian Legislative Council was enlarged and made more democratic in terms of popular representation. In tune with spirit of the Reforms, control of British parliament over Indian Government was relaxed and that of Central Government over the provincial governments was reduced.

3.3.3 Machinery of Dyarchy at the Provinces

The entire subjects of the government were divided between the central and provincial governments. At the provincial level, subjects got further divided, as reserved and transferred subjects (a novel feature of the Montague Chelmsford Reforms). This was dyarchy, wherein there was dividing of governmental administration into reserved and transferred subjects and they were treated differentially. The reserved subjects were in the charge of councilors, who were nominated by the Governor. The transferred subjects were in charge of councilors, who were appointed by the Governor. The reserved subjects were the key departments while transferred subjects were felt to be safe, even though when placed in Indian hands. The councilors in charge of reserved subject was not responsible to the legislature but along with the Governor was responsible to the Secretary of State and the British Parliament. The counotors in charge of transferred subjects were responsible to the provincial legislature. The Governor exercised effective powers over the whole administration through the instrument of instructions and Executive Business Rules.

The experiment of dyarchy failed. The INC boycotted the first elections held in 1920. However, some major reforms pertaining to local government, education, and social welfare were carried out. Almost in every province, right to vote was extended to women. Diarchy failed but it showed the way towards a federal government, which could be more representative and responsive.

3.3.4 Government of India Act 1935

3.3.4.1 All India Federation

The Act of 1935 proposed for an All India Federation at the centre along with provincial autonomy. The Act proposed a federation for provinces and princely states in India. The princely states had an option to join the Federation.

The Act provided for a bicameral legislature. The Lower House will be elected indirectly and the Upper House (Council of States) will be a composite representation of princely states and eminent classes. The Act also gave more powers to the Upper House of voting grants and making members responsible to the Council.

The subjects allotted to the federal and provincial governments were detailed in three lists. The subjects of common interest for the whole country and which demanded a uniform treatment were covered by the Federal list. The List included 59 items. Subjects primarily of provincial interests and where no uniform treatment was necessary were put in the provincial list. This contained 54 items. A third list covered subjects primarily of provincial interests, where uniform action was or would be desirable. These numbered 36. These subjects were jointly managed by the federal and provincial governments. Residuary powers to accommodate future subjects were vested in hands of Governor General.

The Act, proposed a Federal form of government for India and for the first time brought in Indian States and British administration under one Constitution. It adhered to the essential features of a Federation-a written constitution, division of subjects between federal and provincial governments, and a Federal Court to interpret the provisions of the Constitution.

The proposed All India Federation did not materialize. The supremacy of the British Parliament was retained by the Act. The Secretary of State and Governor General were the ultimate authorities and they were to be above the Act. Thus none of the Indian political parties were convinced of the autonomy the Act proposed about.

3.3.4.2 Provincial Autonomy

The 1935 Act discontinued the application of dyarchy. The distinction between transferred and reserved subjects was removed and the whole administration was entrusted to a minister, who was responsible to the legislature. The provinces were given a separate status with specified subjects to operate, as per the three list system and were accorded a federal relationship with the Centre.

The Act of 1935, as a whole, can be considered important. It was an interim constitution and proved to be the base of the draft of constitution for a free India.

3.4 FEATURES OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION INFLUENCING INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

We will now discuss the features of British administration that have influenced Indian administration.

3.4.1 Centralized Administration

The first signs of centralization of administration were witnessed in the Regulation Act of 1773, which restricted the powers of Presidencies. Presidencies were brought under the administrative control of the Governor General-in-Council. The Pitt's India Act of 1784 paved the way for further centralization under by, which matters relating to India were placed under the direct control of a Board of control under the British Government.

We have a central administration with the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers forming the government at the Union level. Commissions and institutions like the National Institute for Transforming India, Union Public Service Commission, Election Commission, Finance Commission, Central Vigilance Commission, and Administrative Reforms Commission are Union bodies that work

Besides, regulatory bodies like Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Aviation Authority and such others are operating at the Central level.

3.4.2 Provincial Government

The Act of 1919 had divided the subjects between central and provincial governments. Some autonomy was given to the provinces to manage their own affairs. The Act of 1935 brought in more decentralization and gave the provinces more autonomy, as compared to 1919 Act. The Act of 1935 had two important aspects. Firstly, it gave the provinces an exclusive authority in specific areas and they were relatively free from the Central control. Secondly, there was evidence of keenness on the part of the colonial government to introduce responsible government at the level of provinces. Despite these efforts, the British were a highly centralized government and developed an administrative structure primarily intended to support the goal of centralization.

We do have a federal structure in our country. Centre, state, and local level governments have been entitled to make laws pertaining to the subjects that are earmarked for each of them. However, here too, the central government is considered to be more powerful.

3.4.3 Elaborate Local Government Structure

The colonial government ruled the country with an elaborate administrative structure supported by vast bureaucratic machinery. The country was divided into provinces, districts, and taluks (revenue sub-district). The institution of District Collector was created in 1772. He headed the district administration and

was the most powerful official under whom all the departments at the district level were placed. The main functions of the District Collector were the maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue. The Collector was regarded, as the principal agent of the government, chief of police, and head of magistracy at the district level.

The office of the Collector is still continuing and plays a pivotal role in district administration. Local administration operates at the district and below levels in both the urban and rural areas. District is made, as an important unit in administration so as to bring government closer to the people. District Collector heads the district administration. He/She is responsible to maintain law and order, administer justice, collect revenue, and carry out developmental works in his/her respective district.

Separate function aries functions and funds have been provided to the local bodies to ensure autonomy and self-governance. There is a planning machinery existing and also a finance commission for earmarking grants.

The establishment of local self-government institutions is providing an opportunity to local people to participate in the local administration and resolve their local problems. These bodies were visualized, as training ground for direct democracy, being retained by the implementation of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts 1992 in local self governance.

3.4.4 Rule of Law

Another characteristic feature of the British administration was the introduction of the Rule of Law. The spread of liberal ideas and institutions in the 19th and 20th centuries across the world prompted the British to introduce the Rule of Law. They codified the laws and considered every citizen to be equal before law.

There is an independent judiciary in India. Supreme Court is the apex authority in the judicial system. High Courts exist in every state followed by District and Sessions Courts operating separately for civil and criminal cases. Rule of law is firmly adhered to. System of appeal is there with higher courts acting, as appellate authorities.

3.4.5 Civil Services

The Indian Civil Service was created for the purpose of achieving efficiency in administration. It was considered to be a highly professional trained civil service. The members of this Service constituted the essence of British power in India. Recruitment to this service was made by open competitive examinations. The Federal Public Service Commission was created in 1926 to conduct competitive examinations for the appointment to these Services.

We have the Union Public Service Commission established at the Centre to conduct examinations for entry into the All India Services. Every year the Commission conducts entrance examinations for the purpose and prepares the final list of meritorious candidates for appointment to different governmental organizations at the Union level.

Activity

Enlist the features of the British administrative system that influenced Indian administration.

3.5 CONCLUSION

We can recollect, as how a body of traders and merchants, who explored the world for commercial activities came to India to work out trade relations in 1600 AD. Coming, as a purely commercial corporation, it assumed the name of East India Company. With passage of time, the Company took control over the Indian political system. After the 1857 mutiny, the power and authority of the Company and the entire administration of the country was taken over by the British Crown.

The British Government initiated reforms in the form of Indian Council Acts 1861 and 1892, Morley Minto Reforms 1909, Montague Chelmsford Reforms 1919, and Government of India Act 1935 during its regime from 1858-1935. The landmark achievements of having three lists of subjects that were categorized, as federal subjects, provincial subjects, and the concurrent subjects; the Public Service Commission, as an autonomous body to conduct the selection of public servants; decentralized local self-government units, the office of the District Collector and such other features of the British administration have been adopted by us in our system of administration of today.

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UNIT 4 CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN INDIAN ADMINISTRATION-POST 1947

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Challenges to Indian Administration
- 4.3 Indian Administration: Legacy of British Rule
 - 4.3.1 Departmental Organizations
 - 4.3.2 Public Services
 - 4.3.3 Public Service Commission
 - 4.3.4 District Administration
 - 4.3.5 Local Government
 - 4.3.6 Financial Administration
- 4.4 Changes in Indian Administration
 - 4.4.1 Development and Welfare
 - 4.4.2 Popular Participation in Administration
 - 4.4.3 Electronic Governance
- 4.5 Conclusion
- 4.6 References and Further Readings

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After the study of this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the legacy of British rule and reasons for its continuity, and
- discuss the changes brought in the Indian administration after independence.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Administration of independent India contains the impact and influence of the British Administration. The legacy of British rule is natural and obvious. In this Unit, an attempt is being made to highlight the legacy of British rule and also changes in administration brought in after the attainment of India's independence.

4.2 CHALLENGES TO INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

In the wake of independence, one of the crises was of the refugees, who came in from Pakistan because of partition. Because of the partition and influx of millions of refugees, there were communal disturbances, which posed a serious challenge to our administration.

Owing to partition, a sudden scarcity of civil servants was felt because a large number of Europeans had left the country and Muslim civil servants resigned and were leaving in numbers. According to Shriram Maheswari the strength of

Indian Civil Service was around 1064 in 1945 and 1947, which fell to 422 immediately after Independence.

With the famines in the forties leading to a shortage in supply of food grains coupled with price rise brought in an undue pressure on the administration to manage the crisis. Rationing was introduced to regulate supply and distribution of food grains. It added another burden to the already pressurized administrative system. The additional work resulting from the introduction of rationing necessitated urgent and large scale recruitment to various positions of public personnel. As it had to be undertaken at a very short notice, so basic training could not be imparted to the newly recruited ones under the prevailing circumstances. An economy of shortages eventually led to corruption in public administration.

When the Britishers left the country, the entire country automatically became a part of the Indian Union. But the territories under princely states (over 600 in number) remained outside the domain of independent India. The administrative system became engaged in the very task of integration of these princely states.

Thus, the administrative system had passed through a testing time after independence. It faced several challenges and crises situations. It had to work, as a stabilizing force, to withstand not only the stress and strain caused by partition but also other major problems, as discussed above.

4.3 INDIAN ADMINISTRATION: LEGACY OF BRITISH RULE

The present Indian administrative structure is largely a legacy of British rule in India. Free India inherited governmental machinery, as developed by the British with the feel of significance accorded to having a federal government. All India Services, civil services recruitment, administrative training, the secretariat system, office procedures, district administration, revenue administration, police system, law and order, budgeting, accounting, auditing, and a number of other structural and functional areas of Indian administration have their roots in the British system. Though the British had their own objectives of sustaining and strengthening their empire, to which the administrative system was geared, some of their organizational initiatives have proved to be useful to India in the aftermath of independence.

The continuing features of British administration are discussed below in detail.

4.3.1 Departmental Organizations

Departmental organizations have been playing a dominant role in Indian administration system. The internal organization of the departments and their working procedures has not changed much. Hierarchy, written records, and communication have continued. Pre-independence manuals still govern these departments. The position of chief secretary in state administration continues even till today.

4.3.2 Public Services

One of the important legacies of the British Rule in India was creation of Indian Civil Service. The nomenclature of the service was changed to Indian Administrative Service (IAS) after independence. It is a steel frame to the administrative machinery. The organizational structure, administrative setup, functioning, and ethos have influenced not only the governmental functioning but also the administrative culture. Several strategic positions in both central and state administrations are being held by the IAS cadre.

4.3.3 Public Service Commission

Another substantial contribution of the British rule was that the competitive examinations were conducted by an independent agency. The idea of a merit-based civil service germinated on the Indian soil for the first time with the submission of the Macaulay Report in 1854. To ensure impartial selection of meritorious civil servants, the Federal Public Service Commission was established in 1926. This was replaced by Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) after the new Constitution of India came into force on 26th January, 1950. The authors of the Constitution not only vested it with a Constitutional Status, but also provided elaborate safeguards for maintenance of its independence to enable it to be the upholder of the merit system of personnel.

4.3.4 District Administration

District is still continuing, as a unit of administration with noticeable increase in its importance. The head of the district administration continues to be the collector. However, the scale of operations at the district has more than doubled. The collector still enjoys the powers and status, as he used to, during the British rule. Now, apart from the regulatory functions like maintenance of law and order and revenue collection, the collectors are entrusted with the developmental functions for the development and growth of the respective districts.

4.3.5 Local Government

Local government is yet another feature of the British administrative system that is being continued. Lord Ripon, who had introduced local self-government in India, has been called the 'father of local self-government in India'. Local government institutions, which existed before independence, were consolidated and new ones were created to meet the growing needs of people. Laws have been passed for every state to have Municipal Corporations and Municipalities in the urban areas and village Panchayats in the rural areas.

4.3.6 Financial Administration

The British administration created institutions like Comptroller and Auditor General, (C&AG), Public Accounts Committee, Reserve Bank, and a budget system for having a sound financial administration in government. These institutions are still playing a key role in government to ensure financial prudence and accountability.

Now we will discuss the changes in the Indian administration system that were brought in by the new Constitution.

4.4 CHANGES IN INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

A new Constitution came into vogue on January 26 1950 and its objectives and nature were quite different from those prevailing under the British rule. The new Constitution established Parliamentary Democracy in the country. Federal governance with the Union and state governments was established. Public Service Commissions were set up at the union and the state levels for ensuring selection of meritorious candidates. Directive Principles of State Policy and the fundamental rights and fundamental duties for the citizens were laid down. These and such other provisions increased the responsibilities of public administration in the country.

We will now delve on the areas that brought in changes and more responsibilities for the administration of free India.

4.4.1 Development and Welfare

Under the British rule, administration was motivated more into trade and commercial activities that led to the surface of railways, posts and telegraphs, ports and highways, banking and insurance areas. Education was also given priority. Health and medical facilities got started at the elementary level. Fiscal incentives were provided for industrial development, especially after the World War I (1914-1918). However, development and welfare of the people were given a second priority.

When India became free from the colonial rule, the Constitution of India was written for the newly independent country. It started with a Preamble. The Preamble seeks to secure to all citizens social, economic, and political justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship; equality of status and opportunity; and promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and sovereignty and integrity of the nation. Part IV of the Constitution, which deals with Directive Principles of State Policy provide for principles to give guidance to the government in making policies and administering them on the basis of the above mentioned features. The State is to strive to minimize the inequalities in income and eliminate inequalities in status, facilities, and opportunities to its citizens. Both men and women will have equal right to an adequate means of livelihood. Equal pay for equal work is another directive to be adhered to by the states. The moral, mental, physical, and psychological health of children and youth are to be protected. Equal justice and free legal aid, right to work, education, and public assistance in old age, unemployment, etc. is secured by these Principles to be taken care of, as guiding points in state policies.

4.4.2 Popular Participation in Administration

In the late fifties, panchayati raj has been the most significant channel of the participation of the rural people in the rural development administration. Community development was the earlier phase of this popular participation.

The Parliament has passed the Right Information Bill on 11th May 2005 and it has come into effect from 12th October 2005.

4.4.3 Electronic Governance

In the past few decades, ICT has been increasingly used to improve government services. This kind of technology application to public system management is called e-governance. It is a form of governance comprising the processes and structures involved in the delivery of electronic services to the public. The aim, ultimately, is to simplify procedures, enable people's participation, and bring about improvement in governance through mail, telecommunication, and Internet. Various manifestations of e-governance initiatives are using IT tools and applications, such as computers and internet and also information systems like GIS, MIS, and such others.

The GoI has launched the National E-governance Plan (NEGP) in May 2006. Under the NEGP numerous e-enabled initiatives have been undertaken by various line departments like Mission Mode Projects. Also, State Wide Area Network, State Data Centers, Common Service Centers, and Electronic Payment Gateways have been functioning enabling seamless connectivity across departments and levels of government.

Digital India has also been launched to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Activity

Update the changes that have been made in the Indian administrative system during the past ten years that is from 2010-2011 to 2020.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Ever since the country became independent, Indian administration has continued with the British legacy by having erstwhile departmental organizations, public services, Public Service Commissions, the institution of District Collector, Reserve Bank, Comptroller and Auditor General, and such others. Along with this, the country introduced changes in Indian administration with a focus on citizens and pro-citizen services. Development and welfare became *sine qua non* with democracy and participation.

Right to Information, local self government institutions, gender participation, citizens' charters, social audit, ICT, and such other measures are the traits of good governance that are today possible for the people of India.

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