



Historical Background of Indian Constitution

Pitt's India Act 1784

- The company territories in India were called 'British possession in India'.
- Commercial and political functions of the company separated. The Court of Directors managed the commercial activities while the Board of Control managed political affairs.
- Reduced the strength of the Governor General's council to three members.
- Governor's councils were established in Madras and Bombay.

Charter Act of 1813

- The company's rule was extended to another 20 years.
- The Company's monopoly over Indian trade terminated; Trade with India open to all British subjects. except for the trade in tea, opium, and with China.
- This act grant permission to the missionaries to come to India.
- The act provided for a financial grant towards the revival of Indian literature and the promotion of science.

Charter Act of 1833

- Governor-General (of Bengal) became the Governor-General of India.
- First Governor-General of India was Lord William Bentick.
- This was the final step towards centralization in British India.
- Beginning of a Central legislature for India as the act also took away legislative powers of Bombay and Madras provinces.
- As per the act, an Indian law commission was established.
- This act ended the commercial activities of the company and it was transformed into an administrative body.

Charter Act of 1853

- A Central Legislative Council was created of 6 members out of which 4 were appointed by the provisional governments of Madras, Bombay, Agra and Bengal.
- The legislative and executive powers of the Governor-General's Council were separated.
- It introduced a system of open competition as the basis for the recruitment of civil servants of the Company.

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Government of India Act 1858

- With this Act the rule of company was replaced by the rule of the crown in India.
- The powers of the British Crown were to be exercised by the Secretary of State for India. He was assisted by a 15-member Council of India.
- The Governor-General was designated the Viceroy as well, Lord Canning was the first Viceroy of India.
- The Court of Directors and the Board of Control were abolished.

Indian Councils Act 1861

- This Act introduced a popular element of involving Indians for the very first time to represent in the legislative council and executive council as the non-official members. three Indians entered the Legislative council.
- Legislative councils were established in Center and provinces.
- It accorded statutory recognition to the portfolio system.
- Decentralisation initiated with the presidencies of Madras and Bombay being restored their legislative powers.

India Councils Act 1892

- The act increased the number of additional or non-official members in the legislative councils.
- Gave more functions to the legislative councils such as the discussion of budget and questioning the executive.
- The legislative councils were empowered to make new laws and repeal old laws with the permission of the Governor-General.
- Introduced indirect elections (nomination).

Indian Councils Act 1909

- Act is also known as the Morley- Minto Reforms.
- Direct elections to the legislative councils were introduced for the first time.
- Changed the name of the Central Legislative Council to the Imperial Legislative Council, in which membership to Indian given for first time.
- It introduced concept of 'separate electorate'.
- Lord Minto appointed Satyendra P Sinha as the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

