British Colonialism and the Indian State: Administrative Evolution of India
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Abstract

This study actually explores the administrative evolution of India from the British colonial era to the present day, analysing the profound impact of British colonialism on the Indian state. The British colonial power introduced Western bureaucratic institutions, laws and practices, which profoundly influenced India's governance structure. Provides an in-depth analysis of key milestones in India's administrative development, including the gradual transfer of power to Indians. In fact, the study explores how British colonialism influenced India's administrative institutions, policies and practices through modernization. Also analyses the response of Indian nationalists and reformers to British colonial rule, including their demands for self-rule, constitutional reform, and social change. This study argues that understanding the colonial roots of India's administrative institutions is essential to addressing the challenges of governance, development and democracy in contemporary India. It also contends that colonial legacies continue to significantly shape India's governance structures, policy-making processes and administrative practices. This study is informed by a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including British colonial records, nationalist writings and historical accounts. It actually uses a multidisciplinary approach combining insights from history, public policy, politics, sociology and public administration. The study contributes to ongoing debates about colonialism, governance and state-building in India and provides insights for policymakers and practitioners interested in promoting effective and inclusive governance in India. By exploring the complex and contested history of India's administrative evolution, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the colonial legacy and its ongoing impact on Indian governance. It seeks to inform contemporary debates about governance, development and democracy in India and to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive governance frameworks and practices.

Keywords*:* British Colonialism, Administration, Bureaucracy, Governance, Indian State

Introduction:

British colonial rule accelerated the Indian administrative system in various ways in view of the prevailing situation. The evolution of the Indian administrative system took place through the rise and fall of administrative organizations. In fact, two characteristics are observed in all social systems. For example, the first is the dominance of the village and the second is centralization and decentralization. However, the current Indian administrative

system is an improved version of the ancient system. It can be said that the modern administrative system was formed on the basis of the ancient public administration. Before the establishment of British colonial rule, the responsibility and power of the Indian state administration was concentrated solely in the hands of the king. There was no such arrangement for regional administration in terms of military and law and order. The villages were looked after by the Gram Panchayat. There was no administrative system like the present-day municipal administration at that time. However, the current administrative system of India is based on the British colonial administrative structure. The contribution of that administrative structure to building the Indian political system on the model of parliamentary democracy is immense. The beginning of British rule in India is considered to be December 31, 1600 AD, when the British Raj gave a few merchants the right to monopolize trade in the East. After the fall of the Mughal Empire, the East India Company came into possession of a vast territory called 'Bharatbarsha' and unlimited power. The company then employed numerous clerks, porters, etc., in addition to merchants. The company had two driving forces: the Board of Control and the Court of Directors. The first was a more powerful organization than the second, because it was appointed by the British Parliament.[1] the members of the Court of Directors were nominated by the proprietors of the company. The company's employees could be divided into two categories. (1) Company employees recognized by the certificate and (2) Company employees not recognized by the certificate. The first group included only white Englishmen. They were loyal to the company and protected the company in every way. The second group included people of Indian, Persian, English and Portuguese origin. None of them had to sign the company's certificate. The British colonial period in India had a profound impact on the administrative structure of the country.[2] The expansion of British colonial rule and the subsequent direct and indirect rule of British colonial rule brought about significant changes in the governance of India. However, one aspect of this administrative evolution was the establishment of municipal bodies and local self-government, which sometimes played an important role in more effective administration and representation.

Objectives:

1. To analyse the evolution of the administration of the Indian state.
2. To trace the nature of the Indian state administration during the period of colonial rule.
3. To investigate the impact of the British colonial system on Indian administration.

Methodology:

This is a documentary study and the method of study is qualitative. The study is based on secondary sources as per the requirement of the study. Information related to the evolution of Indian administration is collected from government websites, reports, journals, internet sources etc.

The evolution of the administration of the Indian state:

The Administrative Evolution of the 'Indian State' was actually controlled by the British colonial government. The administrative structure of the Indian government was determined by the Regulating Act of 1773. This act also recognized the Company's right to perform functions other than trade. The act was originally limited to the Government of India called the Bengal Presidency.[3] the British colonial government appointed a Governor General and a council of four members by the Company to run the Indian administrative

system smoothly. And the Governor-General was also given the power to look after the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Under this 'Act of 1773', Warren Hastings became the Governor General. Under Hastings, the Company's employees increased their trade and commerce. In other words, the employees were elevated from "commercial explorers" or "fortune seekers" to the modern-day "government administrative bureaucracy". The Company transformed from merchants into a government. The company received all the work related to revenue and law and order. It was at this time that the work of the police state that was gradually emerging began.[4]

Some of the major influences of the British colonial government on the evolution of Indian administration were:

1. British colonial centralized administration:

The British replaced the earlier decentralized and fragmented systems with a centralized administrative system with a clear hierarchy and defined roles. This resulted in one of the most modern developments in the Indian administrative system. In particular, the appointment of high-ranking government employees and lower-ranking employees, as well as the police administration, were all developed by the British.

2. Bureaucratic structure:

The British changed the traditional administrative system and established a new modern bureaucracy, the core of which was the Indian Civil Service (ICS), which later became the backbone of Indian administration. And which is now called the Indian administrative service.

3. Modern administrative system:

Although the British colonial government came to India for trade and commerce, they gradually gained power in the political and administrative fields within the Indian territory. And they easily established dominance, not only that, but the British introduced a modern administrative system, which included:

Codified Law:

The British colonial government introduced this judicial system within the territory of India through its rule. The British colonial government introduced codified laws similar to the Indian Penal Code, which in effect provided a uniform legal framework.

Modern Judiciary: The British colonial government established a modern judicial system for the purpose of dispensing justice, with a clear hierarchy of courts and a system of appeals.

Revenue Administration: The British introduced a modern system of revenue collection, including land revenue and income tax.

Infrastructure Development:

The British invested in infrastructure development, for example, the British built an extensive network of roads, which facilitated communication and transportation.[5] The British also introduced railways, which revolutionized transportation and trade. The British administrative system has left a lasting legacy in India, shaping the country's governance structure, bureaucratic culture, and administrative system. Many of these systems continue to influence Indian administration today.

The nature of the Indian state administration during the period of colonial rule:

During the reign of Lord Wellesley (1760-1842), a new era in administrative system was ushered in, Wellesley's contribution in the training of bureaucrats is unforgettable. He was the first to realize that the company's work was growing rapidly. Therefore, he was able to understand the importance of training. In May 1800, he issued an order to establish Fort William College in Calcutta. This was where the company's employees were trained. The college was opened in November 1800.The next training institution of the British colonial government for administrative development - East India College - was started in England in 1805 by the order of the Court of Directors. However, according to the Charter Act of 1833, the charter of the East India Company was renewed for 20 years. The vast Bengal Presidency was divided into two parts - Bengal and Agra for administrative convenience. Then the Charter Act of 1853 was introduced. The principle of patronage in employment was abolished. Entry into employment was through direct competition. The Civil Service Commission in London arranged an entrance examination.[6] The age limit for candidates was 19-22 years.

According to the recruitment policy of the Maclay Committee, some of the first recruitment examinations were conducted on Indian soil. A series of administrative reforms began. The British government set up various commissions, committees, boards and study teams for this purpose. The Maclay Committee Report (1854) is considered the 'bible' of competitive recruitment and training. It clearly stated that candidates between the ages of 18 and 23 had to pass a competitive examination to be appointed to high government jobs.

Later, the Act of 1858 was introduced. Under this Act, the two driving forces of the company, the 'Court of Directors' and the 'Board of Control', were abolished. All the powers of the British colonial power - government, territory and revenue - were transferred to the English royal power. Additional Principal Secretary of State and Council of India were introduced. However, no major changes were introduced in the government system through the Act of 1858. The Governor General remained equally powerful. The conditions of government service continued to be determined through the Secretary of State. The government at that time had the following characteristics:

(1) The erosion of the village-panchayat system,

(2) The division of India into several provinces without recognizing ethnic, cultural or linguistic affinity,

(3) The imposition of huge taxes on the people and huge expenditure on military departments,

(4) Inattention to education, health, irrigation, etc.,

(5) Neglect of national industry and agriculture, which resulted in extreme poverty, epidemics and 'famines,

(6) The political activities of the Indian people were almost stopped by curtailing the freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of movement.

In 1859, Lord Canning introduced the "portfolio system". The main feature of the "portfolio system" was the division of government work into several branches instead of a centre.[7] The purpose of the "portfolio system" was to somewhat weaken the previously extremely centralized bureaucracy. In this system, the government's affairs were entrusted to various members of the Governor General's Council. This system was introduced in 1861. It can be called the father of the cabinet system.

During British colonial rule, the structure and characteristics of Indian state administration were:

1. Authoritarian: British colonial administration was autocratic in nature, with power concentrated in the hands of British officials.
2. Centralized: Administration was highly centralized, with decision-making authority vested in the British government and its representatives in British colonial India.
3. Bureaucratic: The British established a modern bureaucracy with a clear hierarchy and defined roles to govern the country.
4. Exploitative: The colonial administration was structured to exploit India's resources and economy for the benefit of the British Empire.
5. Governor-General: The Governor-General was the highest authority in India, responsible for implementing British policy.
6. Provincial administration: The British divided India into a number of provinces, each governed by a Governor or Lieutenant Governor.
7. District Administration: The basic unit of district administration was a Collector or District Magistrate, responsible for revenue collection, law and order, and policy implementation.
8. Economic Exploitation: The colonial administration exploited India's resources, leading to economic depletion and underdevelopment.[8]

Also, the British colonial rule brought about social and cultural changes. The British introduced Western education, values, and customs, which led to significant social and cultural changes. However, there was limited representation of Indians in the administration, with most positions of power held by British officials.[9] Therefore, it can be said that the British colonial administration had a profound impact on Indian society and economy, which shaped the course of the country's development for the next century.

The impact of the British colonial system on Indian administration:

The British colonial system had a profound impact on Indian administration, with a centralized system replacing the traditional decentralized system. Each ward could have its own administrative structure, with officials responsible for implementing British policies. The legacy of British colonialism continues to shape Indian administration, with ongoing debates about reform and modernization. The British colonial rule established the Finance and Home Departments to take all decisions on financial and internal affairs respectively through the Act of 1861. However, this Act did not introduce decentralization at all. However, Lord Ripon was in India from 1880 to 1884. The idea of self-government became quite popular from that time onwards. The liberal Prime Minister of Britain, Gladstone, declared at that time: "We have failed to give India the benefits and blessings of independent institutions." As soon as he came to power after winning the election in 1880, he did not waste any time and sent Lord Ripon as the Governor General of India. In the short four years from 1880 to 1884, Ripon introduced a system of local self-government for the villages and towns of India.[10] His liberal administrative system became quite popular like the Indian Education Policy, the Ilbert Bill, etc.

The Aitchison Commission was set up in 1886-87. This Commission recommended the creation of a subordinate local administrative organization. This, according to the Commission, would meet local needs. Another subordinate administration was formed under the provincial administration. As per the recommendations of this Commission,

three administrative services were introduced: (1) the Royal Administrative Service, (2) the Provincial Administrative Service and (3) the Subordinate Administrative Service. And subsequently, the functions of the legislature were actually expanded by the Indian Council Act of 1892. Although the direct electoral system was not approved, its initial stages were started, the size of the legislature was further increased by the Act of 1909 as proposed by the Morley-Minto Reforms. Then came the Government of India Act of 1919. Through this Act, the structure of the provincial governments was changed mainly by the British colonial rule. A kind of government system called 'dual rule' was introduced. The subjects of the Provincial List were reserved and transferred. Important subjects, such as home affairs, police, newspapers, finance, etc., were placed in the 'reserved' list. Subjects such as medicines, health, education, etc. were placed in the 'transferred' list. Local autonomy became a provincial and devolved subject.

Since the new experiments with 'dual rule' had completely failed, the British government appointed a Royal Commission on the Higher Administrative Service in 1923. Lord Lee was in charge of it.[11] The Federal Public Service Commission was formed with a chairman and four members. It began functioning from 1 October 1926.

The Government of India Act, 1935, recommended a federal system in place of 'dual rule' in the provinces. Along with provincial autonomy, an attempt was made to bring all subjects into three lists - the Central List, the State List and the Joint List. A Department for Planning was started in 1944. But the Department was closed after two years. Education, Health and Agriculture were made into three separate departments.

It is understood that during the British rule, Indian administration faced many tests. A series of reforms were introduced. Some features of the Mughal system of administration were also introduced by the British rulers. Thus, the colonial influence of continuity and change in Indian administration was observed. India became free from British rule in 1947.[12] In fact, many progressive changes have been observed in various aspects of the administrative system of independent India.

Findings:

1. Administrative Reforms:

The British colonial government introduced a centralized administrative system instead of the traditional decentralized system. A modern bureaucracy, including the Indian Civil Service (ICS), was established to improve the bureaucratic structure of India. And codified laws such as the Indian Penal Code were introduced.

2. Impact on Indian Society:

The British introduced Western education, values, and customs, which led to significant social and cultural changes. However, the British colonial government exploited India's resources, which led to economic underdevelopment. And there was limited representation of Indians in the administration, with most positions held by British officials.

3: Legacy of British Colonialism:

The British introduced modern governance systems, including revenue administration and law enforcement. The British colonial government invested in infrastructure development, including roads, railways, and canals, to improve the country's governance structure and the trajectory of development. However, the British colonial system had a lasting impact on Indian administration, which reshaped the country's governance structure and

development trajectory. Indeed, these findings highlight the significant impact of British colonialism on Indian administrative politics, society, and economy.

Conclusion:

The British colonial period had a profound impact on Indian administration, introducing modern governance, infrastructure and bureaucracy. Although the colonial system was exploitative and limited Indian representation, it laid the foundation for modern governance in India. The legacy of British colonialism continues to shape Indian administration, with ongoing debates about reform, modernization and the role of government in society. Understanding this study is crucial to understanding the complexities of Indian governance and to informing future reforms.

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