

So gold standard. it
benefited the indian
government



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So internally, Lord Curzon's period of office was made especially notable for a drastic overhauling of whole machinery of administration. Lord Curzon himself claimed that "abuses had been swept away, anomalies remedied; the pace quickened and standard rose." So with a strong determination and self confidence Curzon brought about manifold reforms in different branch of administration. Economic: In 1899, the British currency was declared legal tender in India and its ratio with the Indian rupees was fixed. A Pound was declared equivalent to rupees fifteen. India, thus, was put on a gold standard. It benefited the Indian Government and Curzon was able to reduce its debt.

Curzon reduced the rate of salt tax from two and a half rupees per maund to one and a third ($1\frac{1}{3}$) rupees per maund. He gave relief to income-tax payers. So far, all people whose yearly income was more than rupees five hundred paid the tax. He exempted all people below the income of rupees one thousand annually from this tax.

Curzon supported the policy of financial decentralization. So far, the yearly savings of the provinces were taken over by the Central Government, which left no inducement to the provinces for saving. He stopped this practice.

The provinces were allowed to keep their savings for the next year. Besides, he gave additional grant to provinces for the development of educational, agriculture, etc. Agriculture: Curzon took several measures to improve the condition of the peasants. Some banks for the assistance of peasants were opened. In 1904, the cooperative credit societies Act was passed to induce the people to form such societies for the purpose and loans. It was to save

the peasants from the clutches of the money lenders who usually charged exorbitant rate of interest. In 1900, the Punjab Land Alienation Act was passed.

It put restrictions on the transfer of lands of the peasants to money lenders in cases of failure of payment of their debts. Curzon attempted to bring about improvement in revenue administration. He fixed three principles regarding it. One, the revenue was to be increased only gradually, two, every care should be taken not to harm the agriculture while collecting the revenue and three, in case of drought or any other difficult situation the peasants should be helped immediately, on the basis of these principles, suspension and remissions resolutions were framed in 1905 for the guidance of the provincial Government. By it, it was fixed that the collection of the revenue could be postponed in case one-half of the produce was damaged and lost by the cultivators and if it was felt that the peasants were not in a position to pay the revenue due to some natural calamity, they could be exempted from its payment. It was suggested that, as far as possible, the district official should be given the right to decide cases of postponement or exemption immediately so as to give them mental relief. Besides, for the improvement of agriculture and livestock and encouragement of scientific methods of cultivation, Curzon established an Imperial Agriculture Department under an Inspector General. An Agriculture Research Institute was established at Pusa in Bengal for the same purpose.

Irrigation: Curzon appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff to suggest measures for bringing about improvement in the means of irrigation. The commission suggested a scheme involving an <https://assignbuster.com/so-gold-standard-it-benefited-the-indian-government/>

expenditure of rupees found and a half crore in the next twenty years.

Curzon accepted its recommendation and canals were first constructed in Punjab. It helped in increased agricultural there. Famine: When Curzon arrived in India, it was in a grip of terrible famine. Extensive territories in south, central and western India were affected by it. Curzon provided all possible relief to the affected people and spent nearly rupees seven crores. All able-bodied persons were given work on payment while donation was given to others.

The cultivators were exempted from the payment of revenue. Curzon himself supervised the relief measures. By 1960, it was over. But Curzon could not remain indifferent towards what had happened. He appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir Antony Mardonell to probe into the causes of the famine and various measures for the development of agriculture, means of irrigation, famine fund etc. It also suggested that the Government should take all available help from private Philanthropic associations and to give assurance of help to the affected people in the very beginning of the famine with a view to boost up their morale.

The Government accepted all the suggestions of the commission and kept them in view in implementing reform measures concerning agriculture, revenue, irrigation etc. Plague: In the beginning of the rule of Curzon a large part of southwest India was affected by plague. The epidemic took a toll of more than a lakh of lives. The Government took all possible measures to control it and for that took the help of the army. The Indians, however, resented certain actions of the Government particularly the entry of the soldiers in homes to search the patients was regarded as dishonour to their

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families. Bai Gangadhar Tilak, the national leader protested against these severe measures.

Two plague officers were murdered during that period. The Government took severe measures, against the revolutionaries and B. G. Tilak was imprisoned and deported to Mandalay. Attempts to Reduce the Power of Presidency

Governors: The presidency governors enjoyed little more powers as compared to the governors of other provinces and sometimes, took decisions without the approval of the Governor-General. Curzon believed in centralisation of administration. Therefore, he suggested to the Home Government to withdraw the special privileges of the presidency governors and bring them at par with other governors.

But the home Government rejected this proposal and the presidency governors continued to enjoy their privileges. Police The police department suffered from serious organisational defects. There were no arrangements for the training of the police constables and their officers.

There existed no criminal investigation department (C. I. D) at that time. The police constables and the officers were low paid as well. Curzon realised the desirability to bring about improvement in the police department particularly because the Indians and started agitating against the Government both by violent and nonviolent means.

He appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir Andrew Frazer to suggest measures for improving the police organisation. The commission suggested that junior police officials should not be promoted to high officials positions. The senior officials should be taken by direct recruitment. It <https://assignbuster.com/so-gold-standard-it-benefited-the-indian-government/>

suggested that training schools should be opened for the training of constables and officers; the strength of the police force should be increased in all provinces; the policemen should be allowed to visit the villages for making inquiries and their salaries should be increased. It also suggested that a Central Criminal Intelligence Department should be created at the centre.

Its subordinate department should be established in all provinces as well Curzon accepted all recommendations of the commission and implemented them in practice which resulted in an increase of expenditure on the police department from ? 2, 117, 000 in 1899 to ? 3, 212, 189 by 1908-09.

Railways: Curzon decided to improve railway facilities in India and also to make the Railway profitable to the Government. He appointed a railway commission under the Chairmanship of Mr. Robertson in 1901. The Commission submitted its report after two years. Its recommendations were accepted by Curzon. The Railway was increased, the Railways department was abolished and the management of the Railways was taken away from the hands of the public works department and handed over to Railway Board consisting of three members. The department of Railway was organised on commercial basis, profit being its primary motive.

Army: Russian activities in Central Asia and completion of Taskent Railway worried Indian Government. It became conscious of the defence of its north-western frontier. Curzon, therefore, felt necessary to bring in improvement in the organisation of the army. He established a separate corps, the Imperial cadet corps in which only members of the native royal families and highly placed Indians were recruited and given military training. In 1902, Lord <https://assignbuster.com/so-gold-standard-it-benefited-the-indian-government/>

Kitchner came to India as the Commander-in- Chief. He carried out the much needed reforms in the army. The Indian army was divided into two commands-the northern command with its headquarters at Muree and the southern command with its headquarters at Poona.

There were to be three brigades in every division of the army. Out of one of the English battalion. An Officers Training College was opened at Quetta on the model of Camberley College in England. The Military cantonments were kept near the Railway stations so as to facilitate the movements of the army and its supplies. Factories were established in India to produce guns, gun powder and rifles. The army was equipped with the latest weapons. The salaries of the soldiers and their officers were enhanced.

Besides, to increase the efficiency of the soldiers, every battalion was subjected to a severe test called ' The Kitchner Test.' These measures certainly increased the efficiency of the army. Judiciary: Curzon attempted to increase the efficiency of judiciary. The number of judges of the Calcutta High court was increased; the salaries of the judges of the High courts and subordinate courts were enhanced and the Indian Code of Civil Procedure was revised. Calcutta Corporation Act, 1899: Curzon was all for centralisation and officialization.

The Corporation of Calcutta became a victim of it. The Calcutta Corporation Act was passed in 1899. But the number of elected members in it was reduced and the number of nominated officials was increased. It defeated the purpose of local self-Government. Twenty- eight members of the corporation resigned in protest and it, therefore, became a Government

department-the English and the Anglo-Indians having the majority in it.

Ancient Monument Act, 1904: The Act was a useful measure of Curzon. He established an archaeological department under a director. It was assigned the responsibility of repair, the restoration and protection of the historical monuments.

Initially a sum of ₹ 50, 000 was sanctioned for this purpose. Curzon asked the native rulers to take similar measures in their respective states. He also urged the provincial Government to open museums for the safe preservation of rare objects. Education: The Indian Universities Act, 1904: In 1904, Lord Curzon passed the Universities Act in order to bring the Universities under the more strict control of the Government. This Act reorganised the constitution of the syndicate provided for the official inspection of the Colleges and placed the final decision concerning the affiliation or disaffiliation of colleges in the hands of the Government of India, steps were also taken to develop the Universities from examining to teaching bodies. The Universities should not remain merely examining bodies but they should also give an impetus to research work by appointing university professors and lectures.

The size of university Senates and syndicates was considerably reduced. New faculties were created. The Government was to nominate 80 per cent of the members in Senates. In all the provinces their respective Vernacular was to be the medium of instruction in the primary schools while English was to be the medium in the grades of higher education. Training Colleges were started in the various provinces for training the students as teachers. Lord

Curzon wanted to raise the standard of education in India. There was a good deal of controversy regarding the University Act of 1904.

On account of the nomination of 80 per cent of the members of the Senates, Lord Curzon had officialised the Indian universities and brought them under the control of the Government. This was not considered well for the healthy growth of education in the country. A conviction grew in the minds of the common people that the Government was restructuring the education to the higher sections of Indian society and specially the aspiring young men for higher education. This Act made Curzon very unpopular among the Indian masses. The Indian University Act 1904 was severely criticised by scholars like Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The Partition of Bengal, 1905: The partition of Bengal in 1905 was one measure which created deep discontentment among the Indians. The provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were divided into two parts.

The original province includes western Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the new province include Assam and eastern Bengal. Curzon pleaded that Bengal was too large a province and it was necessary to divide it to give it an efficient administration. The Indians resented it. They charged that the Government, desired to divide the Hindus and the Muslims and break up the spirit of Bengali nationalism, language and traditions of Bengal. The educated Indians protested against the partition.

The Swadeshi movement, viz. the use of Indian made goods and boycott of foreign articles began as a protest against it. Surendra Nath Banerjee, an eminent nationalist, toured India to gain sympathy and support for the

movement against the partition the event inspired the national movement and the idea of organised popular movement began with the movement against the partition of Bengal.

But Curzon carried out his scheme and refused to annul the partition or accept any other scheme, short of it. Therefore, this measure let loose the worst inimical feelings against him among the Indians; the doubts of the Indians were not completely unfounded. Curzon had expressed that his one motive in partitioning Bengal was to create a Muslim-Majority province, Sir Andrew Frazer had also declared that he had two wives-one Hindu and the other Muslim and the Muslim one certainly more dear to him. Therefore, when the partition was revoked in 1911, the Indians felt that a serious injustice was undone. Thus, Curzon carried out many measures during the period of his rule.

Certainly some of them were beneficial to the Indians but certain others provided large scale resentment in India. Besides, the primary motive of Curzon was not the welfare of Indians but the security of the British Empire and the Indians did not fail to understand it. Besides, the language which he used and the arrogance which he exhibited as a member of ruling class injured the sentiments of the Indian people. Therefore, Curzon remained among the most unpopular Governor-General of India.