

1774 – 1947 AD : GOVERNOR GENERALS OF INDIA

Warren Hastings (20 Oct 1774 - 1 Feb 1785)

- He was the first Governor Generals of India.
- He stripped off the powers of Bengal Nawab and the annual tribute paid to the Mughal Emperor was withdrawn.
- Hastings concluded treaties with various other Indian rulers and sought alliances against the powerful forces of Hyder Ali in the Carnatic.
- He was a patron of Indian learning and evinced a keen interest in Indian literature and philosophy.
- It was, for instance, with his encouragement that Charles Wilkins rendered the Bhagavad Gita into English.

Sir John Macpherson (1 Feb 1785 - 12 Sep 1786)

- He was the acting Governor Generals of India from 1785 to 1786 on Hastings's resignation.
- Macpherson's administration is characterised by inefficiencies, corruption and unrest in the army.

Lord Cornwallis (12 Sep 1786 - 28 Oct 1793)

- During his tenure he proved an able administrator and a reformer.
- He enacted numerous significant reforms within the East India Company and its territories, part of which implemented important land taxation reforms known as the Permanent Settlement.
- This taxation reforms altered the way the company collected taxes in its territories, by taxing landowners based on the value of their land and not necessarily the value of its produce.
- He had the legal frameworks of Muslim and Hindu law translated into English, and promulgated administrative regulations and a new civil and criminal code.
- This work, introduced in 1793, was known as the Cornwallis Code.
- From 1789 to 1792 he led British and Company forces in the Third Anglo-Mysore War to defeat the Mysorean ruler Tipu Sultan.
- He introduced legislation to protect native weavers who were sometimes forced into working at starvation wages by unscrupulous company employees, outlawed child slavery, and
- established in 1791 a Sanskrit college for Hindus that is now the Government Sanskrit College in Benares.

Sir John Shore (28 Oct 1793 - 18 Mar 1798)

- Sir John Shore always tried to avoid hostilities and some measures were taken toward off the wars.

- During his governorship, Tipu Sultan of Mysore was a much feared name for the British. The governor, however, maintained friendly terms with him but relations with the English deteriorated after 1795.
- He ordered the Company's troops to be prepared for war, and dispatched them to certain strategic points.

Sir Alured Clarke (18 Mar 1798 - 18 May 1798)

- He was the acting Governor Generals of India for two months.

Lord Mornington (18 May 1798 - 30 Jul 1805)

- After becoming Governor Generals he learned that an alliance was being negotiated between Tipu Sultan and the French republic.
- In his period campaign of invasion of Mysore was brought to a swift conclusion by the capture of Seringapatam on 4 May 1799 and the killing of Tipu Sultan.
- He founded Fort William College, a training centre intended for those who would be involved in governing India.

Lord Cornwallis (30 Jul 1805 - 5 Oct 1805)

- It was his second term as Governor Generals of India. He died in India not long after his arrival.

Sir George Barlow, Bt (10 Oct 1805 -31 Jul 1807)

- He was the acting Governor Generals of India after the death of Cornwallis in 1805.

Lord Minto (31 Jul 1807 - 4 Oct 1813)

- He was a Scottish politician diplomat and became the Governor Generals of India from 1807 to 1813.
- He expanded the British presence in the area to the Moluccas, Java, and other Dutch possessions in the East Indies during the Napoleonic Wars.

Earl of Moira (4 Oct 1813 - 9 Jan 1823)

- He took the additional surname 'Hastings' in 1790.
- He was overseeing the victory in the Gurkha War (1814-1816), the final conquest of the Marathas in 1818.
- In January 1817, Hastings led a force in the North; in the South, the Army of the Deccan, under the command of General Sir Thomas Hislop.
- The Peshwa was defeated by William Fullarton Elphinstone on the Poona.
- Appa Sahib, was defeated at the battle of Nagpur.
- Hislop defeated Holkar at the Battle of Mahidpur.
- His domestic policy in India was also largely successful, seeing the repair of the Mughul canal system in Delhi in 1820, as well as educational and administrative reforms.

- He was active diplomatically, protecting weaker Indian states.

Lord Amherst (1 Aug 1823 - 13 Mar 1828)

- The principal event of his government was the first Burmese war of 1824, resulting in the cession of Arakan and Tenasserim to the British Empire.

Lord William Bentinck (4 Jul 1828 - 20 Mar 1835)

- Bentinck engaged in an extensive range of cost-cutting measures, earning the lasting enmity of many military men whose wages were cut.
- He made English, rather than Persian, the language of the higher courts and encouraged western-style education for Indians in order to provide more educated Indians for service in the British bureaucracy.
- Bentinck also took steps to abolition of sati (practice), the death of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, and other Indian customs which the British viewed as barbaric.
- His reputation for ruthless financial efficiency and disregard for Indian culture led to the much-repeated story that he had once planned to demolish the Taj Mahal and sell off the marble.

Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bt (20 Mar 1835 - 4 Mar 1836)

- He was an acting Governor-General of India for one year.
- During his brief tenure of office he carried out several important measures, including that for the liberation of the press, which, while almost universally popular, complicated his relations with the directors at home to such an extent that he resigned the service of the Company in 1838.

Lord Auckland (4 Mar 1836 - 28 Feb 1842)

- He dedicated himself especially to the improvement of native schools and the expansion of the commercial industry of India.

Lord Ellenborough (28 Feb 1842 - Jun 1844)

- Ellenborough went to India in order to "restore peace to Asia" but the whole term of his office was occupied in war.

Sir Henry Hardinge (23 Jul 1844 - 12 Jan 1848)

- Hardinge concluded the campaign with the Treaty of Lahore with Maharajah Duleep Singh on 9 March 1846.

Lord Dalhousie (12 Jan 1848 - 28 Feb 1856)

- He was a far-sighted Governor-General who consolidated East India Company rule in India, laid the foundations of its later administration.

- He stands out as the destroyer of both the East India Company's financial and military position through reckless policies. He introduced the controversial policy Doctrine of Lapse in 1852.
- According to Hindu law, an individual or a ruler without natural heirs could adopt a person who would then have all the personal and political rights of a son.
- By the policy of Doctrine of Lapse Dalhousie asserted the paramount powers right of approving such adoptions and of acting at discretion in their absence in the case of dependent states.
- The rule replaced the long established right of an Indian king to choose his own successor.
- Also the British could undertake the sovereign if they decided that the Indian ruler was not enough competent.
- His critics also hold that he laid the foundations of the Sepoy Revolt 1857.
- In his time the Second Anglo-Sikh War was fought. He commanded the Second Burmese War in 1852, resulting in the capture of parts of Myanmar.
- His contribution in the development of communication -railways, roads, postal and telegraph services - contributed to the modernization and unity of India.
- He was great achievement for the creation of central, modernized states.
- Lord Dalhousie changes law, legalized re-marriage and abolished the disability for a transfer to Christianity to inherit paternal property.
- In his time the first passenger train service was introduced between Bombay and thane

Lord Canning (28 Feb 1856 - 21 March 1862)

- The most significant event during his administration was the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny, 1857.
- Lord Canning suppressed it and the Parliamentary Act of 1858 followed this great event.
- He restored law and order in an effective way and introduced a new system of administration.
- The recommendations of Charles Wood on education made in 1854 were given effect and the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were founded in 1857 .
- The British started tea and coffee plantations.
- The Indian Penal Code framed by Lord Metcalfe, was introduced in 1860 and the Criminal Procedure Code appeared in 1861.
- Archaeological Survey of India was established in 1861.
- After the Sepoy Mutiny the rule of the British East India Company was transferred to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria.
- The Governor-General remained head of the Government of India and now was more commonly called the Viceroy on account of his secondary role as the Crown's representative to the nominally sovereign princely states.

Lord Elgin (21 March 1862 - 20 Nov 1863)

- Lord Elgin became the Viceroy of India in 1862 but next year died of a heart attack while crossing a swinging rope and wood bridge over the river Chandra, on the lap between Kullu and Lahul.

Sir Robert Napier (21 Nov 1863-2 Dec 1863)

Sir William Denison (2 Dec 1863 - 12 Jan 1864)

Sir John Lawrence, Bt (12 Jan 1864 -12 Jan 1869)

- He served as Viceroy of India from 1864 to 1869.
- He increased educational opportunities for Indians.
- In his time Anglo-Bhutan Duar War took place. Imperial Forestry Service (now Indian Forest Service) was created in 1867 .

Lord Mayo (12 Jan 1869 - 8 Febr 1872)

- He promoted irrigation, railways, forests and other useful public works.
- The European-oriented Mayo College at Ajmer was founded by him for the education of young Indian chiefs.
- Department of Agriculture (now Ministry of Agriculture) was created in his time.

Lord Northbrook (3 May 1872 - 12 Apr 1876)

- He was appointed Viceroy of India but in Jan 1876 he resigned.

Lord Lytton (12 Apr 1876 - 8 Jun 1880)

- In his time a famine broke out in south India which claimed many people.
- His implementation of Britain's trading policy has been blamed for increasing the severity of the famine.
- In November 1878, Lytton ordered an invasion which sparked the Second Anglo-Afghan War.
- Queen Victoria (in absentia) proclaimed Empress of India at Delhi Durbar of 1877.

Lord Ripon (8 Jun 1880 - 13 Dec 1884)

- He held high post of Viceroy of India in 1880 and set his reform programme in motion immediately after he assumed power.
- He entered into a peace treaty with the new Afghan, Amir Abdur Rahman.
- He made remarkable contribution to the development of Local Government.
- In 1882, he abandoned the existing system of local government by the officially nominated people.
- He initiated the famous Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, though enacted after Ripon's departure.
- This Act was an enactment of the Bengal government defining the natural rights and liabilities of zamindars and tenants in response to widespread peasant discontent threatening the stability of the colonial system of governance.
- The permanent settlement gave absolute proprietary rights to landholders but was silent about the rights of tenants.

Lord Dufferin (13 Dec 1884 - 10 Dec 1888)

- In 1884, he was appointed as Viceroy of India. In 1885, Bengal Tenancy Act and Bengal Local Self-Government Act were passed.
- Third Anglo-Burmese War started in 1885. In his time Allahabad University was established.

Lord Lansdowne(10 Dec 1888 - 11 Oct 1894)

- Lord Elgin (11 Oct 1894- 6 Jan 1899) Elgin was made Viceroy of India in 1894 following in his father's footsteps.
- During his time as viceroy, famine broke out in India and many people died.

Lord Curzon(6 Jan 1899- 18 Nov 1905)

- He was appointed Viceroy of India in 1899.
- He paid equal attention for the balanced development of agriculture, industry and communication.
- India had 27000 miles of railway by the end of the 19th century. Curzon added 6000 miles, a phenomenal development in terms of growth rates.
- Lord Curzon, conceived and carried out the project of setting up a memorial to the Queen at Kolkata on the death of Queen Victoria in January 1901.
- The princes and people of India responded generously to his appeal for funds.
- Finally King George V, then the Prince of Wales, laid the foundation stone of Victoria Memorial on January 4, 1906 and it was formally opened to the public in 1921. He established the Department of Archaeology under the Director Generalship of Dr Marshal for the conservation of the Indian artistic heritage and the carrying out of new excavation.
- Curzon's glorious administrative record was largely marred by two controversial policies.
- One was the education policy illustrated by the Universities Act, 1904 and other one Partition of Bengal, 1905 .
- Under the Universities Act, government nominees were made predominant on the governing bodies of schools and colleges.
- Affiliations and grants-in-aid were subjected to many stringent conditions. By the Partion of Bengal, in the name of improving the efficiency of the traditionally neglected Bengal province, Curzon divided Bengla into two halves (a) West Bengal and (b) East Bengal and . The Congress branded it as a policy of Divide and Rule.

Lord Minto (18 Nov 1905 - 23 Nov 1910)

- During his tenure, Lord Minto had to face challenge from two sides, firstly, the Congress demanded popular participation in the government and secondly a new class of patriots, young and educated comes forward with the determination to fight the struggle of Indian independence.
- Minto passed the Indian Press Act of 1910 laying down heavy fines and penalty of Press for rebellious publications.

- According to the Act any kind of independent criticism of the Government was prohibited.
- Thus, Lord Minto had to face increasing unpopularity and finally, he resigned in November 1910.

Lord Hardinge (23 Nov 1910 - 4 Apr 1916)

- During his tenure Delhi was made the capital in place of Calcutta in 1911. Delhi Durbar was held in 1911 to greet the King of England, George V.
- The Gateway of India to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Bombay, prior to the Delhi Durbar, in December 1911.

Lord Chelmsford (4 Apr 1916 -2 Apr 1921)

- Under Lord Chelmsford's tenure, The Government of India Act of 1919, popularly known as Montague-Chelmsford reform was passed.
- It was passed to expand participation of Indians in the government of India. In 1919 the Rowlatt Act also called the black Bill, was passed.
- Rowlatt Act gave British imperial authorities power to deal with revolutionary activities. The Act led to indignation from Indian leaders and the public.
- In the Punjab the protest movement was very strong.
- A protest was held in Amritsar on 13 April 1919.
- On the same day it was the traditional festival of Baisakhi.
- Thousands of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh garden near the Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar.
- Most were unaware of the political meeting.
- Brigadier-General Reginald E.H. Dyer appeared at the head of a contingent of British troops.
- Giving no word of warning, he ordered 50 soldiers to fire into the gathering, and for 10 to 15 minutes 1,650 rounds of ammunition were unloaded into the screaming, terrified crowd, some of whom were trampled by those desperately trying to escape.
- As per official source of Government of India, estimated fatalities at 379, with 1,100 wounded however this figure is much higher as per Indian National Congress.
- This incident is known as the most infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre, also known as the Amritsar massacre in Indian History. In the year 1920, Mahatma Gandhi led the Non-Cooperation movement which was a significant phase of the Indian struggle for freedom from British rule.

Lord Reading (2 Apr 1921 - 3 Apr 1926)

- Lord Irwin (3 Apr 1926 - 18 Apr 1931) During Lord Irwin's reign, the Simon Commission visited India in 1928.
- Civil Disobedience movement was started in India by Gandhi.
- Gandhi -Irwin pact was signed on March 5, 1931.
- The First Round Table Conference was held in London. Indian National Congress boycotted it.

Lord Willingdon (18 Apr 1931 - 18 Apr 1936)

- Under Lord Willingdon, the second and third round table conferences were held at London.
- The Poona pact was signed between Dr. B R Ambedkar and M K Gandhi.
- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar participated in all three round table conferences.
- Royal Indian Air Force created in 1932.
- Indian Military Academy, Dehradun; the officer training Academy of the Indian Army was established in 1932.
- The Reserve Bank of India was established on 1 April 1935 in accordance with the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- The Government of India Act, 1935 was enforced.

Lord Linlithgow (18 Apr 1936 - 1 Oct 1943)

- Under him elections were held for the first time in 11 Indian states in 1939.
- Congress ministers were formed in eight out of 11 provisions but subsequently resigned because India was being dragged into the Second World War.

Lord Wavell (1 Oct 1943 - 21 Feb 1947)

- Under him the cabinet Mission came to India from London.
- The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was held on 9th December 1946.

Lord Mountbatten (21 Feb 1947 - 21 Jun 1948)

- He was the last British Governor General and Viceroy of India.
- Under him an act for Indian independence was passed by British Parliament.
- India attained independence on 15 August 1947.
- Mountbatten remained in New Delhi for another ten months, serving as India's first governor general until June 1948.

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (21 Jun 1948 - 26 Jan 1950)

- Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was the last Governor-General of India and the only Indian national ever to hold the office..
- He also served as leader of the Indian National Congress, Premier of the Madras Presidency, Governor of West Bengal, Minister for Home Affairs of the Indian Union and Chief Minister of Madras state.
- He founded the Swatantra Party and was one of the first recipients of India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna. On 26 January 1950, India became a republic and a new constitution came into effect under which India was established as a secular and a democra