**Administration of Lord Curzon (1899-1905)**

Lord Curzon was one of the most important viceroys that were sent from England to rule India. He was a seasoned politician and before coming to India he had been an active parliamentarian and had been a minister twice. He was hardly forty when he was appointed as the viceroy of India. He was a very energetic, capable and brilliant man and proved by far the most successful and the ablest viceroy. Before becoming the Viceroy, he had been to India three or four times and had also visited Ceylon, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkistan, China, Japan and Korea. In this way, his understanding of the Asian affairs was better than that of any other British statesman of the time. He fully understood the Indian problems and solved them most successfully. By his all-round reforms, administrative measures and careful foreign policy, he tried to strengthen the British Empire in India.

**Administration and Reforms of Lord Curzon**- Lord Curzon fully deserves the credit of introducing various reforms in almost all the departments of the government. Some of his reforms were good and were introduced for the betterment of the country, but mostly they were guided by imperialistic designs. Lord Curzon, like Lord Dalhousie, was an imperialist to the core of his heart and so he tried to bring the Indians more and more under the British domination rather than affording them any opportunities in self-rule. Such a policy was naturally resented by the Indians and made the viceroy very unpopular. Some of the chief reforms introduced by Lord Curzon were the following:

(1) *Famine and Plague Relief.* When Lord Curzon came to India, a severe famine had adversely affected various parts of India including those of the Rajputana, Baroda, C.P., Hyderabad and Gujarat, and the accursed plague, cholera and malarial fever were further adding to the miseries of the people. Lord Curzon organised the relief work on a large scale and spent over six crores of rupees in helping the affected people. A Famine Commission was appointed and on the submission of its report in 1901 various recommendations made by it were acted upon. Extension of railways and irrigation works were undertaken and various government cesses were remitted to the affected people.

(2) *Financial Reforms.* (i) The salt tax was reduced to one-half. (ii) All other agencies except the Government were forbidden from minting the coins. (iii) The British Sovereign (or Pound) was made a legal tender in India at the value of fifteen Rupees. (iv) The limit of the taxable income was raised from 500 to 1000 rupees a month.

(3) *Police Reforms.* During the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon a commission was appointed to give its report on the working of the police department. On the recommendations of this commission various reforms were introduced in the police department. (1) The salary of a constable was raised to give him an honest living. (ii) Training schools for the new recruits were established. (iii) The C.I.D. department was established in every province. (i) An increase in the Provincial Police was made for the effective checking of the crime. (v) The system of investigating the offences on the spot was introduced.

(4) *Educational Reforms.* As mentioned above Lord Curzon was an imperialist viceroy and was not in favour of giving any power to the Indians. To his mind the Indian universities and colleges had become the places of propaganda against British Imperialism, so he wanted to bring them ander strict control. It was with this purpose in mind that the Universities Act was passed in 1904 by which several restrictions were imposed on the universities. (1) Official element was increased in the management of the universities so that the University Senates and Syndicates became the official organs of government. (ii) The affiliation of colleges was made somewhat more difficult and the system of inspecting the colleges was introduced. (ii) Formerly the universities were merely examining bodies, but now they were also entrusted with the task of teaching the students. (iv) More emphasis was laid on the teaching of various sciences.

(5) *Ancient Monuments Preservation Act.* For the preservation of ancient monuments Lord Curzon passed the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act in 1904. Any injury to the protected monuments was declared as an offence punishable by law. In addition to this, the Archaeological Department was also established which has done a commendable work in collecting historical documents of great importance and in excavating various sites of ancient times and bringing to light important historical information. This was really a great achievement of Lord Curzon.

(6) *Agricultural Reforms.* For the welfare of the rural people Lord Curzon introduced various useful reforms: () In 1900, the Punjab Land Alienation Act was passed by which it was laid down that no non-agriculturist could buy lands from the agriculturists, neither could he attach their lands in case of non-payment of his debts, nor keep their lands in mortgage for more than twenty years. (if) As a result of the above act the money-lenders refused to advance loans to the agriculturists, so Lord Curzon had to open various. Agricultural Banks from where the cultivators could get loans on easy terms. Similarly, various Co-operative Societies of the agriculturists were established in different parts of the country. (iii) Lord Curzon tried to help agriculture in many other ways. For instance, an Agricultural Research Institute was established at Pusa in Bengal to carry on research work in agriculture and to improve its condition. (iv) To increase the production of agriculture, various irrigation projects were taken in hand and canals were dug in large numbers.

(7) *Reforms in Commerce and Industry.* For the promotion of Commerce and Industry in India new department of Commerce and Industry was established by Lord Curzon. As a result of the efforts made by this department numerous factories began to open in India at a rapid speed and new railway lines of about six thousand miles were constructed.

(8) *Military Reforms.* Lord Curzon had a great reforming zeal and no branch of administration could escape his eyes. Several reforms were introduced into the army too. All the native regiments were re-armed and better guns were supplied to them. In 1901 the Imperial Cadet Corps was founded to impart military training to the young men of princely and noble families.

(9) *Partition of Bengal, 1905.* Possibly the chief measures which made Lord Curzon very popular was the partition of Bengal. Bengal in those days was a very big province with a population of about eight crores and an area of about two lakhs (189.000) square miles. It was thus impossible for one Lieutenant Governor to administer it efficiently. So in 1905 Lord Curzon split it up into two parts. A new province of East and Assam was created out of it with Dacca as its capital. But the Bengalis could not tolerate the cutting of their land, language and culture into two pieces. They started an agitation against this partition and under the leadership of Shri Surendra Nath Banerjee this Movement became so vigorous that ultimately the British Government had to revoke the partition of Bengal and in 1911 Bengal was once again reunited.