

Charter Act 1833

[UPSC Notes]

The Charter Act of 1833, which renewed the East India Company's charter for another 20 years was passed in the British Parliament. It came from the backdrop of the changes that had taken place in Great Britain because of the Industrial Revolution. The Charter Act of 1833 was passed to renew the Charter Act, 1813 of the East India Company. The concept of Laissez-Faire was accepted as the government's attitude toward the industrial enterprise. The Company's monopoly over the trade except for tea and trade with China was ended due to Laissez-Faire and the continental system adopted by Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Charter Act of 1833 ended the activities of the East India Company as a commercial body; it was just merely an administrative body. The Act provided that the company's territories in India would be held by the government 'in trust for His Majesty, His heirs, and successors. The Charter Act of 1833 is also called the Government of India Act 1833 or the Saint Helena Act 1833.

Through this article on the Charter Act of 1833 UPSC Notes, students can prepare the topic in a comprehensive manner for the upcoming IAS Exam.

What is the Charter Act of 1833?

The Charter Act of 1833 was an updated version of the Charter Act of 1813. This Charter was of great significance because it was an indication of British supremacy over entire India. This can be witnessed by the fact that this charter promoted the designation of the governor-general of Bengal to the Governor-General of India

Saint Helena Act 1833, better known as The Charter Act 1833 was issued to India by Britain. The reason why this act is called Saint Helena Act 1833 is that Saint Helena had an island, which was taken away on the enactment of this act.

Go through the main aspects of the Charter Act 1833 for an easy understanding of the topic.

Charter Act 1833 UPSC [Modern History of India Notes for UPSC]	
Introduced by	The British Parliament
Purpose of Charter Act of 1833	It ended the activities of the East India Company as a commercial body.

	The Act provided that the company's territories in India to be held under the Crown.
Also Known as	Government of India Act 1833 or the Saint Helena Act 1833.
Charter Act of 1833 Governor-General	Lord William Bentinck
Importance of the Charter Act 1833	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legalized the British colonization of India. • Governor-General of Bengal was made the Governor-General of India. • Introduction of a system of open competition for the selection of civil servants. • Indian Law Commission was established.
Territories Affected	Territories under British possession in India

Charter Act 1833 UPSC

The Charter Act 1833 is an important topic in Modern Indian History and should be covered through the Indian History Notes for UPSC. Over the years, several questions have been asked from the Charter Act 1833 in both UPSC Prelims and UPSC Mains GS Paper- 1. To cover this topic, a candidate needs to be well versed with the UPSC Syllabus, along with readings of the NCERT Books for UPSC and the UPSC Books.

The importance of the Charter Act 1833 must be understood in a detailed manner along with the comparison between several other charters acts, such as Charter Act 1813, Charter Act 1853, Morley-Minto Reforms, and the Regulating Act of 1773.

Charter Act 1833: Provision and Features

- The Charter Act 1833 ended the activities of the East India Company as a commercial body. The EIC was just an administrative body. It provided that the company's territories in India were held by the government 'in trust for His Majesty, His heirs, and successors.
- It legalized the British colonization of India and permitted the English to settle freely in India.
- It made the Governor-General of Bengal the Governor-General of India and vested in him all civil and military powers. The Governors of Bombay and Madras lost their legislative powers.
 - Lord William Bentinck the first Governor-General of India.
- The Governor-General had legislative powers over entire British India. Even the matters related to civil and military affairs of the company were controlled by the Governor-General in council.
- The Governor-General's council had four members. The fourth member had limited powers only. The Pitt's India Act 1784 had initially decreased it.

- The Governor-General in council had the authority to amend, repeal or alter any law pertaining to all people and places in British Indian territories whether British, foreign or Indian native.
- The Governor-General's Government was called the Government of India and the council was called India Council.
- The laws made under the previous Charter Acts were called Regulations while laws made under Charter Act 1833 were called Acts.
- The Charter Act 1833 introduced the system of open competition for the selection of civil servants from India. The Act stated that the Indians should not be debarred from holding any place, office or employment under the Company.
 - The Act recommended that the Hailey Bury College of London should make a quota to admit the future civil servants.
- The Indian Law Commission was established to codify all Indian laws, with Lord Macaulay as its first chairman.
- The Charter Act 1833 aided down the regulation of the establishment of Christian establishments in India and the number of Bishops was sealed at 3. It also sought to regulate the establishment of Christian institutions in India.
- The act also provided for the mitigation of slavery in India. Slavery was abolished by British Parliament in Britain and all its possessions in 1833.

Charter Act 1833: Defects and Drawbacks

- All the powers were snatched from the Governor-General of Madras and Bombay and given to the Governor-General of Bengal. This act created an over-burdening of workload on him.
- This burden of over-centralization was often refraining the government in council that they couldn't take time for resolving the public matters.
- The government in the council was solely accountable for the entire British India territory, hence most of the time, they could not manage the requirements of the local governments as there were no representatives from their sides.
- This mismanagement led to the gap between the presidencies, and they started becoming callous concerning the laws made by the supreme council.
- The supreme leader - the Governor-General of Bengal wasn't able to exercise effective administration over the distant territories due to a lack of leaders.
- However, this act of vesting all the powers to one hand increased the chances of autocracy.

Charter Act 1833 Questions asked in UPSC Exam

Some of the sample UPSC Prelims Questions on Charter Act 1833 can be:

Question- Which among the following helped in the passing of the Charter Act of 1833?

- A) Gray, Buckingham, Mill
- B) Buckingham, Mill, Macaulay
- C) Mill, Macaulay, Grey
- D) Grey, Macaulay, Buckingham

Answer: Option C

Question- Who was empowered to legislate for the whole of civil, military and revenue services by the Act of 1833?

- A) The Governor-General of India
- B) The Governor-General of India in consultation with the provincial Governors
- C) The Governor-General-in-Council
- D) The Governor-General of India in consultation with the Secretary of State for India

Answer: Option C

Question- Which one of the following provisions was NOT made in the Charter Act of 1833?

- (a) The trading activities of the East India Company were to be abolished
- (b) The designation of the supreme authority was to be changed to the Governor-General of India in the Council
- (c) All law-making powers to be conferred on Governor-General in Council
- (d) An Indian was to be appointed as a Law Member in the Governor-General's Council

Answer: Option D

