

Morley-Minto Reforms

[UPSC Notes]

What is Morley-Minto Reforms?

Go through the major highlights of Morley-Minto Reforms for the upcoming exam.

Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909 UPSC	
Morley Minto Reforms Date	12 March, 1909
Introduced by	The British Parliament
Objective of Morley-Minto Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduced communal representation and separate electorate in Indian politics.• The size of the legislative councils was increased.• For the first time, the association of Indians with the executive councils of the Viceroy and Governors.
Morley-Minto Reforms Governor-General	The Earl of Minto
Morley-Minto Reforms amended	the Indian Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892 were amended.
Importance of Morley-Minto Reforms	Responsible association of elected Indians with the administration. Indians got an opportunity to criticize the executives and make suggestions for the better administration of the country.
Territories Affected	Territories under British possession in India

Morley-Minto Reforms UPSC

The Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909 is an important topic in Modern Indian History. Over the years, several questions are asked about this topic in both UPSC Prelims and UPSC Mains GS Paper- 1. To cover the Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909, one needs to go through the Indian History Notes for UPSC, along with readings of the NCERT Books for UPSC and the UPSC Books. The Indian Councils Act 1909 is also covered in the Polity section of the UPSC Syllabus.

The importance of the Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909 must be understood in a detailed manner along with a comparison between several other acts. Also, read Charter Act 1813 UPSC Notes for comparison.

Morley-Minto Reforms Background

The British authorities were hesitant to accept Indians as equal partners even after Queen Victoria's proclamation that Indians would be treated equally. There was a huge revolt in Bengal after the division of Bengal which was carried out by Lord Curzon in 1905.

- The Indian National Congress's (INC) reasonable intentions were not met by the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and were agitating for more reforms and self-governance of Indians.
- In 1906, the INC, for the first, time demanded home rule.
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale met Morley in England to emphasize the need for reforms.
- A group of Muslim elites, led by the Agha Khan, met Lord Minto and demanded separate electorates for the Muslims. It was called the Shimla Deputation. The same group quickly took over the Muslim League, initially floated by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca along with Nawabs Mohsin-ul- Mulk and Waqar-ul-Mulk.

Features of Morley-Minto Reforms

- The size of the legislative councils, both Central and provincial was increased in size. The size was increased from 16 to 60 members.
- The number of members in the provincial legislative councils was not uniform. The official majority in the Central Legislative Council was maintained but the provincial legislative councils were allowed to have the non-official majority.
 - Ex officio members: Governor-General and members of the executive council.
 - Nominated official members: Government officials who were nominated by the Governor-General.
 - Nominated non-official members: nominated by the Governor-General but were not government officials.
 - Elected members: elected by different categories of Indians.
- The India Council Act 1909 enlarged the deliberative functions of the legislative councils at both the Central and Legislative levels.
- The elected members of the Central Legislative Council were to be indirectly elected. The local bodies were to elect an electoral college, which in turn would elect members of provincial legislatures, who in turn would elect members of the central legislature.
- The India Council Act, 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) provided for the first time the association of Indians with the executive councils of the Viceroy and Governors. Two Indians were nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs.
- Satyendra Prasad Sinha became the first Indian to join the Viceroy's Executive Council.
- It also provided for the separate representation of chambers of commerce, presidency corporations, universities, and zamindars.
- The Morley-Minto Reforms also introduced a system of communal representation for Muslims by accepting the concept of a 'separate electorate'. Under this, the Muslim members were to be elected only by Muslim voters.
 - Lord Minto came to be known as the Father of Communal Electorate.

Conclusion of Morley-Minto Reforms

- The Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909 introduced communal representation in Indian politics. The Government aimed at rallying the Moderates and the Muslims against the growing wave of nationalism.
- The Act did nothing to grant colonial self-government. Lord Morley made it clear that it was not suitable for India, and he was against the introduction of a parliamentary or responsible government in India.
- The position of the Governor-General remained unchanged and his veto power remained undiluted.
- The Morley-Minto Reforms or the Indian Councils Act 1909 effectively allowed the election of Indians to the various legislative councils in India for the first time.

