

**THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT  
(1919)****The important features of the Act were:**

1. The Council of the Secretary of State was to have eight to twelve members, including three Indians, and at least half of them should have spent a minimum of 10 years in India.
2. The Secretary of State was supposed to follow the advice of his council.
3. A portion of the expenditure of the office of the Secretary of State was to be met by the British Government.
4. The Secretary of State was not allowed to intervene in administrative issues of the provinces in the matters of 'Transferred Subjects' and also in the matters on which the Governor-General and his Legislative Council agreed.
5. The Governor-General was empowered to nominate as many members to his Executive Council as he wished.
6. Members appointed to the Executive Council were to have served in India for minimum of 10 years.
7. The Central Legislature was to be composed of two houses – the Council of the State (Upper House) and the Legislative Assembly (Lower House).
8. The Council of the State was to be composed of 60 members, of which 33 would be elected and 27 nominated by the Governor-General.
9. The Legislative Assembly was to be composed of 144 members, of which 103 would be elected and 41 nominated by the Governor-General.
10. There was to be restricted franchise.
11. The term of the Upper House was to be 5 years and of the Lower House 3 years.
12. Both the houses enjoyed equal legislative powers. If there was a tie, the Governor-General was supposed to summon a joint meeting to decide the matter by majority vote.
13. The Executive Council was not responsible to the Legislature and the Governor-General could reject its advice.
14. Provincial legislatures were to be unicameral.
15. Seventy per cent members of the Provincial Legislative Councils were to be elected and the remaining 30 per cent were to be nominated.
16. The Governors were to be handed over an 'Instrument of Instructions' which was supposed to help them in executing their administrative functions.
17. The system of diarchy was set up in the provinces.
18. Apart from the Muslims, other minorities (Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, Christians and Europeans) were also accorded the right of separate electorates.
19. New reforms were to be introduced after 10 years.

**Reaction to the Act of 1919**

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were not accepted by most quarters in India as they fell far short of the Indian expectations. It introduced the principle of a dual mode of administration, or diarchy, in which both the elected Indian legislators and the appointed British officials shared power. Dyarchy set in motion certain real changes of the provincial level; a number of non-controversial or 'transferred' portfolios, such as agriculture, local government, health, education and public works, were handed over to the Indians, while more sensitive matters such as finance, taxation and maintaining law and order, were retained by the provincial British administrators.

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi****(1869 – 1948)**

M. K. Gandhi returned to India in 1914 and led three major crusades for the Indian independence from the British rule. The first was the Satyagraha campaign of peaceful non-cooperation urging the Indians to fast, close businesses and the boycott British goods in protest against the Rowlatt Bill of 1919 (a plan to imprison people suspected of trouble-making). By 1920, Gandhi was dominating Indian politics, thousands were jailed for supporting the Satyagraha, and in 1922, Gandhi was jailed for 6 years. In 1933, he launched his second major campaign to defy the law that forbade Indians to make their own salt. His journeys to the coast led thousands to follow him and his subsequent imprisonment. Finally, in 1942 he endorsed the 'Quit India' campaign, formally calling for the Indian Independence. Once again he was jailed, but negotiations led to the Mountbatten Plan of 1947, which formed India and Pakistan. He never wanted the partition of the country; he suggested that Jinnah should be invited to form the Government. To Gandhi's dismay, the country was split and the subsequent riots led to his assassination in January 1948. Nelson Mandela cites Gandhi as a dominant influence in his own struggle and described him as --- no ordinary leader. There are those who believe he was divinely inspired, and it is difficult not to believe with them.

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