# IPC Section 15: “Servant of Government”.

Section 15 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) does \*not\* define "Servant of Government." Section 14 defines "Servant of Government," as previously explained. Section 15 defines \*\*"British Government."\*\*  
  
  
## IPC Section 15: "British Government" - A Detailed Explanation (and its historical context)  
  
Section 15 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) defines the term "British Government." While seemingly obsolete in modern India, understanding this section requires delving into its historical context and acknowledging its relevance during the British colonial era. The original wording of the section states:  
  
"The words “British Government” denote the British Crown and Parliament, and all the territories for the time being vested in Her Majesty by law."  
  
\*\*1. Historical Context:\*\* The IPC was drafted during British rule in India. At that time, the "British Government" held ultimate authority over the Indian territories. Section 15 served to clarify the entity wielding this authority within the context of the Code.  
  
\*\*2. "British Crown and Parliament":\*\* This phrase refers to the sovereign authority of the British monarchy and the legislative body of the United Kingdom. It highlights the dual nature of British governance, encompassing both the symbolic head of state and the elected representatives.  
  
\*\*3. "All the territories for the time being vested in Her Majesty by law":\*\* This phrase clarifies that the "British Government" encompassed all territories under British control at any given time. This dynamic aspect of the definition accommodated the changing boundaries of the British Empire.  
  
\*\*4. Relevance During British Rule:\*\* Section 15 was relevant during British rule because several offences within the IPC related to actions against the colonial government, such as sedition, waging war, and offences against the state. This definition clarified the entity targeted by these offences.  
  
\*\*5. Post-Independence Relevance:\*\* After India gained independence in 1947, the term "British Government" lost its practical relevance within the IPC. The Indian government, through the Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950, adapted existing laws to suit the independent nation. While Section 15 was not explicitly repealed, its practical application ceased.  
  
\*\*6. Interpretative Challenges:\*\* The continued presence of Section 15, despite its lack of practical relevance, can create interpretative challenges. While it has no direct application in modern India, its presence necessitates acknowledging the historical context of the IPC and understanding the changes brought about by independence.  
  
\*\*7. Historical Significance:\*\* Section 15 serves as a historical marker, reflecting the legal framework of British colonial rule. It demonstrates the extent of British authority and its integration into the Indian legal system.  
  
\*\*8. Legal Legacy:\*\* While Section 15 is no longer practically applied, it remains a part of the IPC's text. This highlights the complexities of legal legacy and the challenges of completely purging colonial-era language and concepts from existing legal frameworks.  
  
\*\*9. Adapting to Independence:\*\* The Adaptation of Laws Order, 1950, addressed the transition from British rule by adapting existing laws to suit the independent nation. This process involved replacing references to the "British Government" with appropriate Indian authorities and institutions.  
  
\*\*10. Future Considerations:\*\* While there may be arguments for formally repealing obsolete sections like Section 15 to streamline the IPC and remove vestiges of colonial rule, its continued presence serves as a reminder of the evolution of Indian law and the historical context within which the IPC was drafted.  
  
  
  
In conclusion, while Section 15 of the IPC is now effectively obsolete, understanding its historical context and significance is crucial for a complete understanding of the Code's evolution. Its presence serves as a reminder of the legal legacy of British colonial rule and the complexities of adapting legal frameworks to suit the needs of an independent nation. While its practical application has ceased, its historical significance remains.