

Legislations in British India

The legislations in British India included legislative bodies in the presidencies and provinces of British India. These legislations were created under Acts of Parliament of the United Kingdom.

They were responsible for passing many laws that to this day are used in Independent India. This article will provide a list of acts passed by the British in India.

This topic is important for both the prelims and mains stage of the UPSC exam. To know more about the UPSC syllabus this 2020, visit the linked article.

List of acts passed by British in India

1. Hindu Personal Law, 1772
2. Regulating Act of 1773
3. Pitt's India Act of 1784
4. Charter Act of 1793
5. Charter Act of 1813
6. Bengal Regulation Act, 1818
7. Bengal Sati Regulation Act, 1829
8. Thuggee and Dacoit Suppressions Acts, 1836
9. Indian Slavery Act, 1843
10. Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850
11. Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act, 1856
12. Government of India Act, 1858
13. Societies Registration Act, 1860
14. Indian Penal Code, 1860
15. Frontiers Crime Regulation Act, 1860
16. Female Infanticide Prevention Act, 1870
17. Criminal Tribes Act, 1871
18. Christian Personal Law, 1872
19. Indian Contract Act, 1872
20. East India Stock Dividend Redemption Act, 1873
21. Dramatic Performances Act, 1876
22. Murderous Outrage Regulation, 1877
23. Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878
24. Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881
25. Transfer of Property Act, 1882
26. Ilbert Bill, 1883
27. Indian Telegraph Act, 1885

28. Age of Consent Act, 1891
29. Indian Councils Act, 1892
30. Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900
31. Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904
32. Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1907
33. Indian Councils Act, 1909 / Morley-Minto Reforms
34. Indian Press Act, 1910
35. Government of India Act, 1912
36. Ingress into India ordinance, 1914
37. Government of India Act, 1915
38. Defence of India Act, 1915
39. Rowlatt Act, 1919
40. Government of India Act, 1919
41. Official Secrets Act, 1923
42. Bengal Criminal Law Amendment, 1924
43. Indian Forest Act, 1927
44. Hindu Inheritance (Removal of Disabilities) Act, 1928
45. Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
46. Indian Sale of Goods Act, 1930
47. Jain Law, 1930
48. Indian Partnership Act, 1932
49. Government of India Act, 1935/ Simon Commission Report
50. The Foreigners Act 1946
51. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947
52. Sindh Land Alienation Bill, 1947
53. Indian Independence Act, 1947

About the Legislations of British India

It is one thing being familiar with the legislative acts passed during the British colonial rule but candidates must also know why some of these acts were passed. The display of extra knowledge will increase the chances of scoring higher marks in the exam.

The purposes of some of these acts are highlighted below:

Legislation in British India		
Name of Legislation	Purpose of Legislation	Date of Enactment
Regulating Act of 1773	To overhaul management of East India Company's rule in India	June 10th, 1773

Pitt's India Act of 1784	This act was passed to address the shortcomings of the Regulating Act of 1773. It provided for the joint rule of the crown and company with the crown being the supreme authority.	August 13th, 1784
Charter Act of 1813	It renewed the charter issued to East India Company by the British Crown but also ended the company's monopoly in certain areas of trade.	July 21st, 1813
Bengal Sati Regulation Act of 1829	This act made the practice of Sati illegal in all areas under company rule and its practitioners liable to prosecution	December 4th, 1829
Hindu Widows Remarriage Act of 1856	This act legalised the remarriage of widows, who were earlier forbidden from marrying and shunned from society as a result.	July 26th, 1856
Government of India Act of 1858	Following the 1857 mutiny, the British Parliament passed this act to liquidate the East India Company. The colonial rule of India came directly under the control of the British Government. This act marks the beginning of the British Raj.	August 2nd, 1858
Indian Councils Act of 1892	This act brought various amendments to the composition and function of legislative councils of British India	February 3rd, 1893 (Royal Assent on June 20th, 1892)
Government of India Act of 1919	This act expanded the participation of Indians in the government of India when earlier only British members were allowed to take part.	December 23rd, 1919

Rowlatt Act, 1919	This act indefinitely extended the emergency measures of preventive indefinite detention, incarceration without trial and judicial review enacted in the Defence of India Act 1915	March 21st, 1919
Government of India Act of 1935	The act allowed for a greater degree of autonomy to the provinces of British India ending the diarchy introduced by the Government of India Act, 1919	April 1st, 1937 (Royal assent on 24th July 1935)
Industrial Disputes Act, 1947	This act regulates the Indian Labour Law with regards to trade unions as well as individual workmen	April 1st, 1947
Indian Independence Act, 1947	It is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that partitioned British India into the two new independent dominions of India and Pakistan.	August 15, 1947 (Royal assent - July 18th, 1947)