**Subject: History (General) Paper: History of India ( 1857-1947) 6th semester**

**Unit –II Topic: Lord Ripon and his administrative reforms**

**Submitted by – Orchid Baruah (Sarma)**

Lord Ripon was one of the most liberal Governor Generals of British India. He succeeded Governor General Lord Lytton in 1880.Prior to that Ripon served India as an Under-Secretary and Secretary of State for India .So Ripon had good knowledge about India and its people. Ripon had strong belief in peace, laissez faire and self-government.

Just after becoming the governor general of India the main task before Ripon was to eliminate the feeling of hatred prevailing among the Indian masses. With that end in view Ripon abolished some of the unpopular acts introduced by Lord Lytton. He also took various measures for the welfare of Indian people.

**Local self-government:** Lord Ripon has been described as the *Father of Local self-government in India* for the contribution which he made for the development of Local self-government in India.Lord Ripon had opinion that the people of India could administer their affairs themselves independently. In order to execute his thoughts Lord Ripon passed a famous resolution on Local self-government in 1882. According to this resolution, orders were issued for the formation of Local Boards in every district and they were given responsibility. The work of the local bodies was kept free. There was no interference in the activities of the local bodies.

**Factory Act:** To improve the conditions of the labour in Indian factories and also to regulate their activities, Lord Ripon for the first time in Indian history passed the Factory Act in 1881 which prohibited the employment of children under the age of 7. This act also fixed the time limit of working hours for the children below 12 years of age. To unsure the implementation of the provisions of the act Ripon appointed Inspectors. This Factory Act of Lord Ripon was a landmark in the industrial history of India because through this act the British government for the first time tried to improve the working conditions of labour in the factory.

**Repeal of Vernacular Press Act:** Lord Lytton imposed various restrictions on press which had evoked strong protests and Indian people protested against it as an unnecessary interference in the freedom of press. To eliminate this discontentment Lord Ripon repealed the Vernacular Press Act in 1882 and allowed equal freedom to the Vernacular Press.

**Economic Reforms**: In 1882 Lord Ripon introduced the system of dividing the revenue into three categories \_Imperial , divided and provincial .Under the imperial head the income was reserved for the Central Government .The divided head included income from excise, stamps, forests, registration etc.

The Provincial head included income from jails, roads, printing, etc. Another important economic policy Lord Ripon followed was the policy of free trade .He reduced duty on salt.

**Educational Reforms:** For reorganizing the education system of India Ripon appointed an education commission under Sir William Hunter .The commission suggested several measures for the improvement of education system of India

Firstly it suggested that the work of Primary Education should be handed over to the Municipal District Boards under the supervision of the government. Secondly, it recommended that government should withdraw its control over the education system as much as possible. Thirdly, the commission put a lot of emphasis for encouraging education among the Muslims.

Most of the recommendations made by Hunter Commission were accepted by the government.

Ripon also tried to bring some changes in the Civil service examination. Though his effort to hold the civil service exam in India failed yet he could increase the upper age limit of the candidates from 18 to 21 years.

**Ilbert Bill Controversy**: But the most important achievement of Lord Ripon was the Ilbert Bill through which Ripon tried to bring equality between the Indians and the Europeans. Under the existing law the Indian magistrates were not allowed to try the Europeans .As Ripon tried to abolish this system he appointed Sir C.P.Ilbert ( Law member of Viceroy’s council ) who authorised the Indian judges to try the cases of Europeans .However the Bill was strongly opposed by the Europeans and ultimately Ripon was compelled to withdraw the Bill. In this way Ripon adopted various measures for the welfare of the Indian people.

**Subject: History (General) Paper –History of India (1857-1947)**

**6th Semester**

**Unit –II Topic – Lord Curzon and his reforms**

Submitted by –Orchid Baruah (Sarma)

In 1899 Lord Curzon was appointed as the Viceroy of British India. Before assuming the office of Viceroy, Curzon tried his best to understand the problems of India. He even visited India many times. Therefore when he assumed the office he knew more about India and its people. Curzon had no faith on the efficiency of the Indian people. He believed that only the British had the ability to rule over India .Just after assuming the power Curzon had to face various problems. He tried his best to solve these problems for which he adopted various measures. Among all his deeds the partition of Bengal was the most controversial step which led to the famous Swadeshi Movement. Some of the important measures Curzon adopted to make the administration more effective –

**Agricultural Reforms:** Curzon could realise that Indian economy completely depended on agriculture so he introduced a number of reforms for the improvement of agriculture .First of all he established a new agricultural department under the supervision of an officer known as Inspector General. The main aim of this department was to encourage the scientific method in the field of agriculture. He then established an agricultural Research Institute at Pusha in Bihar. Curzon also took measures for the safety of peasants’ land for which he passed an act known as Punjab Land Alienation Act. For the improvement of agriculture Curzon provided better irrigation system especially in Punjab. For the construction of canals different schemes had been adopted during his time. But the most important measure he took was the Land Resolution in 1902 which permitted reduction in revenue collection in case of the failure of crops.

**Financial Reforms:**  Lord Curzon brought about many changes in the financial system of the British India. During his time the Indian Coinage and Paper currency Act was passed through which the price of pound was fixed as equivalent to fifteen rupees. He reduced the taxes during the time of the famine. He also reduced the sale tax by about 50%.

**Police Reforms:**  To improve the efficiency of the police department Curzon appointed a Commission which suggested for the direct recruitment to higher police post. It also suggested for increasing the salary of the police officers to get their best. Apart from that the Commission advised to establish a Criminal Investigation Department in every province. All these recommendations of the Frazer Commission were accepted and Curzon took immediate necessary steps to reform the police department.

**Reforms in Local Bodies:** Lord Curzon had no faith in local bodies, instead he favoured the centralised administration .Actually Curzon always doubted the abilities of the Indian people. He did not want to appoint the Indians in the higher post of the government .With that end in view he passed the Calcutta Corporation Act through which he reduced the number of the members of the Corporation from 75 to 50 .All these 25 members were the elected members .While the rest were the nominated members .As a result of this the number of the British members increased.

**Reform in Railways:** For the development of railway system Curzon appointed a Railway Commission. According to the advice of the commission Curzon brought about many changes in the railways. For the expansion of Indian railways Curzon opened a number of new railway lines and also repaired the old lines,

**Educational Reform:** Lord Curzon made significant changes in the field of education system of India. As he was not happy with the existing education system of India he appointed a Universities Commission to find out solutions. On the recommendation of the Commission Curzon passed the Universities Act of 1904 through which he established government control over the universities. According to the terms of this Act the number of the members of Syndicate and Senate of the Universities were reduced. However Curzon took special measures for female and technical education. Another important work of Lord Curzon was the establishment of Archaeological Department in 1904 for the preservation and exploration of the historical monuments.

Apart from these Curzon carried out various changes in the Military and Judiciary system of British India. For giving the military training he started the Imperial Cadet Corps. He then increased the salary of the High Court Judges.

**Partition of Bengal:** But the most controversial measure Curzon took in the field of internal administration was the partition of Bengal. On the pretext of administrative convenience Curzon divided Bengal (1905) into two provinces \_Eastern Bengal and Assam, dominated by the Muslims and Western Bengal dominated by the Hindus Although Curzon told that he had done this for the administrative efficiency yet his main motive was to create difference between the Hindus and the Muslims .The people of India specially the people of Bengal could not accept this partition silently. They strongly urged the government to repeal the partition of Bengal which was rejected by Curzon. Under such circumstances the feeling of Swadeshi emerged. Gradually this feeling of Swadeshi spread in different parts of India .The nationalist leaders urged the people to boycott the foreign goods. They told the people to use their own products. Thus the agitation continued .Even the people of India left the schools and colleges established by the British .Thus the word Swadeshi assumed a new meaning—attachment to everything Indian which ultimately compelled the British government to cancel the partition in 1911.The partition of Bengal led the growth of Extremism under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak popularly known as Lal, Bal, Pal.

Thus Curzon tried his best to strengthen the roots of the British in India