

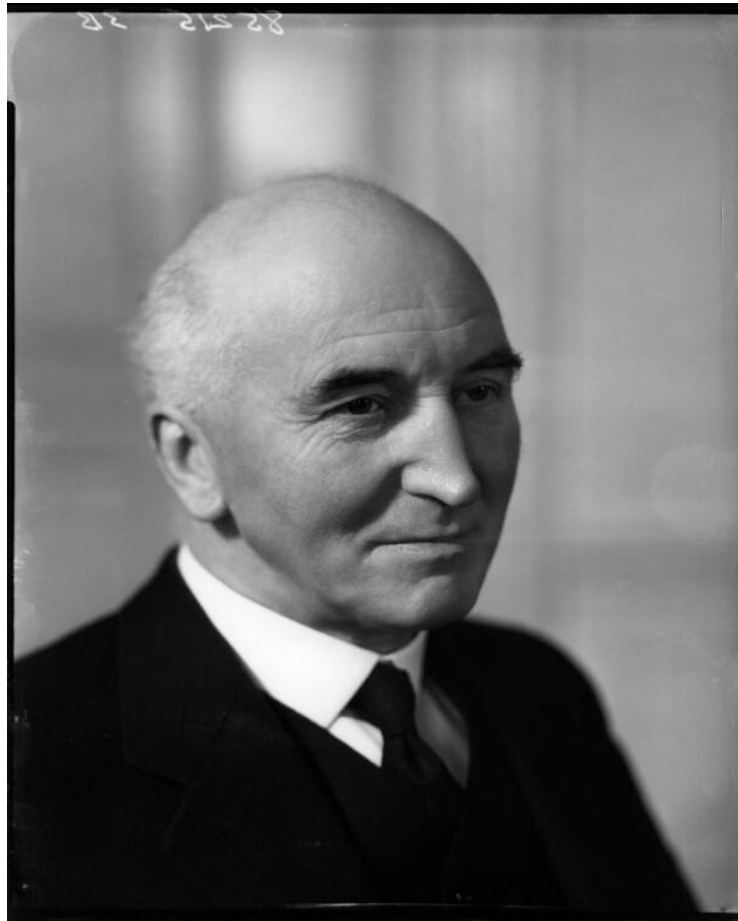
Simon Commission

UPSC Exams are conducted to recruit efficient administrators and civil servants in the country. It is considered one of the toughest exams in India which are taken by candidates willing to serve the nation. Modern History is one of the major topics covered in these exams. One of the quintessential concepts in History is the Simon Commission which can help you answer most of the history questions for UPSC & SSC Exams. Through this blog, we are going to list NCERT notes and important points related to the Simon Commission.

About Simon Commission

The Indian Statutory Commission, also known as Simon Commission, was a group of 7 Members of Parliament under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon (later, 1st Viscount Simon). The commission arrived in British India in 1928 to study constitutional reform in Britain's largest and most important possession. After its Chairman's name Sir John Simon, Simon Commission was named.

It was under the leadership of Sir John Simon, an English-based group was visiting India. These Simon Commission delegates created ripple effects on the ground, strong reactions were witnessed from noted politicians like Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi, Jinnah, the Muslim League, and Indian National Congress. They were not taken into confidence while formulating the report.



John Simon

Courtesy: National Portrait Gallery

Key Highlights of the Simon Commission (Background)

Now that you have a clear understanding of the Simon Commission, let's take a look at the main highlights which are basically its expansion:

- It was under the Government of India act 1919, Diarchy was introduced. The Diarchy was made to appoint a working commission after 10 years who could review the overall progress and work from the measures the act prescribed.
- There were strong reactions against the Diarchy-based government. Political leaders and Indian masses were up in the arms against the reform.
- Indian leaders were kept out while making this reform. It was seen as sheer injustice and a sort of insult.
- It was Lord Birkenhead, who was responsible for formulating the Simon Commission.

- Clement Atlee who was one of the core members was the key person as British Prime Minister at the time of India's participation in 1947. There was no Indian control, all the important power was in the hands of the British. India took this commission as a core insult and blot on the Indian masses.
- Simon Commission took place when the Indian National movement was at a standstill and directionless. They boycotted the commission in the year 1927 in Madras. Jinnah's Muslim league followed the suit.
- Certain factions and the Justice party of the South supported the commission.
- Finally in the year 1928, amid mass demonstrations and uproar, Simon Commission landed in India. People resorted to slogans "Go Simon Go" and "Go Back Simon"
- In Lahore-now in Pakistan, Lala Lajpat Rai took a strong protest against the commission. He was not spared even, he was brutally beaten.

Boycotting Simon Commission with 'Simon Go Back'



- The omission of Indians from the Commission infuriated Indians.
- In Madras in 1927, the Congress Party chose to boycott the Commission.
- It was also boycotted by the Muslim League, which was led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. A group of members led by Muhammad Shafi backed the administration.
- The famous slogan Simon Go Back was first said by 'Lala Lajpat Rai'. Several protests took place when they entered India in February 1928. Lala Lajpat Rai moved a resolution against the Commission in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab that month.
- Gandhiji was not in support of the Commission as he believed that someone outside India could not judge the condition of India.
- The Congress Party and Muslim League boycotted the Commission. However, The Justice Party in the South supported the Government.
- People in protests were chanting the slogan 'Simon Go Back'. In October 1928, when the Commission arrived in Lahore (now in Pakistan), a protest led by Lala Lajpat Rai waved black flags against the Commission.
- The local police began to beat the protestors and one of the white police officers brutally hit Lala Lajpat Rai on his chest with a Lathi. He was critically injured and soon died.
- Dr. B R Ambedkar presented a report on the education of the oppressed sections in the Bombay Presidency on behalf of the Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha.

Simon Commission Recommendations

The main recommendations of this commission were;

- The Diarchy system of administration in the provinces is to be abolished and in place of it, representative governments will be established.
- It recommended the separate electorates remain until communal violence and tension die down.
- In order to maintain communal hatred, rift, and internet security, Governor was given discretionary powers.
- It was recommended that the number of members of the Legislative council should be increased.
- The reforms equally suggested that the Commission were incorporated into the Government of India Act 1935.
- In order to have complete control over the high court, the Government of India should have complete control.
- In the year 1937, the first provincial-based elections were held which has seen a wave of Congress making inroads in every province.

Impacts and Objectives of the Simon Commission

Now that you have understood the general information, let's move a step closer to its impacts and objectives:

- Its main impact was directionless of Indian National Congress.
- Its main objective was to widen the communal feelings in order to break the country's social fabric.
- It wanted to delay the process of providing the powers of governance to Indians.
- They were trying to propagate and endorse the regional movement which could automatically wipe off the national movements in the country

Result of Simon Commission

Other than the many recommendations, they soon realized that the educated sector of India was not accepting of the changes completely so they suggested a few changes for the betterment of Indians as well.

The Commission resulted in the Government of India Act 1935, which called a "responsible" government at the provincial level in India but not at the national level—that is a government responsible to the Indian community rather than London. In 1937, the first provincial elections were held that made Congress Governments in several provinces.

The commission finally published its two-volume report in May 1930. Here are some of the crucial features of this report:

- It proposed the abolition of dyarchy
- Establishment of representative government in the provinces
- A recommendation for separate communal electorates only until the tension between Hindus and Muslims died down

Ahead of this, Motilal Nehru shared his Nehru Report to counter its charges that Indians could not find a constitutional consensus among themselves. Understanding that educated India was rejecting the commission and communal hatred only increased, they decided to keep the Indian opinion into account.

Important Questions on Simon Commission

Simon Commission is an important part of history and courses. Here are some of the important questions and answers you should know about it:

1. Why was Simon Commission rejected in India?

The Simon Commission was boycotted because Indians were excluded from the commission and had no representation in the assemblage. It was supposed to give an account of how the Indian Constitution was working and no Indian was involved in the process.

2. What was Simon Commission?

The Simon Commission was a group of seven parliamentarians who had to conduct an extensive study on constitutional reforms in order to make recommendations to the then ruling government.

3. When did Simon Commission come to India?

The Indian Statutory Commission, known colloquially as the Simon Commission after its chairman Sir John Allsebrook Simon, was dispatched to India in 1928 (February – March, and October 1928 – April 1929) to investigate prospective constitutional reforms.

4. Who were the members of the Simon Commission?

The members of the Simon Commission were:

- Sir John Simon, MP for Spen Valley
- Clement Attlee, MP for Limehouse
- Harry Levy-Lawson, 1st Viscount Burnham
- Edward Cadogan, MP for Finchley
- Vernon Hartshorn, MP for Ogmore
- George Lane-Fox, MP for Barkston Ash
- Donald Howard, 3rd Baron Strathcona, and Mount Royal

5. Who headed the Simon Commission?

Simon Commission was headed by Sir John Simon, MP for Spen Valley. Hence, the name was Simon Commission

6. What was the main problem of the Simon Commission?

The Simon Panel was unable to establish a constitution in India because there were no Indian citizens on the commission. The primary issue with the Simon Commission was that there was no Indian presence on the board.

7. Who said Simon go back?



Yusuf Meherally, the mayor of Bombay and a lesser-known hero of India's freedom fight, said both the "Quit India" and "Simon Go Back" chants for the first time.