

The Local Governments in British India: An Assessment

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ABSTRACT

The British parliament passed the Government of India Act 1858 through which the Indian empire of the British East India Company was transferred from the Company to the Crown. Along with many other changes that this Act brought about in India, a process of indigenization of institutions and Indianization of services was started to make the governance process inclusive. This indigenization process included establishing a local government system and granting autonomy to it. Moreover, these institutions were handed over to the Indians who were elected to their offices and remained in them for a prescribed period of time. Furthermore, the eligibility and franchise were restricted either to property holding, education and/or the payment of taxes. The British Indian government achieved two-fold objectives through this policy innovation: on the one hand, this ensured inclusiveness of public policy to make governance effective and efficacious while on the other hand, this inclusiveness built trust among people and encouraged them to pay more taxes to make the empire

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stronger. In modern parlance, this process was the initiation of democratization in British India the results of which were yielded to the successor states after the withdrawal of British rule in 1947. Its beneficial effects and support to democracy can well be assessed by drawing a comparison with any successor state getting independence from German or French colonial rule where this process did not take place. The present study is aimed at exploring the British policy of local self-government and the class/classes that it designed to serve as well as to highlight the principles on which these local bodies were erected.

Introduction

The rule of East India Company, which had won England a world Empire, ended in 1858 in India. The British East India Company became bankrupt in the 1830s and it had to take loans and administrative help from the British parliament. In spite of its financial and administrative difficulties, the Company continued its policy of annexation of territories thus increasingly expanding its empire. After the mutiny of 1857, the British Parliament took over the control of India, and the Government of India Act 1858 was passed. Although the British continued the process of westernization and modernization, they introduced modifications in state policy, based on a reliance on “natural leaders”, meaning the traditional ruling class. This class was brought to help govern by protecting their existing power position and/or by granting new privileges.¹ This policy opened new avenues of power for local elites at the central, provincial, district, and local levels. They were accommodated in the existing state structure, and sometimes new reforms were introduced or institutions were created to cater to their mounted aspiration for power or due to gradual liberalization and Indianisation of state structures.² The British wanted to seek permanence in

1 Rudolf Albertini and Albert Wirz, *European Colonial Rule, 1880-1940: The Impact of the West on India, Southeast Asia, and Africa*, trans., John G. Williamson (England: Clio Press, 1982), 11.

2 Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (London: University of California Press, 1979), 284.

India through institutional development instead of physical continuity.³

Although, the British Indian administration was colonial in nature and autocratic in approach and remained highly centralized until 1919-1920, yet the process of decentralization of less important functions was introduced. The involvement of Indians at the lower rungs of the administrative hierarchy was also necessitated due to smaller numbers of the British human resource governing empire. The Indians were introduced to the lower ranks of bureaucracy as well as to the representative institutional structures through which they could take part in administration. It initiated an incremental advance towards representative and autonomous institutions at provincial as well as districts levels.⁴

Civil society cannot exist in a meaningful manner in an autocratic state where any opposition to the state is taken as an unpardonable treasonous act. In the history of subcontinent, the existence of civil society, in the modern sense of the term, was first witnessed during the British period. It was introduced along with the rule of law, the institution of private property, and the creation of autonomous institutions within the state structure. Society, at large, was also allowed to develop civil institutions on its own. One example of the development of civil society institutions was the lawyers. Their theoretical knowledge along with their understanding of the operational aspects of law in society and state allowed them “a position uniquely suited to lead opposition to the state.”⁵ Moreover, “lawyers have the distinction of being forced to come into continuous contact with the state apparatus without, however, being a part of it,” and this position allowed their capacity to confront

3 Ilhan Niaz, *The State During the British Raj: Imperial Governance in South Asia 1700-1947* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2019), 221.

4 Wirz, *European Colonial Rule*, 14-15.

5 Ilhan Niaz, *An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent* (Islamabad: Alhamra Publishers, 2006), 213.

the state as the most effective civil society opposition.⁶ Since the lawyers are frontline of civil society so “it is not mere coincidence that of the subcontinent’s political leaders and freedom fighters, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Motilal Nehru, and Mohandas Gandhi, every third or fourth name one comes across has a law background”.⁷ This participation of Indians “set in motion an autocatalytic process that generated pressure for more Indian involvement in running of the British Indian state”.⁸ Consequently, it was the same Indians who had been co-opted by the British Indian state that spearheaded national movement for the Indian liberation.

The Indian Act of 1861 expanded the scope of legislative and executive councils and allowed the sitting of public to see their deliberations. The Governor General could refuse to give assent to any bill passed but could not overrule the legislative and executive councils. The Governor General was also answerable to the home authorities for his actions and omissions. For example, Lord Canning had to argue for and try to defend his prerogative against an interfering Secretary of State. Moreover, Dadabhai Naoroji’s organization called as the East India Association directly appealed to London for a policy of recruiting Indians to the covenanted services, and “in 1870, the rules were relaxed to allow the appointment of Indians to higher offices without going through the competitive examinations.”⁹ In addition to it, by 1867, Indians already held about half of the thirteen thousand public sector jobs that paid more than nine hundred rupees a year.¹⁰ In 1881, a complaint published in *Calcutta Review* was that the recruitment policy for the police service had allowed lower caste bet jobs as against

6 Niaz, *An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent*, 213.

7 Niaz, *An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent*, 213.

8 Niaz, *The State During the British Raj*, 221.

9 Niaz, *An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent*, 214.

10 Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: The Penguin Press, 2003), 189. See also, Claude Markovitz, ed., *A History of Modern India 1480-1950* (London: Anthem Press, 2002). 347-386.

that of the higher castes, thus, abusing the colonial authority of victimizing high castes.¹¹

Another giant step taken by the British administration was the introduction of district advisory committees comprising the prominent residents to the district magistrates in 1870. To assure them of funds, Lord Mayo introduced reforms that required the provinces to pay a certain portion of their revenue to the local governments. It was envisaged that the locals would raise finances through local taxation and would take care of local roads and primary education. The result was that by 1882 all areas of the British India had local governments comprising district committees having officials and private persons as members. Since, it was becoming difficult for these district committees to look after enormous areas falling under the jurisdiction of districts, Governor General Lord Ripon introduced sub-district committees with elected chairmen to assist district administration.¹²

During the late 19th Century, in the British administrative structure, the actual administrative units were the 240 districts organized on the pattern and borders of the Mughal *Sarkars*. The districts varied in population and area but were all very large and were constituted of hundreds of villages. The districts, in turn, were divided into sub-districts and *tehsils*. The key figure in the British administration was the district officer, an “all-purpose local agent” of the government. His major duties were collecting taxes, the responsibility for law and order, and the maintenance of roads, schools and hospitals. The British generally limited themselves to collecting taxes like the Mughals. They did not interfere much with the village life and did not attempt to force modernization or westernization, as was evident in urban centers.¹³ The district officer might see himself as the

11 Anandswarup Gupta, *The Police in British India: 1861-1947* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company 1979), 96-97.

12 Niaz, *An Inquiry into the Culture of Power of the Subcontinent*, 215.

13 H. H. Dodwell, ed., *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. 6, *The Indian Empire: 1858-1918* (Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1958), 101.

mai baap [Urdu: mother and father] of his district and make personal efforts to keep in contact with people and work for their uplift and betterment. Thus, in many ways and among nearly all the government departments in a district, the deputy commissioner was a sort of linchpin in overall coordination and revenue collection. Therefore, in the British administrative system the centrality of the office of deputy commissioner was so much embedded that this office retained its importance in the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan after the withdrawal of British Empire.

Municipalities in British Indian Presidencies

The municipalities, developed in the presidency towns, provided an important pattern for metropolitan corporations in India. The British introduced a local government system with limited autonomy in the presidencies of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The history of these corporations in India can be traced as far back as 1687 when the company formed a corporation consisting of the European and Indian members for the purpose of local taxation.¹⁴ For example, the Madras Corporation had a mayor, 12 aldermen, and 60 burgesses. The Charter of 1726 introduced a Mayor's Court at the headquarters of each of these Presidencies.¹⁵ However, Mayor's Court was more judicial than administrative in nature. Later, the local body institutions were introduced in subsequent reforms at a different pace according to local requirements and increased their scope beyond presidencies according to the model applied there but with local variations. Since the presidency towns were the earliest where the British East India Company had devised and established its administrative structure, these towns served as models for further revision and implementation of effective instruments of control and governance in India beyond the areas of presidency towns.

14 B. B. Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947): General Administration* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1970), 565.

15 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 565.

In 1861, James Wilson, the finance member, due to post-mutiny financial crisis suggested the decentralization, to relieve the central government from the responsibility of providing funds for the local requirement in the vast state of India. He suggested that "it is of the first importance to break through the habit of keeping everything in dependence on Calcutta, and to teach people not to look to government for things which they can do for better themselves."¹⁶ Local expenditures and needs must be met by local taxation. Lord Mayo's decentralization scheme was based on this principle, which was introduced in the Government of India Resolution of 1870.¹⁷ The conception of local taxation and expenditure was a hallmark of the Anglo-Saxon traditions, it was introduced in India along with the New World dominions of settlement.

Lord Dufferin in the Government of India Resolution 1882 had established the elective principle in local self-government. He introduced in more precise terms the duties and powers of municipal authorities, including the mode of their election in the cities of Bombay and Calcutta to elaborate the rules governing conservancy, sanitation and public health, and to extend the application of municipal funds to such new services as education, hospitals, control of epidemics, fire-brigades, public libraries, museums and art galleries, botanical and zoological collections. As the share of local government responsibilities increased, it resulted in an increase in more financial resources at their disposal, other than through local taxation or funds and grants provided by the provincial governments. Their authority and autonomy were increased by the availability of more financial resources at their disposal to perform different civic responsibilities.¹⁸ As mentioned above, the principle of local government autonomy was implemented and responsibilities

16 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 596.

17 J. Royal Roseberry, *Imperial Rule in Punjab: The Conquest and Administration of Multan, 1818-1881* (Islamabad: Vanguard, 1988), 205.

18 Dodwell, ed., *The Cambridge History of India*, 273.

were devolved into many departments including libraries, museums and art galleries.

The 1882 reforms in local government had also enlarged the elective proportion, that the majority of city and district councillors be elected by Indians who were not civil servants. London refused a proposal of an increase in elected members as opposed to appointed ones. Lord Ripon's reforms faced opposition from the administrative organ as well.¹⁹ An Act of 1884 was introduced for Madras Council, the elective principle was further enlarged by electing 24 out of 32 members. It also established a standing committee, elected by the members at their first meeting. It consisted of five members including a President, a Vice-President, and two ordinary commissioners.²⁰ Significantly, the elective and representative principles were both applied to ensure autonomy.

The city of Bombay Municipal Act 1888, changed the designation of the municipal commissioner and replaced it with 'councillors' i.e. 72 in number, 36 were elected members through ward elections, 16 by justices and two each from fellows of Bombay University, and chamber of commerce and remaining 16 were appointed by the local government. The term was increased from two to three years and with an elected president.²¹ Thus, with an elected President of the corporation, a Chief Executive Officer, and a Standing Committee to act as the watchdog of municipal finance; the city of Bombay enjoyed a degree of local self-government that did not exist either in Madras or Calcutta.²²

The turn of the 20th Century witnessed a radical transition in the political structures of British India. The urbanized educated middle classes equipped with western political ideas were frustrated due to the prevailing political,

19 Wirz, *European Colonial Rule*, 72.

20 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 580.

21 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 580.

22 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 583.

economic, and social conditions in India. With the growth of political consciousness and revivalist nationalism, the ideas of self-government received popular approval during the years of First World War. The promised enlarged share in power by the British in post-war years had initiated the revolution of rising expectation and new radical leadership with mass support emerged. According to B. B. Misra:

The turn of the century however witnessed the rise of forces that tended to weaken centralism. The spread of education, the emergence of the lower middle classes in society, the rise of educated employment and revivalist nationalism, and, above all, the growth of political consciousness resulting from the Great War (1914-18)—all these dictated the urgency of a political approach to administrative problems. The appointment of the Royal Commission on Decentralization was the first of a series of attempts made to justify the Indian demand for administrative decentralization.²³

The British adequately responded to this revolution of rising expectations and aspirations for power by introducing the system of diarchy and administrative decentralization.²⁴ Local self-government naturally became a transferred subject in 1919 reforms. Sir Surendranath Banerje, a veteran leader of the National Congress, became the first Bengal Minister for Local Self Government and introduced the Calcutta Municipal Act according to which franchise qualification was halved, the franchise was enlarged and even women were admitted as voters. In accordance with the example of England, “the Act designated the Chairman of the Corporation as Mayor and its members as Councillors. Four-fifths of the Councillors were elected. They, in turn, were to elect both the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer newly created under the Act.”²⁵ Another important leader C. R. Das was elected Mayor and radical leader Subhash Chandra Boss was the Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta which had a fourth-fifth of the councillors elected.²⁶

23 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 586.

24 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 586.

25 Misra, *The Administrative History of India (1834-1947)*, 586.

26 Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, 587-588.

Evidently, even radical elements of the political landscape of India were not denied representation in local government institutions.

The government control was limited, and the councils were run along rigid party lines due to the elected political chief executive, and enlarged autonomy granted to local government. The government approval was only required for appointments of four superior posts and for expenditure exceeding Rs. two and a half lakhs, and for raising loans. The most important feature of the act was the adoption of communal representation after an intense debate in 1923.²⁷ The communal representation was becoming a reality and it further fanned communal consciousness in the body politic of India.

The Madras Corporation also followed and entire executive responsibility was invested in the hands of elected president through which the local government exercised direct control, except the appointment of three superior officers namely, revenue officer, the health officer and chief engineer. The president was responsible to the popularly elected council according to the Act of 1919 while the chief executive officer was still appointed by the government as a separate officer.²⁸ In 1933, the designation of the president was replaced with the mayor in line with most civic bodies in England.²⁹ As mentioned earlier, some of the British characteristics were applied in India and some of the Indian contours were applied to the British system such as the concept of mass education which was first implemented in India and then replicated in Britain.

In the process of financial decentralization and political improvement of the local elite and educated middle classes, modern municipalities were developed initially at presidencies and, later on, in other parts of the British

27 Roseberry, *Imperial Rule in Punjab*, 203.

28 Roseberry, *Imperial Rule in Punjab*, 203.

29 Roseberry, *Imperial Rule in Punjab*, 203.

Empire, but with regional variations, and local political exigencies and compulsions. The local governments were encouraged to meet local needs through local taxation, and additional taxes were imposed if civic bodies provided additional facilities like the lighting of streets, water supply, vaccination, medical relief, the registration of statistics, and sanitary inspections.³⁰

Municipalities in British India outside the Presidencies

The introduction of local bodies relieved the central government from administrative functions at the local level but maintained a supervisory role. Secondly, the taxation system was replaced from voluntary to compulsory taxation, and the local government played an effective role in tax collection with less repression due to local solutions. The local population was willing to contribute due to immediate advantages and facilities they received. It also increased the efficiency of local administration but also the provincial and central administration due to the shared workload at different layers of the administration. This local autonomy was also used as an instrument of political and popular education because it provided channels for the exercise of authority for the local elite and educated class with the public interest and also avoided a confrontation between rigid bureaucracy and the rising Indian middle class.³¹

Where it had divergent and opposite interests, it was also a check on the absolute supremacy of district officers. Lord Ripon said 'India is governed by a bureaucracy, which, though I sincerely believe it to be the best bureaucracy that the world has ever seen, has still the faults and the dangers which belong to every institution of that kind, among those faults is conspicuously a jealousy of allowing non-officials to interfere in any way whatever with any portion, however restricted, of the administration of the country.'³²

30 Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj*, 289.

31 Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj*, 290.

32 Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, 603.

British patronized the local bodies as popular, strong, autonomous, and broad-based as a parallel institution to state bureaucracy, but in fact, it was the subservient and auxiliary organ of the state, which exercised little authority with greater responsibility. 'Ripon was in fact providing an organized popular counterpoise to bureaucracy, which he considered necessary for the political stability of Government. It was a liberal middle-of-the-road policy designed to afford an opportunity to both officials and non-officials to appreciate each other's point of view.'³³

The elective principle was increased at a great length. In 1885, there were 712 municipalities from which 546 were nominated and 166 were partially or wholly elected. While in 1889, the number was increased to 727, but the elective principle wholly or partially introduced was in 472, while the nominated were 242 in British India.³⁴ It was a quantum leap towards local self-government with the representative element. However, regional and local compulsions hindered the progress of the concept of local self-government, especially it remains in the state of backwardness in Punjab, it was introduced in North-Western provinces and Oudh with certain official checks but it was successful in Central provinces.³⁵

These local institutions effectively responded and catered to the aspirations of the local emerging political elite and provided controlled and positive channels to nourish their political aspirations and urge them to exercise power. It also accommodated the westernized educated classes with political agendas without affecting and challenging the authority of the central government. So, the autonomous local governments were not only a relief to the people but also administrative and financial relief to the central

33 Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London: Abacus, 1997), 645.

34 James, *Raj*, 645.

35 *Imperial Gazetteer of India (Provincial Series): Punjab*, vol. 1 and 2 (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1998), 101.

government as well. It served the local political aspiration of Indians and the British imperial interests as well. The local government enjoyed a limited and controlled status under the effective and efficient supervision of the British Imperial bureaucracy.

The history of municipalities in British India outside presidency towns can be divided into four distinct phases: the first phase was of voluntary associations and it continued till the 1850s; the second phase (1851-81) included the introduction element of compulsion with emphasis on administrative efficiency and the extension of municipal services; the third phase (1881-1919) introduced an element of development in which efficiency was to be subordinate to the political exigencies; the fourth phase (1919-47) can be termed as a period of democratization of the local government institutions.³⁶

In the pre-British period, *kotwal* was an office that combined the duties of the superintendent of police and that of the chief municipal officer. In accordance with *Ain-i-Akbari*, a *kotwal* had to divide the town into wards so that each may be placed under the supervision of a subordinate officer to give incessant information regarding foreigners coming in and going out. The peace of town used to be maintained with the help of local inhabitants. For the purpose of sanitation, a number of people called *halal-khors* were recruited who would supply information regarding every household. While writing about the roles of *Kotwal* and *halal-khors* in Mughal administration, an Italian traveller wrote that "he [the *kotwal*] obtains information about all that goes on, so as to be able to send in his report. For this purpose, there are throughout the Mughal Empire certain persons such as Alaecor [*halal-khor*], a word which means men who live on what is well-earned. These men are under obligation to go twice a day to clean out every house, and they tell the *kotwal* all that goes

36 B. B. Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, 591.

on.”³⁷ His other duties included ensuring sanitation, allotting quarters to butchers and sweepers, locating burial and cremation areas, restraining the public use of wine, examining weights and measures, and price control.³⁸ The East India Company initially carried the same system of Mughal pattern and *kotwal* was appointed in major towns like Murshidabad, Dacca, and Patna where a certain number of *barkandazis* (armed guards), *chowkidars* (watchmen), and *doomes* (scavengers) were appointed.³⁹ This was not an exception because the British continued many of the offices and responsibilities of Mughal India into the colonial India.

The second phase (1851-81) started with the Dalhousie era (1848-56) in India. Whereas the introduction of railways and telegraph revolutionized the communication system, the power-driven big industry changed the production systems. The new conditions necessitated new laws and solutions to many problems. Improved sanitary conditions and provision of civic amenities were demanded. In fact, new populated industrial towns had started to emerge which required a new type of legislation. Moreover, in the post-War of Independence period, the financial burden on the empire necessitated “the development of local institutions as the best means to relieve the finances of the Government of India.”⁴⁰ James Wilson, the finance member, suggested decentralization as an answer to the problem. He suggested that roads and public works should be transferred to the local government.

The third phase started with the evolution and development of Lord Ripon’s policy because he introduced a new era in the history of local government in India. Broadly, he contributed to two aspects of local institutions. Firstly, a

37 H. S. Jarrett, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II (Calcutta: 1873), 41. See also, John Keay, *India: A History from the Earliest Civilizations to the Boom of the Twenty-First Century* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2010), 289-320.

38 Parmatma Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals, 1526-1658* (Allahabad: 1941), 353.

39 Saran, *Provincial Government of the Mughals, 1526-1658*, 353.

40 Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, 596.

uniform and vast system of decentralization of finance structure was introduced. It included the transfer of provincial to local financial heads and some additional taxation taxable by municipal committees. Secondly, he introduced a political element in his local self-government policy and subordinated administrative considerations under the political ones. In his government's famous resolution of May 18, 1882, he clearly pointed out that "It is not, primarily, with a view to improvement in the administration that this measure is put forward and supported. It is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education."⁴¹ By the words of popular and political he meant the grooming and education of popularly elected members of local and municipal boards as well as the electorates. For the management of local affairs, such training was acutely needed. Ripon wanted this principle to be accepted as a policy initiative and the elective system should be used as an instrument of political education.

In peculiar circumstances of Indian society, when the elective principle was introduced in the local government bodies, it fanned communalism and served to aggravate communal differences. This manifested itself, especially in Punjab where Muslims were in majority yet Hindus dominated local bodies due to their predominance by virtue of superiority in western education, the legal profession, and trade. For example, in 1891, the Lahore Municipality placed Muslims, Hindus and other communities on separate electoral rolls to vote for separate members. On the same lines, Amritsar introduced fully separate communal electorates. Therefore, it can be said that the growth and development of communalism owe its origin in the local government institutions because the elective principle was first introduced there.

41 Ripon to Kimberley May 21, 1883, in Ripon to Northbrook of same date, I.O. Mss.Eur.c. 144/3, 166. Quoted in Misra, *The Administrative History of India*, 602.

The fourth phase was introduced in the shape of the principle of diarchy and related other developments. It included rapid democratization of local and municipal bodies, eradication of disqualification against women candidates, reservation of seats for scheduled backward castes, and reservation of seats for labour and elected presidents and vice presidents. The expansion of elective principles in Punjab province provided an interesting example of the way this expansion gave rise to communalism. The Punjab Municipalities Act of 1911 authorized the provincial government the introduction of elective principles through executive orders and allowed any municipality to elect its chairman. However, it was the Punjab Amending Act of 1920 that included liberal reforms by fixing the number of elected members to a minimum of three-fourths and permitting municipalities to elect their own non-official chairmen. This was done through the efforts of two prominent leaders Fazl-i-Husain and Lala Harkishan Lal. Although both of them were Congress members yet they differed from Gandhi in their approach to politics. They believed in constitutional developments, modern education and local self-government. Fazl-i-Hussain distributed municipal representation to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in accordance with their population and voting strength. His work was in line with the democratic principles yet the consequent increase of Muslim members from 44 to 49 percent ignited the feelings of Hindus and Sikh members who moved united against the Government in 1923. However, the move was defeated by a combination of Muslim and official votes. Nonetheless, this defeat created bitter memories which affected the working of local and municipal bodies in Punjab. Resultantly, communal politics came to dominate the working of local bodies because the Muslims wanted their due share on the basis of their numerical majority.

Conclusion

The colonial intervention facilitated the development of representative institutions in South Asia. These interventions initiated and created necessary prerequisites for

representation such as private property, a public space for opposition to the government, rule of law, the growth of a class of westernized Indians and, argumentatively the most important of all, the development of local government institutions having representative characteristics. The British empire opened up India to the forces of modernization and the government facilitated in this regard. One of these forces was the introduction of local self-government and its increasing democratization in various parts of India. The municipality boards and local administration were first introduced in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. After their implementation and observing its results, they introduced these institutions on elective principles into various parts of India. Prior to the reforms of 1919, the local bodies remained largely under the control of officers of government. After the introduction of diarchy, however, a process of increased democratization was started and the electoral base was also expanded. The introduction of the electoral principle was an advancement of unprecedented scale in Indian history. The communal tensions that it produced in some parts of India were not envisaged by the British administration. Moreover, the political movement of freedom being vigorously pursued by the Indians created many impediments in the way of working of the local institutions. Yet the working of local bodies contributed to the growth of civic consciousness and political awakening. One significant contribution of representative and local government institutions was the aggregation and articulation of interests. The indigenous organized political parties aggregated local interests which may be rooted in caste, class, kinship and, most often, religion. It can be argued that Indians diverged on many aspects of representation and eventually divided into two great camps, one led by the Indian National Congress and the other by the All India Muslim League. Since compromise could not be reached between these two camps, it yielded into creation of two independent states of India and Pakistan. However, both of the successor states of British India retained

constitutionalism and representative institutions including the local government.