

The Independence Act of 1947

Background

The Independence Act of 1947 was passed by the British Parliament on 18th July 1947. It came after years of struggle by Indians and the failure of earlier plans like the Cabinet Mission. The British were unable to handle political pressure, communal violence, and increasing demands for freedom, so they decided to leave. Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, played a central role in the fast transfer of power. The Act became a turning point in the history of South Asia.

Main Provisions

The Act divided British India into two dominions, India and Pakistan, both becoming independent on 15th August 1947. Each dominion was given the right to make its own constitution through its Constituent Assembly. The British Parliament and Crown had no further authority in Indian matters. The Governor-General became the representative of the Crown in each dominion. The princely states were given the choice to join India or Pakistan, or to remain independent. In this way, complete sovereignty was given to both countries.

Impact of the Act

The Act had a deep impact on the region. It created Pakistan and independent India but also led to the partition of the subcontinent. This caused one of the largest migrations in history, where Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims moved across new borders. Unfortunately, this migration brought massive communal riots and killings. Pakistan faced immediate problems like shortage of funds, lack of offices, and settlement of millions of refugees. India also had to reorganize its political structure. Despite these challenges, the Act marked the official end of British rule and gave birth to two sovereign states.

Conclusion

The Independence Act of 1947 is the most important legal step in the independence of South Asia. It ended colonial rule, divided the region into two countries, and gave them full freedom to shape their own futures. Though partition brought pain and violence, the Act remains the foundation of Pakistan's independence and identity, and it also marked the beginning of a free India.