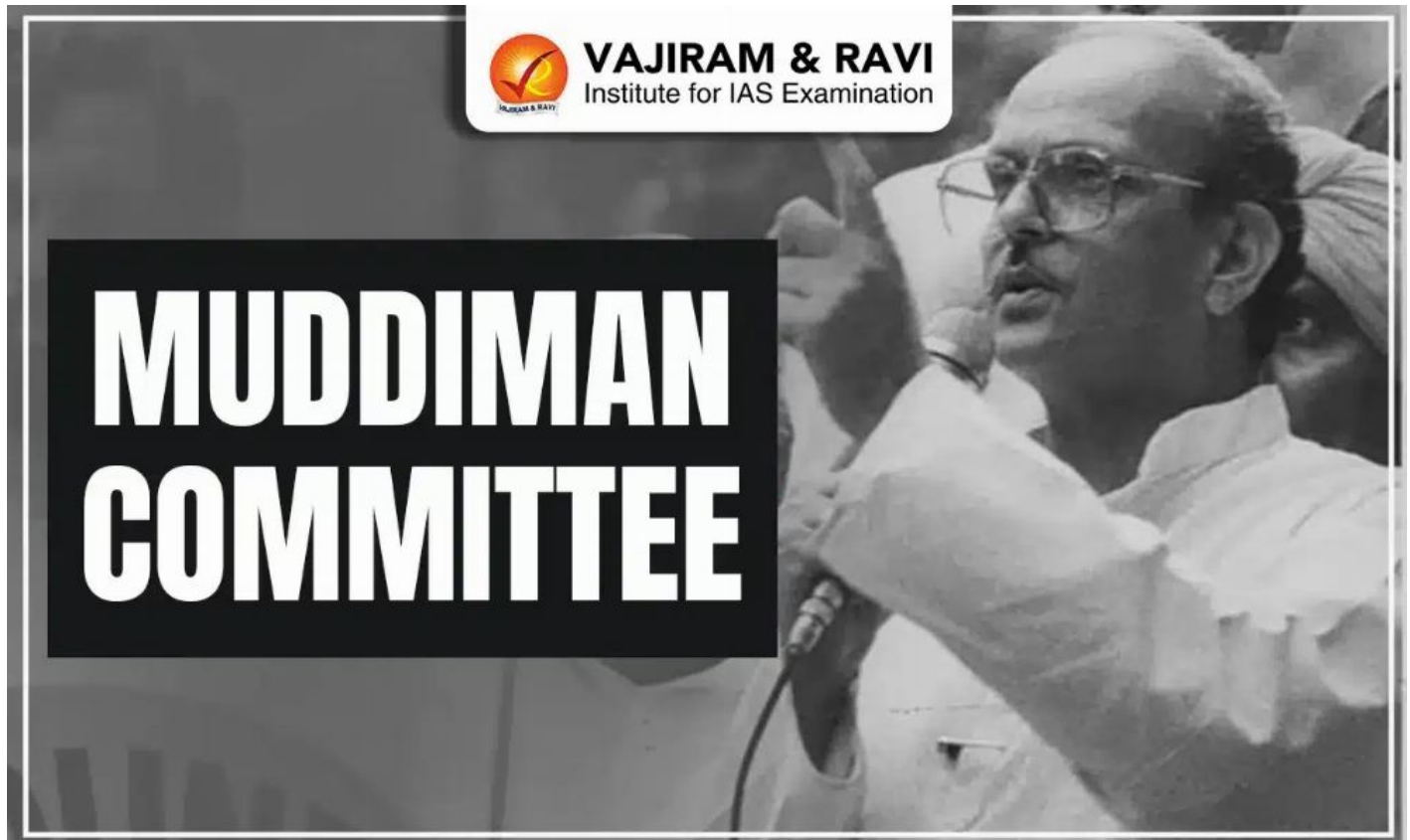


Muddiman Committee, Purpose, Recommendations, Significance

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The Muddiman Committee, also known as the Reforms Enquiry Committee, was created in 1924 to check the functioning of the constitutional system introduced by the Government of India Act 1919. The act brought the system of dyarchy into effect in the provinces and divided the subjects into “reserved” and “transferred” categories. The committee became the center of political controversy, as Indians strongly criticized its inefficiency and lack of real power-sharing. Growing political unrest and dissatisfaction over the dyarchy system prompted the British government to set up this committee. The committee was chaired by Sir Alexander Muddiman, a senior British civil servant, and consisted of both official and non-official members. In this article, we are going to cover the Muddiman Committee, its purpose, recommendations and outcomes.

Muddiman Committee Purpose

The Muddiman Committee was created with the goal of reviewing the constitutional reforms introduced by the 1919 Act, with special focus on dyarchy. Its aim was to analyse whether dyarchy had worked in practice, evaluate the criticisms raised by Indians and suggest changes for better governance. The purpose was to question whether the Indian political structure under British rule should remain static or whether it required a built-in mechanism for

gradual progress towards self-governance.

Muddiman Committee Reports Features

The Muddiman Committee submitted its finding in 1925 but the members were completely divided in their opinions. Due to this division, there were two separate reports created- the Majority Report and the Minority Report.

1. Majority Report

The report was prepared by the official members and supporters of British Rule.

It said that the system of dyarchy had not been given a fair trial.

- According to them, the defects noticed were due to premature criticism rather than inherent flaws in the Act.
- They suggested only minor adjustments in the working of the system instead of sweeping reforms.
- The implication was that the British government should continue with dyarchy and avoid yielding greater political power to Indians.

2. Minority Report (Non-Official)

- The Minority Report was drafted by non-official Indian members who strongly disagreed with the majority.
- This report declared that the Government of India Act of 1919 had failed to deliver meaningful constitutional progress.
- It argued that dyarchy was unworkable in practice and did not meet the aspirations of the Indian people.
- It recommended that any future Constitution must be permanent in character and provide a mechanism for automatic advancement toward greater self-rule.
- This report reflected the nationalist demand for a more responsible form of government.

Muddiman Committee Recommendations

The Muddiman Committee didn't bring any revolutionary changes but it did introduce some important observations. These recommendations included:

- Criticism of Dyarchy: Both reports acknowledged the inherent difficulties in the working of dyarchy.
- Small Adjustments Suggested: The majority sought minor modifications in the responsibilities assigned to non-official Indian ministers.
- Need for Larger Reforms: The minority pushed for a recognition that the Government of India 1919 reforms had failed and that a permanent Constitution with progressive stages was essential.
- Appointment of a Royal Commission: The committee recommended that a Royal Commission be appointed to conduct a deeper inquiry into the reforms and propose future changes.

Muddiman Committee Outcome and Government Response

The Secretary of State for India at the time, Lord Birkenhead, rejected the radical proposals of the minority report. Instead, he declared that the government would take action only in line with the majority report, thereby preserving

the dyarchy system with limited reforms. However, the criticism of dyarchy continued to intensify in Indian political circles, and this ultimately paved the way for the appointment of the Simon Commission in 1927, which re-examined the working of the 1919 Act.

Muddiman Committee Significance

The Muddiman Committee had the following Significance:

- The Committee discussed the deep divisions between official British views and Indian nationalist aspirations.
- It reinforced the perception among Indians that the British government was unwilling to introduce real reforms.
- Although the recommendations did not immediately alter the constitutional setup, the minority report became an important document of nationalist critique of the dyarchy system.
- Its work can be seen as a precursor to the Simon Commission, which took up the task of reviewing constitutional reforms.

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