

IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

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Abstract:

This paper aim is to study the Impact of British Rule in India. The coming of the Europeans brought about several changes in the socio economic and political spheres of Indian society. The main difference between the early Invaders and British empire list was that none of the previous Invaders made structural changes in the Indian economy. The establishment of the British Empire in India transformed India's economic, social and political scenario. It is undeniable that the social, economic and cultural impact of British rule on India is immense. The economic policies of the British government made a rapid transformation on the Indian economy. In the year between 1600 to 1757 British got the primary profit from selling Indian products abroad. The British government made economic policies for the Indians very cleverly. By these policies, India always remained dependent on them. These policies completely break the traditional structure of the Indian economy. The basic reason for the British to come to India was for trading purposes. In that period, Britain faced the Industrial Revolution. For that reason, they needed so many raw materials for their factories, which mainly came from India as well as they also needed a proper market for selling their finished goods. India can give them these two, a huge source of raw materials and a perfect market for selling those finished products. Therefore, the foremost economic impact of British rule in India was that the country became the centre of British trade. On the surface, it may seem that the British rule in India that transformed its society for the better. But upon closer examination, these benefits were purely coincidental, if not self-serving. Economic improvements were only enacted in order to better plunder the Indian economy. Even societal changes would have come out on their own without the need for British intervention. The industrial revolution has really assisted the English traders to a lot of profit from countries in Asia, Africa and America. From the profit they gained, they wanted to invest it in trade with India. With the help of the East India Company they were able to increase their industrial base. During this spread of industries across India many English traders in India were gaining more profit from manufacturing than trading. From the year 1793 to 1813 the Britain manufacturers started a movement against the company, "its trade monopoly and the privileged it enjoyed". They finally thrive in downgrading the East India Company's monopoly of Indian trade. With this happening India then became an economic colony of Britain.

Keywords: British Rule, Economic Impact, Social Impact, Cultural Impact, India etc.

INTRODUCTION:

The coming of the Europeans brought about several changes in the socio economic and political spheres of Indian society. The main difference between the early Invaders and British empire list was that none of the previous Invaders made structural changes in the Indian economy. The establishment of the British Empire in

India transformed India's economic, social and political scenario. It is undeniable that the social, economic and cultural impact of British rule on India is immense. The economic policies of the British government made a rapid transformation on the Indian economy. In the year between 1600 to 1757 British got the primary profit from selling Indian products abroad. The British government made economic policies for the Indians very cleverly. By these policies, India always remained dependent on them. These policies completely break the traditional structure of the Indian economy.

With India under the colonial rule of Britain, they set up their own policies which kept them in control over the territory. One of such policy was the land revenue policies, which made the low income farmers to work more and in return more revenues for the Britain administrative. They also forced the Indians to commercialize their raw materials and some of their cash crops for the industries in Britain. Britain knew they are going to face some competition with other European countries so they managed to defeat all of them. They also devour the sale of raw materials and made the Indian weavers to buy their raw materials at an exorbitant price where as they bought there's at a low price. The British gained more land for their empire through the colonization of India. They also imported raw materials from India. All the successes and progress experienced by India came into a downfall because when Britain really came in and colonized India the "possession of power, the economic consequences of the trade was reversed and India was placed on the precipice to roll down to the bottom,"

The British made the Indian soldiers to fight their battles of seas against the Portuguese and some of the other European traders. The British then hired the Indian soldiers to engage in their fight battle. The Indian soldiers also fought in World War II alongside the army of Britain. The British came to India to establish their industries in order to exploits its raw materials and labour. So Britain, in the seventeenth century, found the landscape of India as the "tropics which represented both paradise and opportunities". India then became the market for the British. Calcutta and Bombay became the major trading cities and it opened doors to trade with its neighbouring Asian countries and the rest of the world. As said through my introduction, the colonization of India by the British had its set of drawbacks. One of the greatest freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi told the British that "even though you have given us our own government but you have not given us any responsibility to run the government". The citizens of India where not allowed in running its own government and the Indian natives where not allocated any position in its own administration. English educations were introduced to create a class of educated Indians who would assist the British in ruling the country and strengthen their political Authority. From what we just mentioned above we could say that the British imperial rule has just been using the Indians and its resources to better their own nation. So towards this point of view this essay will discuss the economic impact towards the negative point of view on the impact British rule had on India. To further elaborate on the negative impact, we have decided to use the various Indian industries and trade, which includes the textile industry and trade, Land Revenue Policy and Land Settlements, Commercialisation of Agriculture, Rise of the New Money-lending Class, Rise of the New Middle Class and finally transport and communication.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

This paper aim is to study the Impact of British Rule in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This paper is purely based on secondary sources of data such as websites, journals, articles, books and other sources.

IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA:

The industrial revolution has really assisted the English traders to a lot of profit from countries in Asia, Africa and America. From the profit they gained, they wanted to invest it in trade with India. With the help of the East India Company they were able to increase their industrial base. During this spread of industries across India many English traders in India were gaining more profit from manufacturing than trading. From the year 1793 to 1813 the Britain manufacturers started a movement against the company, “its trade monopoly and the privileged it enjoyed”. They finally thrive in downgrading the East India Company’s monopoly of Indian trade. With this happening India then became an economic colony of Britain.

1. ECONOMIC IMPACT:

- ✓ **Commercialisation of Agriculture:** Another major economic impact of the British policies was the introduction of a large number of commercial crops such as coffee, Indigo, cotton, jute and opium. These crops were introduced with different intentions. Indians were forced to produce Indigo and sell on the conditions which were dictated by the Britishers. It was sent to England and was used as a dying agent for cloth produced in Britain towns. The speed of transfer of ownership of land thereby increasing the number of landless labourers. It also brought in a large number of merchants, traders and middlemen who further exploited the situation. The shift to commercial crops led to decrease in the food grains production which led to frequent famines.
- ✓ **Deindustrialisation :** The Charter act of 1813 allowed one way free trade for British citizens which flooded the Indian market with cheap, machine made goods from Britain. On the other hand heavy duties were levied on imports from India in Britain. As high as 80% were imposed on Indian textiles which made Indian cloth expensive. After 1820, Indian exports were virtually barred from European markets.
- ✓ **Education Policy:** The Britishers introduced the English language in India. The reason for educating Indians in the English language was to prepare them to work as clerks on low wages for the Britishers. This was aimed at reducing the expenditure on administration. It was also expected to create a class of Indians who are loyal to the Britishers. In addition, they would also increase the market for British goods in India. The charter act of 1813 sanctioned Rs 1 lakh for promoting Western Sciences in India. This amount was to be used for teaching Western ideas and literature through the medium of English

language alone. The Woods Dispatch of 1854 asked the government to assume responsibility for the education of the masses. Departments of Education were instituted at all provinces and affiliated universities were opened in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. The English language and western ideas had some positive impact on the society as leaders like Swami Vivekananda, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar used the Western ideas of liberalism and democracy and used it to reform the non-humanitarian social and religious practices of the time. It also helped the Indians to adopt a modern, rational, democratic and liberal outlook. English became the lingua franca of the educated people in India. It made them politically aware of their rights and gave them the opportunity to study in England and learn about the working of the democratic institutions.

- ✓ **Famine and Poverty:** Famine became a regular feature in India. These famines were caused due to poverty unleashed by the colonial forces in India and due to lack of food grains.
- ✓ **Impact on Society and Culture:** The Indian society underwent many changes after the advent of Britishers in India. In the 19th century, social practices like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and caste system were prevalent. Women were discriminated against at all stages of life. The British brought in new ideas of Liberty, Equality and Freedom from Renaissance, the reformation movement that took place in Europe. These ideas appealed to some sections of the society. The movements led by leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali look for social unity and strive towards Liberty, equality and fraternity. Introduced to improve the status of women for example the prohibition of the Sati in 1829 by Lord Bentick. In 1872, a law was passed that legalised inter caste and inter communal marriage. Slavery was declared illegal. With Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's assistance, the Widow Remarriage Act was passed by Lord Dalhousie in 1856. Vidyasagar also campaigned against child marriage and polygamy. The cruel custom of offering little children as sacrifice to please God, practised by certain tribes, was banned by Governor General Lord Hardinge.
- ✓ **Impoverishment of Peasantry:** The Britishers carried out a number of land revenue experiments which caused hardship to the cultivators. They extracted taxes from the farmers to finance the policies and war efforts. The government imposed Permanent settlement system in large parts in order to maximise rent and secure its share of revenue. The transferability of land caused insecurity among the tenants. The government did little to increase the land productivity. With zamindars bestowed with increased power, they demanded illegal dues to maximise their share of revenue. The overburdened peasants were forced to turn to money lenders to pay the dues. Moreover, the money lenders often forced the farmer to sell his produce at low prices which led to impoverishment of peasantry.
- ✓ **Judicial System:** The Britishers introduced a new system of law and justice in India. A hierarchy of Civil and criminal courts were established. The laws were qualified and attempts were made to separate the Judiciary from the executive. Efforts were taken to establish the rule of law in India. But these law

courts were not easily accessible to the common people. Justice became a costly affair and the new judicial system discriminated between the Europeans and the Indians.

- ✓ **Rise of New Money Lending Class:** Excessive demand of revenue by the British government forced the peasants to take loans from the money lenders. These money lenders exploited the peasants by charging a high rate of interest. They often used unfair means like false accounting. In most of the cases, the peasants failed to pay back the loan with full interest and their lands were passed into the hands of the money lenders.
- ✓ **Ruralisation:** Decline of industries increased the trend towards ruralisation of India. The loss of traditional livelihood led to many artisans leaving their professions and moving to villages. There was increased pressure on land as most of these artisans were concentrated in agriculture. An overburdened agricultural sector upset the village's economic setup.
- ✓ **Textile Industry and Trade:** Indian textiles had markets in Asia and Africa. With industrialisation in England and the colonisation of India there was a reversal in the direction of textile trade. There was massive Import of machine made clothes from English factories. This import led to increased threat for the handicraft industry. Within a few years, India became an exporter of raw materials from being an exporter of clothes. This reversal made a huge impact on the Indian handloom industry leading to its virtual collapse. It also created unemployment for a large community of weavers. This increased the pressure on the rural economy.
- ✓ **Transport And Communication:** The Britishers introduced Railways to connect the inland areas with the exporting ports to facilitate the movement of British goods. This opened an avenue for British bankers and investors to invest surplus wealth and material in the construction of Railways. This benefited the British capitalist in two ways. Firstly, it made trading in commodities easier and profitable. Secondly the rail engines coaches came from Britain where the British capitalist invested in railways and were guaranteed a minimum profit of 5% by the government. The Railways also played an important role in the national awakening of the country.

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT:

1. Amid social issues like Sati, Child Marriages, Infanticides; ideas like Liberty, Equality, Freedom, and Human Rights were brought by the British.
2. To improve the condition of women in society, various legal measures were introduced.
3. British showed keenness in introducing the English language in Indian society.
 - The vernacular languages were ignored
4. The British Parliament issued the Charter Act of 1813 by which a sum of Rupees One lakh was sanctioned for promoting western sciences in India.
- 5.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

- **New Job Opportunities:** The British introduce new job opportunities that were especially beneficial to the members of the lower caste. With these opportunities, there was a better chance of upward social mobility for them
- **Rise of the modern middle class in India:** British rule led to the rise of an influential middle-class who would become pioneers of Indian industrialization in the post-independent era.
- **Development of Infrastructure:** The British authorities built many important infrastructures such as hospital schools and the most important of all, railways. Of course, this was done not to enhance the lives of the local Indians but rather to facilitate their exploitation. Regardless these infrastructures laid the foundation of India becoming a major economic powerhouse
- **Introduction of new technology and ideas:** The introduction of new technology like steamships, telegraphs and trains completely changed the economic landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Culturally, the British put an end to social evils such as Sati (with the passing of the Bengal Sati Regulation Act on December 4, 1829) and weakened the caste system to an extent.
- **Protection from external enemies:** India was known as the “jewel in the crown of the British Empire”. Thus the British provided protection against like Persia and Afghanistan. Even other western nations like France were deterred from being too involved with India. Though a boon, it turned out to be a bane in the long run as it made India too heavily dependent on the British.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

- **Destruction of Indian Industry:** When Britain took over, they forced the governments to import goods from the British Isles rather than create their own products. This led to the local cloth, metal and carpentry industries to fall into disarray. It made India a virtual hostage of Britains economic machinations which meant breaking away from it would destroy India’s economy.
- **British mismanagement led to famines:** The British rule placed more emphasis on the cultivation of cash crops rather than growing crops that would feed India’s huge population. They imported food from other parts of the empire to feed its citizens. This policy, combined with the unequal distribution of food, led to 24 famines killing millions between 1850 and 1899 alone. The first and if not the worst of this lot was the Bengal Famine of 1770.
- **The Divide and Rule Policy:** The British realised that they could never rule a vast territory like India without breaking up strong kingdoms into small easily conquerable segments. The British Empire also

made it a policy to pay religious leaders to speak out against each other, slowly poisoning relations between different faiths. The hostile relationship between India and Pakistan can be attributed as a direct result of this policy.

- **Britain plundered the Indian Economy:** Due in no small part to the unethical business practices of the East India Company it can be estimated that trillions were siphoned off by Britain. Such practices even destroyed the Indian industries and ensured that money flowing through the Indian economy ended up in the hands of London.

CONCLUSION:

The basic reason for the British to come to India was for trading purposes. In that period, Britain faced the Industrial Revolution. For that reason, they needed so many raw materials for their factories, which mainly came from India as well as they also needed a proper market for selling their finished goods. India can give them these two, a huge source of raw materials and a perfect market for selling those finished products. Therefore, the foremost economic impact of British rule in India was that the country became the centre of British trade. On the surface, it may seem that the British rule in India that transformed its society for the better. But upon closer examination, these benefits were purely coincidental, if not self-serving. Economic improvements were only enacted in order to better plunder the Indian economy. Even societal changes would have come out on their own without the need for British intervention.

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