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The bedrock of British influence on Indian economy and politics was laid in 1600 AD with the establishment of English East India Company (Wikipedia, 2012). It was not until the 18th century that England (later Britain) was acquainted with its own power to preside over the small Indian states. After emerging victorious in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 (Stanley, 1989) under the directive of Robert Clive, England started premeditating to reign over contemporary India, the Golden Bird. And the imperial hold began to magnify. This essay illuminates the following points:

1. The major aspects of British Rule in India
2. The impact of British Colonial Rule over India population

The British reign had augmented its dimension and dominance over more or less whole of India by 19th century. Several instances of offensive behaviour and discrimination with against the Indians instigated an insurgence (Olson, 1996, p. 653). Especially the controversy apropos the use of cartridges containing portions of beef and pork, affronted both the Hindu and Muslim sepoys (Wikipedia, 2012). The rebellion of 1857 was observed enormously across the British India causing loss of life and property on both sides (Wikipedia, 2012). The revolt faded due to lack of coordination among Indians and brutal suppression from British rulers. In 1858, the direct British rule commenced. And Queen Victoria was crowned as Empress of India (Olson, 1996, p. 568). The mightier the British reign became, the crosser were native's outlook for the foreign governors who started in the name of trade. Britain profited enormously with India in hand. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India (1899-1905) quoted, " While we hold on to India, we are a first-rate power. If we lose India, we will decline to a third-rate power." The <https://assignbuster.com/free-essay-on-british-colonialism-in-india/>

extreme exploitation of Indian resources and unfair adjudications smouldered a strong feeling of revolt in Indians over decades which finally lead to the Indian Struggle for Freedom. And the British proceedings to curb the struggle were exceedingly inhumane and unjustified (Wikipedia, 2012). On 13th April 1919, Brigadier-General Dyer commanded to shoot at thousands of men, women and children in a gathering at Jallianwala Bagh without warning, killing myriads of innocent people (Lloyd, 2011). But the struggle continued. The martyrdom of thousands of freedom fighters, sincere struggle by numerous leaders and active participation of common folks in the feat finally begot the Indian independence on 15th August 1947. It marked the end of British colonialism in India.

Having administered India extensively for almost two centuries, the impact of British colonialism on the country was entrenched and multifaceted. On one hand, it facilitated education, especially for women and helped the Indian reformers to uproot some of the heinous social evils prevailing in the highly conservative Indian society. On the other, it devastated the once flourishing economy of India. Though the technological advancements introduced by British like railroads, telegraph and postal services helped India in

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consolidating the infrastructure (Duiker & Spielvogel) later but the losses incurred to the basic Indian economy was irreparable. According to historian Angus Maddison, India contributed a total of 22.6% to the world income in 1700. At that time, Europe's share was 23.3%. It dropped to 3.8% in

1952(Dutt, 1904). And the reason was evident. The worst cost of colonialism paid by Indians was economic. The British rulers focussed chiefly on cultivation of cash crops instead of food crops. They aimed at yielding cotton for their textile mills in Manchester and Lancashire (Wikipedia, 2012). And then the final British textile was introduced in India ruining the local textile industries in India. Another debauched step was to promote the partition of Bengal in 1905-1911(McLane, 1965). The step exacerbated the communal differences leading to tremendous bloodshed and a conflict which prevails even today in fractions.

One of the positive influences of British Raj over India was a better social life for the elite and middle classes; the poor were overburdened with debts and taxes. Study of English literature, modern science and technologies and taking up of European leisure activities were a result of British impact (Duiker & Speilvogel). Also, the introduction of democratic institutions and practices like Zamindari system were aimed for improving the condition of Indian economic and social panorama. But, people could not draw benefits from the reforms due to intermediate influences (Duiker & Speilvogel) and rudimentary outlook.

Constructive impacts apart, it cannot be denied that the colonialism was aimed at harnessing maximum wealth from India. And eventually, it left the country in dwindling pecuniary, political and communal aftermaths. With miscellaneous interpretation of the British colonialism in India, there might be different outlook for different perceivers. But one fact is undeniable- the

impact of the imperial rule was astronomical enough to transform the economy, society and even the map of India.

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