

Introduction ruling the  
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## **Introduction**

British commenced economic pursuits in India as early as 1600s with British East India Company putting up trading centers in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. However, all European traders were answerable to the ruling Mughal Dynasty; unfortunately, by 1707, this ruling dynasty was collapsing rapidly as its constituent states broke ranks.

Following this disintegration, the British seized the opportunity to expand their territories as they sought to dominate India. This marked the start of imperialism in India and its effects are felt even to date.

## **British Rule**

As aforementioned, British rule gained entrance into India through British East India Company.

Robert Clive was the country director of this country; however, the British government that ran this company from London. As the Mughal Dynasty

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disintegrated, in 1757, Clive-led troops managed to overthrow Indian forces in the Battle of Plassey. Consequently, the British East India Company assumed power and became the leading body in the country.

This company's rule flourished through dialogues and warfare as well. With time, this British rule recruited Indian soldiers into its forces and used them to overthrow rebellious leaders. In other cases, the British would fund and support one ruler to overthrow another before overthrowing the former. By 1830s, British rule was literally ruling the whole India and this was possible because many Indians would rather submit to British rule than to fellow Indians. Above all, the 'divide and rule' principle worked well for the British rule. As time went on, the British rule expanded her interests in India to entail missionary work, education and other social services. In 1813, British Christian missionaries arrived in India and this brought radical religious changes in a society dominated by Hinduism and Islam. Within no time, "English became the official administrative language of India" (Littell 1999).

The British rule embarked on a mission to make India the highest 'rung' in civilization ladder; a mission they called, 'the civilizing mission' (Bhanbhri 1985). However, British rule faced stiff rebellion in 1857, from Indian troops within British forces and this was very threatening. This rebellion came from a misunderstanding on part of Indian soldiers commonly known as Sepoys. Soldiers were required to bite cartridge's end before using it and when the British rule introduced new cartridges coated with vegetable, the Sepoys thought it was coated with pork and beef, something that offended them, for many were Muslims and Hindus regarded pigs as unclean and cows as sacred respectively. Moreover, the Sepoys were not happy with the fact that

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fellow British soldiers earned more than themselves. The ensuing warfare left “ Tens of thousands of Indians and more than 10, 000 Britons dead” (Hutchins 1967).

By 1858, the British regained control and immediately passed the Government of India Act, which allowed the British Crown administrators to run the country instead of the British East India Company. These new administrators changed tactic and stopped interfering with religious issues; consequently, missionary work was halted for sometime. This move quelled the mounting tension between the British rulers and natives. More than a third of Indians remained under the rule of native rulers who worked under the British Crown. In 1877, Queen Victoria became the Empress of India through an act of parliament pushed by Benjamin Disraeli, the then Prime minister. However, in 1885, Hindus formed the Indian National Congress whilst Muslims, in 1887 formed the Muslim League and they all sought modernity and liberalization.

## **Changes Brought by Imperialism**

The British rule came with many changes including political, economical, and social issues. On social and religious matters, the British rule proscribed Suttee, “ Hindu widows burning themselves to death on their husband’s funeral pyres” (Hutchins 1967).

English became the official language in India; therefore, it infiltrated the education system. Economically, India benefited largely from the British rule. The British rule laid down the third largest railway in the world and its

completion linked India with the rest of the world enabling her to build a strong economy.

Infrastructure improved greatly with intense road network, dams, irrigation schemes, telephone lines, and bridges, which modernized India.

Consequently, public health and sanitation improved drastically due to accessibility and improved literacy facilitated by foundation of numerous schools and colleges across the country. The local warfare ended as the British soldiers halted infightings between local leaders. Industrial development boomed even though British rule regulated industries owned by natives. Famine was no more in India under the British rule as irrigation promoted food production.

Schools and colleges ensured that science improved. However, the country's form of governance changed as no natives were allowed to take any significant posts in the government. Overall, the changes brought in India by imperialism were long lasting as they continue to be felt even to date.

## **Long Term Effects**

Currently, India is linked to the whole world courtesy of the rail that the British rulers laid down. India remains one of the most industrialized countries claiming a big share of the African markets. This emanated from the introduction of industries in the colonial times. Moreover, India remains one of big players in modern science and medicine. There are numerous surgery institutions across the country and other contemporary medical institutions.

Agriculture thrives well in India through different irrigation schemes across the country. All these economic advantages initiated by the colonial rule make India the “ twelfth-largest economy in world” (McGraw 2009).

Currently, India has embraced cultural pluralism and syncretism, retaining some of her traditions and incorporating new ideologies. All these occurrences owe their roots to imperialism, as this was the stating point that defined how India looks like today.

## **Conclusion**

By Mid 19th Century, imperialism was deeply rooted in India with the ultimate take over of British Crown in 1858. Imperialism affected India in all ways running from political arena, through social fronts to economical aspects. Introduction of English as the official language was a landmark move and the construction of the third largest railway in the world linked India with the rest of the world. Political arena was totally changed as the British Crown took control over everything and eventually crowning Queen Victoria as the Empress of India through an act of parliament.

The changes brought by imperialism in India had long-lasting effects as India remains connected to the rest of the world. Modern science and technology is fully at work in India with contemporary medical institutions running in the country. Industrially, India is one of the most industrialized countries in the world making it the twelfth largest economy.

Agriculturally, India boasts wide variety of agricultural practices. All these events owe their genesis to imperialism. The positive imperialism effects outweigh the negative ones considering the current state of events in India.

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