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The mechanised industries needed a continuous supply of raw materials. They also needed markets for the manufactured goods. To fulfil these needs, the countries with mechanised industries began to establish political control over regions around their trade settlements in other countries. These regions were called colonies. India, thus, became a British colony. The British imposed heavy taxes on the Indians, exported raw materials from India to feed England's industries and sold their cheap machine-made goods in Indian markets. Most of the money they earned in India and the goods they bought with such money were sent to England.

Thus, India's wealth was drained out. Although British rule caused many hardships to the Indians, some of the British policies benefited the Indians in the long run. Let us see how British rule affected education, transport and communication, and social and cultural life in India.

: In the eighteenth century, elementary education in India was imparted in pathshalas for Hindus and maktabas for Muslims. Children were taught to read and write, memorise religious texts and do simple arithmetic. Tols and madarsas imparted higher education in Sanskrit and Persian respectively. However, these institutions did not promote the spirit of enquiry. They made no effort to make students aware of the latest scientific developments around the world. Initially, the British did not try to change the existing system of education.

But, in the early nineteenth century, Christian missionaries, Indians influenced by Western liberal ideas, and the British government began to encourage the spread of Western education among the Indians. The

Christian missionaries believed that the spread of Western education in India would help them win converts. So, they established educational institutions attached to their churches, mainly in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta.

The Indians with liberal ideas wanted to remove social evils by promoting Western education. The British government decided to introduce Western education in India when it realised that employing educated Indians in public offices would reduce administrative costs and ensure the loyalty of the Indians. In 1835, Governor-General Lord William Bentinck formally introduced English education in India. In 1844, English was made the official language. This made the knowledge of English necessary for appointment to public offices.

In 1854, an official report known as Wood's Dispatch recommended the establishment of a graded system of English-medium schools, colleges and universities. A department of education and institutions for training teachers were also set up. The universities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were set up in 1857, followed by the universities of Allahabad and Lahore in 1887.

Technical education for Indians was, however, neglected. The engineering college at Roorkee, for instance, was open to Europeans only. Thus, the new education system did not wholly benefit the Indians. : In the eighteenth century, the transport and communication system in India was rather poor. Bullock-carts plying on poor-quality roads and boats plying on rivers were the chief means of transport. In the nineteenth century, the British built a network of sturdy roads in India. They also dug canals and introduced steamships.

Above all, they introduced railways in India. All this was done to improve the transportation of raw materials to the ports and imported goods to the Indian markets. Lord Dalhousie rebuilt a part of the ancient road connecting Sonargaon in Bangladesh to Peshawar in Pakistan. This road is known as the Grand Trunk Road. Dalhousie also inaugurated the first Indian railway line, between Bombay and Thane, in 1853.

The railways not only ensured the quicker movement of goods, but also ensured the quick movement of British troops from one part of India to another. To improve communication, Dalhousie established the Post and Telegraph Department. He introduced a half-anna postage stamp for a letter to be carried from one part of the country to another.

These changes helped the British to strengthen their administrative control over India. However, in the long run, these changes also brought Indians from all over the country closer to each other. :

#### **Equality before the law:**

The British introduced uniform laws in all the Indian territories under their direct control. These laws were written down in the form of a code. They applied to all without any discrimination, at least in principle. Thus, they denied traditional social privileges to the upper castes and helped reduce caste discrimination in Indian society. The British, however, practised racial discrimination.

Indians were not permitted to use public utilities and services meant for the whites.

**Improved social interaction:**

The British introduced new systems of mass transport, like railways, in which people of different castes had to travel together. This forced people of different castes to interact and mix with each other. The British also improved the communication system, which resulted in greater interaction among people living in different parts of India. The schools and colleges set up by the British for spreading Western education were open to all sections of the society. Indians speaking different languages learnt English in these institutions and used it to communicate with each other. Western education also introduced Indians to modern liberal ideas.

This led to social reform movements, and later aroused national pride among the Indians.

**Emergence of new professional class:**

British rule opened up new employment opportunities in administrative offices, business houses, law courts, workshops and educational institutions. This led to the emergence of a class of professionals such as clerks, merchants, lawyers, teachers and industrial workers. Entry into such professions was not based on caste or social status but on educational qualification and specific skills. Movements and legislations for social reform

In the early nineteenth century, enlightened Indians started reform movements against social evils such as cruelty towards women and discrimination against the lower castes. Responding to these movements, Lord William Bentinck abolished sati in 1829 and Lord Dalhousie legalised widow remarriage in 1856. :

**Rediscovery of India's past:**

When the English East India Company's rule in India began, the Company's servants were unfamiliar with the laws and customs of India.

To make them familiar with the existing Muslim and Hindu laws, Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madarsa in 1781 and Jonathan Duncan set up the Sanskrit College at Varanasi in 1792. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, European scholars began to take a keen interest in the study of India's rich culture. They translated works of ancient Indian literature and made valuable contributions in the field of Indian archaeological studies.

**William Jones**

William Jones founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784) and translated Kalidasa's play *Abhijnanashakuntala*.

Charles Wilkins translated the *Bhagwadgita*. Max Mueller, a German scholar, translated the *Rigveda* and parts of the *Upanishads*. James Prinsep deciphered the Brahmi script of Ashoka's time (1837) and Alexander Cunningham carried out archaeological excavations at various places including Sarnath and Sanchi. Indian reformers encouraged fellow Indians to take interest in India's glorious past.

Their efforts gave rise to a sense of cultural unity and pride among the people. This led to a cultural awakening in India in the late nineteenth century.

**New trends in literature:**

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Western influence on Indian literature became prominent. The authors of the period started writing on humanistic issues such as social problems, unlike earlier authors, who wrote on religion, mythology and the lives of rulers.

New styles of prose and verse were introduced, and simple language was used. Dramas, short stories and novels became very popular. Many works based on patriotic themes were produced. Dinabandhu Mitra wrote the play Neel Darpan, describing the suffering of indigo cultivators under British plantation owners. Bankim Chandra Chatterji wrote the famous novel Anandmath, which contains the national song Vande Mataram.

Muhammad Iqbal wrote the national song Saare Jahan Se Achchha. Such works aroused national pride among the Indians. Among the famous Indian authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's were Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand and Subramania Bharati. Tagore won the Nobel Prize for his work Gitanjali, Song Offerings.

New trends in art Indian artists began to blend Western techniques of painting with traditional Indian techniques. They also began to use canvas, watercolours and oil paints. They chose themes based on everyday life, Indian mythology and nature. The Bengal school of art, which developed in the early twentieth century, was influenced by Indian folk art, the Ajanta cave paintings and the Mughal miniatures. It made a significant contribution to painting.