

Impact of imperialism on india



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Throughout history, many nations have implemented imperialism to enforce their will over others for money, protection and civilization. India was no exception. Since its discovery, Europeans were trying get a piece of India's action. In many cases England was the imperial, or mother country. Since India was put under imperialism, a great deal of things changed, some for the good, mostly though for the bad. Between 1640 and 1949, India was ruled by two periods of imperialism, both of which effected India in a very profound and permanent manner.

The first period of European control was between 1740 and 1858. During this period the British East India Company controlled the Indian sub-continent under the guise of economic imperialism, when in fact the manipulation of Indian affairs was much more political than let on. When it was founded in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth I, the East India Company's main purpose was " to break into the Indonesian spice trade which was dominated by the Dutch." But after colonizing a post a Madras in 1640, the company was re-chartered to include such rights as coining money and act as government to British subjects at the East India Company's posts. As well, the British government also gave the company the right to make was or peaceful arrangements with powers who were non-Christian. This control expanded with the founding of a port at Bombay in 1668, and the founding of Calcutta in 1690. Then in 1756, a young employee named Robert Clive, who had been named lieutenant-governor in 1755, was sent to take back Calcutta from the Bengal nawab. He accomplished this in January of 1757. Then later that year, Clive lead a group of 950 European and 2, 000 Indian soldiers(sepoys) against a group of 50, 000 Indians lead by a degenerate nawab at Plassey. The victory of the

English forces over the local resistance brought Bengal under the effective political control of the East India Company. Although a “ puppet nawab” was left in control of the area, Clive was granted the right to extract land revenue from most of eastern India. Throughout this whole period, the company slowly found it’s privileges being revoked, until in 1858, the Sepoy Rebellion, or the Indian Revolution, finally brought an end to the rule of the East India Company in India when it was revealed the cause of the rebellion was the use of beef and pork fat to grease rifle cartridges, which are taboo to the Muslims and Hindus. This Revolution brought the rule of the East India Company to an end.

The second period of English imperialism started in August of 1858 when the British monarchy assumed direct control of India from the East India Company. This established a full colonial government, where British officials run the country’s affairs, in India. This is known as colonial imperialism. This period was one of major change in Indian life and culture. While the East India Company tried respect local customs and learn local languages, the colonial government “ tried to impose British culture on India. . . encouraged the Indian people to abandon their traditions and learn to speak, dress and live like Europeans.” This came to a head in 1877, when Queen Victoria was recognized as the Empress of India. The colonial government felt it was their duty to civilize the people of India, feeling “ I am a little bit better than you, therefore my presence is necessary.” This all began to end in 1885 with the formation of the Indian National Congress, made up of middle-class Indians who were known as the congress. This congress campaigned for free education for both sexes, more Indian representation in government, and

other reforms. But then in the early 1900's, nationalists began to reject British rule and petition for its end in India by boycotting British goods and publishing books which "restored peoples pride in India's ancient heritage." The nationalist leader, Mohandas Gandhi, is perhaps best known for his method of passive resistance to help the struggle of India. Then finally in 1949, the partitioning of the British controlled lands into the independent countries of Pakistan and India brought an end to English rule in the Indian subcontinent.

Throughout the rule of the British in India, the effect of the colonial and economic imperialism impacted the sub-continent in the form of many economic and social changes. On the economic side, many Indian goods were sold overseas by the East India Company, but the government of England saw India as a large base for British goods, as well as a source of raw materials. This led to British officials discouraging Indian industry, as well as encouraging the production of export crops rather than food crops. In this way cotton was produced in India, processed in England, and then sold back to the Indians. This change in food supplies killed millions of Indians from famine in the 1800's. Then when the British government took direct control, the construction of railways, canals, and roads, especially the opening of the Suez canal in 1869 opened the interior of India for trade throughout Europe and Asia. With the construction of the telegraph lines in India, exports from India jumped tremendously. However, all of the profit went to the colonialists, plunging most Indians into poverty. The social changes included the introduction of health care and hospitals, which, while curing diseases and improving the general health of Indians, created such a

tremendous population explosion that famine resulted in some regions. As well, the creation of British educated professionals and business people created a new upper-class in India changing the rule of class in India forever. All of these changes, while under the guise of helping the natives, only served to help the colonists and leave the Indians feeling inferior, as though Indians are only “ hewers of wood, and drawers of water”

All of these changes in Indian culture and economy forever changed the destiny of the Land of India. While many changes may have been good in retrospect, they were only meant to help the colonizing British. Overall, the colonization of India had nothing but a negative effect on its people and culture. Perhaps one day people will realize that imposing one culture on another is not only wrong, but it is destructive to the natural course of a country’s history.