

## MODULE - 1

India and the World  
through the Ages



Notes



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5

# IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE ON INDIA: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL (1757-1857)

Around the 18<sup>th</sup> Century a number of significant events took place in the world. One such event was the Industrial Revolution which took place in England. It gradually spread to other countries of Europe also. You must have read about the Industrial Revolution that took place in England, and also read about the discovery of new sea and trade routes. One such sea route to India was discovered by a Portuguese called Vasco da Gama in 1498. As a result, the English, French, Portuguese and the Dutch came to India for trade. They also used it to spread missionary activities in India. Do you know that the beginning of modern period in Indian history began with the coming of these European powers to India? In this lesson you will be reading about the coming of the British to India and the impact it had on the economic, social and cultural spheres as well.



## OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- discuss the reasons for the British to come to India;
- identify the various methods used by the British to colonize India;
- study the economic impact during the British rule;
- describe the British impact on Indian society and culture; and
- identify the reasons for the protest movements that took place under their rule before the revolt of 1857.

## 5.1 REASONS FOR COMING TO INDIA

The European and the British traders initially came to India for trading purposes. The Industrial Revolution in Britain led to the increase in demand for raw materials for

the factories there. At the same time, they also required a market to sell their finished goods. India provided such a platform to Britain to fulfill all their needs. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a period of internal power struggle in India and with the declining power of the Mughal Empire, the British officials were provided with the perfect opportunity to establish their hold over Indian Territory. They did these through numerous wars, forced treaties, annexations of and alliances with the various regional powers all over the country. Their new administrative and economic policies helped them consolidate their control over the country. Their land revenue policies help them keep the poor farmers in check and get huge sums as revenues in return. They forced the commercialisation of agriculture with the growing of various cash crops and the raw materials for the industries in the Britain. With the strong political control, the British were able to monopolise the trade with India. They defeated their foreign rivals in trade so that there could be no competition. They monopolised the sale of all kinds of raw materials and bought these at low prices whereas the Indian weavers had to buy them at exorbitant prices. Heavy duties were imposed on Indian goods entering Britain so as to protect their own industry. Various investments were made to improve the transport and communication system in the country to facilitate the easy transfer of raw materials from the farms to the port, and of finished goods from the ports to the markets. Also, English education was introduced to create a class of educated Indians who would assist the British in ruling the country and strengthen their political authority. All these measures helped the British to establish, consolidate and continue their rule over India.



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Figure 5.1 Currency used by the East India Company



Figure 5.2 Currency used by the East India Company

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### 5.2 METHODS OF COLONISATION IN INDIA

Look at the map of Europe. You will find many big and small states on it. When the industrial revolution started in Europe these small states did not have sufficient raw materials for their industries, or markets for their finished goods. These countries now started looking for markets in Asia and Africa. England succeeded in controlling trade with India and established the East India Company in 1600. This company was supported by the British government. With its help England was able to extend her territorial frontiers to the Indian subcontinent. The first factory was established at Surat in 1613. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe got permission from the Mughal emperor Jahangir to open more factories at Agra, Ahmadabad and Broach. Their most important settlement on the southern coast was Madras where they built a fortified factory called Fort St. George. This was the first proprietary holding acquired by the company on Indian soil. Gradually the company expanded its trading network. By that time the company was well established in India. It had also succeeded in eliminating the other rival European powers from India. They also started interfering in the political affairs of the Indian rulers.

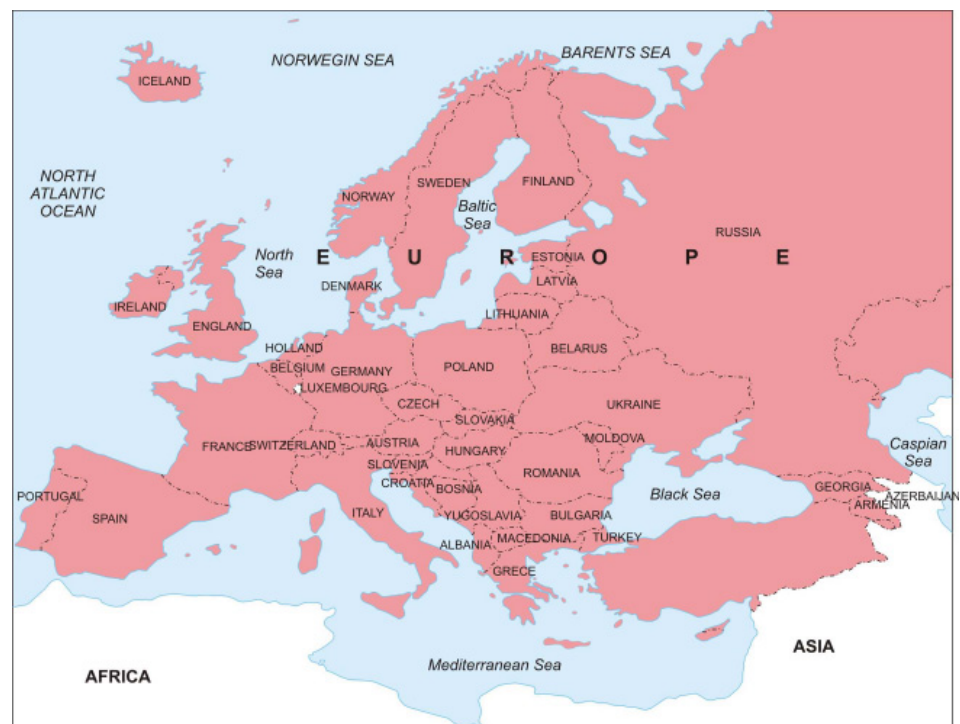


Figure 5.3 Present day map of Europe



Do you know

In 1696, the company developed three villages into a city in Bengal and named it Kolkotta. They also built a fort around this city known as Fort William.



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Look at the map of the 19<sup>th</sup> century India. What do you see? You will locate many big and small independent states. These states had their own rulers, economy, language and culture. These states were constantly at war with each other. It was not surprising that they fell an easy prey to the European powers especially the British. It was the battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) which provided the ground for the British success in India. Through these battles, a long era of British political control over India began. The Battle of Plassey was won by the English in Bengal. The British made Mir Jafar, the new Nawab of Bengal, in return for which they receive an enormous sum of money as well as the territory of 24 Parganas from the Nawab. But Mir Jafar was not able to make further payments to them. As a result he was replaced by Mir Qasim who proved to be a strong ruler. Mir Qasim was not ready to meet their demands for more money or control. As a result, Mir Qasim was removed and Mir Jafar was made the Nawab again. Mir Qasim then joined hands with the Nawab of Awadh, Shiraj-ud-daula and the Mughal emperor Shah Allam

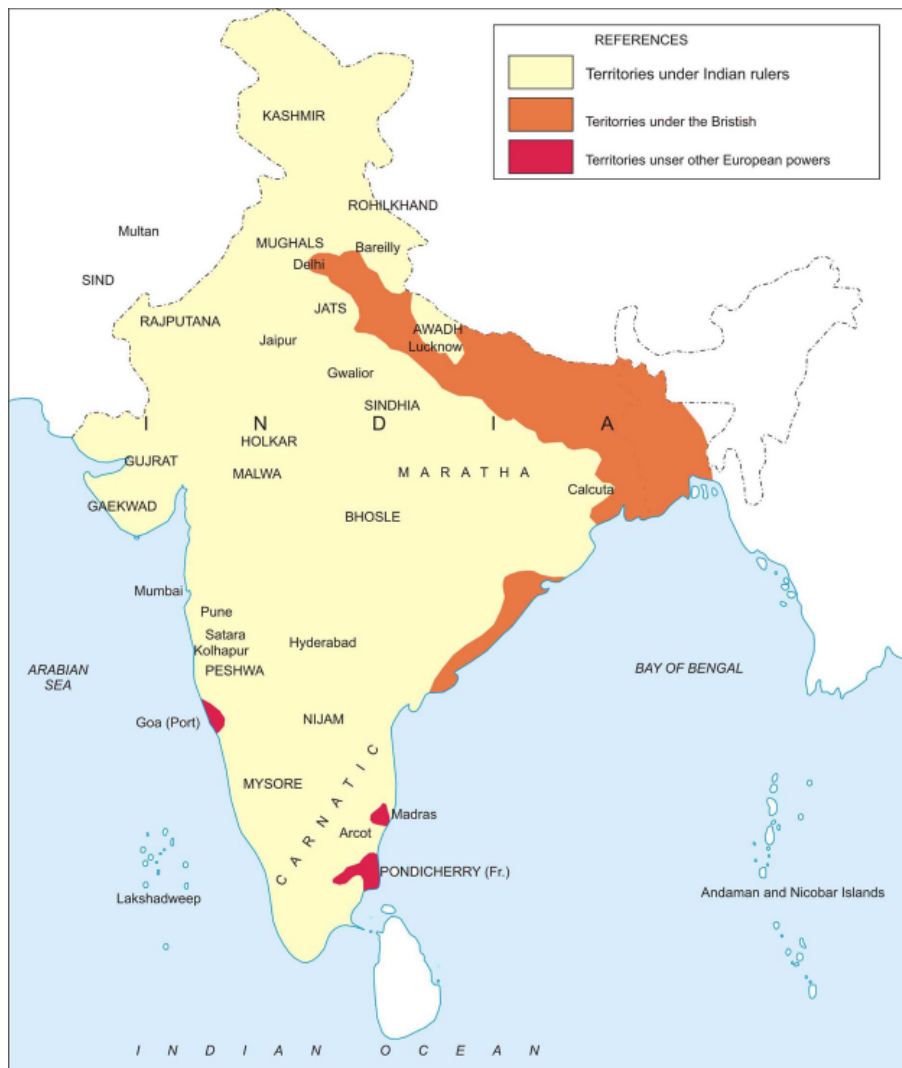


Figure 5.4 Map of 19<sup>th</sup> century India

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II in plotting against the British, the battle took place at a place called Buxar on 22 October 1764. Their defeat proved to be decisive.

Though the British successfully gained control over Bengal, the imposition of British rule throughout India was not an easy task. A number of regional powers opposed them and tried to resist the efforts of territorial expansion of the British. Let us read about the various wars waged by the British against the Indian states.

#### (i) Anglo-mysore Wars

Mysore emerged as a powerful state under an able leadership of Haider Ali and his son Tipu Sultan in the second half of the eighteenth century. Four wars took place between Mysore and the British. Finally the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799) ended in the heroic defeat and death of Tipu Sultan. With this a glorious chapter of struggle between Mysore and the English came to an end. Large ports like Kanara, Coimbatore and Seringapatam were secured by the British.



Figure 5.5 Tipu Sultan

#### (ii) Anglo-maratha Wars

The Marathas were another formidable power in western and central India during the second half of the eighteenth century. But the struggle for power among themselves gave the British an opportunity to intervene in their internal matters. Many wars took place between the British and the Marathas mainly on account of the Subsidiary Alliance (which you will read in 5.2.1). The Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-19) was the last war between them. The English defeated the Peshwa, dethroned him and annexed all his territories. The Peshwa was pensioned off and sent to Bithur near Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

#### (iii) Anglo-sikh Wars

In north-west India, the Sikhs under their able leader Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1792-1839) became an effective political and military force. The British power in India

viewed the rise of the Sikhs as a potential threat. The British thus wanted to bring the Sikhs under control. After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, lawlessness prevailed in Punjab. The British took advantage of this and the First Anglo-Sikh War broke out in 1845 which ended with the defeat of the Sikhs. In the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849, the British finally defeated them in the battle of Gujarat, a town on river Chenab (1849). The Sikh chiefs surrendered and Punjab was annexed by Lord Dalhousie. Maharaja Dalip Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was pensioned off and sent to England.



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Figure 5.6 Maharaja Ranjit Singh

### 5.2.1 Other Conquests, System of Alliances and Annexations

The Third Battle of Panipat against the Marathas in 1761 had already provided the stage for the success of British in India. Soon many more native states came under British control. This was done by a system of alliances called the Doctrine of Lapse and Subsidiary Alliance. Doctrine of Lapse led to a number of independent kingdoms being annexed to the British Empire. These were the states that were enjoying British protection but their rulers had died without leaving a natural heir to the throne. Their adopted sons could now no longer inherit the property or the pension which was granted to them by the British. In this way Dalhousie annexed the Maratha States

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of Satara (1848), Sambalpur (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853), Jhansi (1854) and Awadh (1856). In Subsidiary Alliance, the Indian States that were under British protection had to suspend their armies and instead maintain British troops. They also surrendered their control on their foreign affair and let go of their right to make alliances with other foreign states for any purpose, economic or political. In return, they were given protection by the British from their rivals.

The policy of annexation affected not only the Indian rulers, but all those who were dependent upon them such as soldiers, crafts people and even nobles. Even the traditional scholarly and priestly classes lost their patronage from these rulers, chieftains, nobles and zamindars, and were thus impoverished. Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century, no single Indian power was there to challenge or resist the British. Assam, Arakhan, North Eastern region and portions of Nepal and Burma were already annexed (1818 to 1826). The British also occupied Sind in 1843.



Figure 5.7 Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi



### ACTIVITY 5.1

Imagine you are 15 years old and the nephew/niece of a ruler of a princely state in 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Your uncle has no child of his own, so you are made the heir to the throne. What steps would you take if the British imposed Doctrine of Lapse in your kingdom and didn't allow you to succeed after your uncle?



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.1

1. Tick the correct answer:
  - (a) The British came to India as
    - (i) conquerors
    - (ii) travellers
    - (iii) invaders
    - (iv) traders
  - (b) Mir Jafar was the nawab of
    - (i) Mysore
    - (ii) Punjab
    - (iii) Bengal
    - (iv) Berar
2. Why did the British come to India? Give at least two reasons.
3. What were the two main methods that the British used to annex the native states?

### 5.3 ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Industrial revolution has helped the English merchants accumulate a lot of capital from the countries of Asia, Africa and America. They now wanted to invest this wealth in setting up industries and trade with India. The mass production of goods through machines that we witness today was pioneered through the Industrial Revolution which occurred first in England during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This led to a massive increase in the output of finished products. The East India Company helped in financing and expanding their industrial base. During this time there was a class of manufacturers in England who benefited more from manufacturing than trading. They were interested in having more raw materials from India as well as sending their finished goods back. Between 1793 and 1813, these British manufacturers launched a campaign against the company, its trade monopoly and the privileges it enjoyed. Ultimately, they succeeded in abolishing the East India Company's monopoly of Indian trade. With this India became an economic colony of Industrial England. Let us learn more about the economic impact on various Indian industries and trade.

#### 5.3.1 Textile Industry and Trade

Earlier, Indian handloom had a big market in Europe. Indian textiles such as cotton, linen, silk and woolen goods already had markets in Asia and Africa. With the coming of industrialisation in England, the textile industry there made important headway. There was now a reverse of the direction of textile trade between Britain and India. There was a massive import of machine made clothes from English factories to Indian markets. This import of large amount of products manufactured by mechanical looms in England led to increase threat for the handicraft industries as the British goods were sold at a much cheaper price.

The British succeeded in selling their goods at a cheap price as foreign goods were given free entry in India without paying any duty. On the other hand, Indian handicrafts were taxed heavily when they were sent out of the country. Besides, under the pressure of its industrialists, British government often imposed a protective tariff on



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Indian textiles. Therefore, within a few years, India from being an exporter of clothes became an exporter of raw cotton and an importer of British clothes. This reversal made a huge impact on the Indian handloom weaving industry leading to its virtual collapse. It also created unemployment for a large community of weavers. Many of them migrated to rural areas to work on their lands as agricultural laborers. This in turn put increased pressure on the rural economy and livelihood. This process of uneven competition faced by the Indian handloom industry was later dubbed by the Indian nationalist leaders as de-industrialisation.



#### Do you know

**Duty:** Taxes which are paid to the government on goods that are bought or sold.

**Tax:** A sum of money demanded by a government for its support for specific facilities or services, levied upon incomes, property, sales.

**Tariff:** An official list or table showing the duties or custom imposed by a government on imports or exports.

The main aim of the British was to transform India into a consumer of British goods. As a result, textile, metal work, glass and paper industries were soon out of work. By 1813, the Indian handicrafts lost both their domestic as well as foreign market. Indian goods could not compete with the British factory-made products where machines were used. These markets were now captured and monopolised by Britain by means of war and colonisation. From an exporter India became an importer of these goods. They extracted money from the Indian rulers, merchants, zamindars and even the common people. Added to this drain were the profit made through trade and also the salaries of the officials. It was evident that their economic policies were meant to serve the interests of the East India Company and later the British Empire.



#### ACTIVITY 5.2

##### Case Study of Behriyar-Gareriya nomads:

This community of 75 sheep wool weavers' in Jharkhand from the Gaya district in Bihar has almost given up weaving blanket due to lack of funds as reported in the news (The Sunday Tribune-Spectrum, March 11, 2012). One weaver says, 'we cannot compete with the blankets being sold in the markets'. Another says, 'we are forced to sell our products in villages because of limited access to urban markets'.

Compare the situation of the weavers in British India and in the present times. Is it same or different? What steps would you suggest to improve their conditions?

### 5.3.2 Land Revenue Policy and Land Settlements

Since ancient times, the main source of livelihood for the people were agriculture. Hence, land tax had formed a principal source of revenue for all the emperors all over the world. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the main occupation of the Indian people were agriculture. During British rule, revenue from land kept on increasing, and the reasons for this were many. Earlier the British had come to trade with India. Gradually they wanted to conquer the vast territory of India for which they needed a lot of money. They also needed money for trade, projects of the company as well as for the cost of running the administration. The British carried out a number of land revenue experiments which caused hardship to cultivators. They extracted taxes from the farmers to finance their policies and war efforts. Direct and indirect means were carried out to bring about this collection of revenue for the British. This affected the lives of the people who could not meet their daily needs because they had to provide the landowners and the collectors their share in the produce. Local administration failed to provide relief and natural justice to the rural poor.

Lord Cornwallis introduced the **Permanent Settlement** in Bengal and Bihar in 1793. It made the landlord or zamindar deposit a fixed amount of money in the state treasury. In return they were recognised as hereditary owners of land. This made the zamindar the owner of the land. The amount of revenue to be paid to the Company was fixed for a period of time which made the British financially secured. Now they knew in advance as to how much revenue was coming in from the State. The zamindar also knew how much revenue was to be paid. So to get surplus revenue for themselves they asked the peasants to increase production. But, if the zamindar failed to pay the fixed revenue on time his land was sold off to another zamindar. The British stood to benefit from this settlement as the new class of zamindars that emerged became their political allies. They supported the British in times of need and acted as a buffer between them and the peasants. This class, in fact, supported the British against the freedom movement.

In 1822, the British introduced the **Mahalwari Settlement** in the North Western Provinces, Punjab, the Ganga Valley and parts of Central India. Here the basis of assessment was the product of a **mahal** or estate, which may be a village or a group of villages. Here all the proprietors of mahal were jointly responsible for paying the sum of revenue assessed by the government. Unfortunately it brought no benefit to the peasants as the British demands were very high.

The **Ryotwari Settlement** was introduced in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in many parts of Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Here the land revenue was imposed directly on the **ryots**, the individual cultivators, who actually worked on the land. The peasant was recognized as the owner of the land as long as he was able to pay the revenue but the exploitation continued with the high revenue demands.



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### 5.3.3 Commercialisation of Agriculture

Another major economic impact of the British policies in India was the introduction of a large number of commercial crops such as tea, coffee, indigo, opium, cotton, jute, sugarcane and oilseed. Different kinds of commercial crops were introduced with different intentions. Indian opium was used to balance the trade of Chinese tea with Britain in the latter's favor. The market for opium was strictly controlled by British traders which did not leave much scope for Indian producers to reap profit. Indians were forced to produce indigo and sell it on the conditions dictated by the Britishers. Indigo was sent to England and used as a dyeing agent for cloth produced in British towns. Indigo was grown under a different system where all farmers were compelled to grow it on 3/20<sup>th</sup> part of their land. Unfortunately cultivation of Indigo left the land infertile for some years. This made the farmers reluctant to grow it. In the tea plantations ownership changed hands quite often. The workers on these plantations worked under a lot of hardships.

Commercialisation of agriculture further enhanced the speed of transfer of ownership of land thereby increasing the number of landless laborers. It also brought in a large number of merchants, traders and middlemen who further exploited the situation. The peasant now depended on them to sell their produce during harvest time. Because the peasants now shifted to commercial crops, food grain production went down. So, less food stock led to famines. It was therefore not surprising that the peasants revolted. You would read about it in detail in the coming chapters. There was an enormous drain of wealth from our country to Britain due to the various economic policies. Additional financial burden was placed on India due to expenditures on salaries, pensions and training of military and civilian staffs employed by the British to rule India. If this wealth was invested in India it could have helped enormously improved the economy in this country. Let us learn how the economic policies implemented by the British changed the social structure of Indian society.

### 5.3.4 Rise of the New Money-lending Class

Time bound and excessive demand of revenue by the British government forced the peasants to take loans from the moneylenders. These moneylenders often exploited the peasants by charging high interest rates. They often used unfair means like false accounting, forged signatures and thumb impressions. The new legal system and the policy introduced by the British only helped the moneylenders who were either local merchants or landlords. In most cases, the peasants failed to pay back the loan with full interest. Thus, their lands gradually passed into the hands of the money-lending class.

### 5.3.5 Rise of the New Middle Class

A major impact of the British rule in India was the beginning of a new middle class. With the rise of the British commercial interests, new opportunities opened to a small

section of the Indian people. They often acted as the agents and intermediaries of the British traders and thus made huge fortunes. The new landed aristocracy, which came into being after the introduction of Permanent Settlement, also formed a part of this new class. A major section of the old landowning aristocracy lost ownership of their land and in many cases were replaced by a new class of land owners. These people got some English education and became the new elite. With the spread of British power, new job opportunities were also created. Indian society witnessed the introduction of new law courts, government officials and commercial agencies. The English educated people naturally got the necessary patronage from their colonial rulers. Thus, a new professional and service-holding middle class was also created by the British, apart from those with landed interests.

**Notes**

### 5.3.6 Transport and Communication

The means of transport in India at that time were bullock carts, camels and pack animals. England on the other hand needed railways that connected the raw material producing areas with the exporting ports and to facilitate the movement of British goods to different parts of the country as well as bring raw materials to the ports. The vast network of railways that you witness today was pioneered during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This opened avenue for British bankers and investors to invest surplus wealth and material in the construction of railways. Railways benefited the British capitalists in two important ways. First, it made trading in commodities much easier and profitable by connecting the internal markets with the ports. Secondly, the rail engines, coaches and the capital input for building of rail lines came from Britain. The British capitalists who invested in railways were also guaranteed a minimum profit of 5% by the government. These companies were also given free land with a lease of 99 years.

Although the railways were set up for the advantage of British trade, they also played an important role in the national awakening of the country. Though the British had never anticipated, the extensive transport network and improved education brought people and ideas closer.

During British rule, India took ideas of liberty, equality, human rights, science and technology from the West. This accelerated the process of modernisation. Now we will read about the impact of modern idea on Indian society.

**Do you know**

The first railway line was the Red Hill Railroad line, Madras. It opened in 1837 and was use for the carriage of granite stone. While the first passenger railway line ran from Bombay to Thane in 1853. The same year Dalhousie opened the first telegraphic line from Calcutta to Agra and also introduced the postal service to India.

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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.2

1. State true or false and justify your statement:
  - (a) Duty free entry of foreign goods was good for Indian economy.  
.....
  - (b) All land settlements benefit the British.  
.....
  - (c) Indigo, rice, wheat, tea and opium were the five major commercial crops introduced by the British.  
.....
  - (d) Some of the money lending class became the new landowners.  
.....
2. Provide any two reasons why the British built an extensive network of railways in India?

### 5.4 BRITISH IMPACT ON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Indian society underwent many changes after the British came to India. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, certain social practices like female infanticide, child marriage, sati, polygamy and a rigid caste system became more prevalent. These practices were against human dignity and values. Women were discriminated against at all stages of life and were the disadvantaged section of the society. They did not have access to any development opportunities to improve their status. Education was limited to a handful of men belonging to the upper castes. Brahmins had access to the Vedas which were written in Sanskrit. Expensive rituals, sacrifices and practices after birth or death were outlined by the priestly class.

When the British came to India, they brought new ideas such as liberty, equality, freedom and human rights from the Renaissance, the Reformation Movement and the various revolutions that took place in Europe. These ideas appealed to some sections of our society and led to several reform movements in different parts of the country. At the forefront of these movements were visionary Indians such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aruna Asaf Ali and Pandita Ramabai. These movements looked for social unity and strived towards liberty, equality and fraternity. Many legal measures were introduced to improve the status of women. For example, the practice of sati was banned in 1829 by Lord Bentinck, the then Governor General. Widow Remarriage was permitted by a law passed in 1856. A law passed in 1872, sanctioned inter-caste and inter-communal marriages. Sharda Act was passed in 1929 preventing child marriage. The act provided that it was illegal to marry a girl below 14 and a boy below 18 years. All the movements severely criticized the caste system and especially the practice of untouchability.

The impact of the efforts made by these numerous individuals, reform societies, and religious organisations was felt all over and was most evident in the national movement. Women started getting better education opportunities and took up professions and public employment outside their homes. The role of women like Captain Laxmi Sehgal of Indian National Army (INA), Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant, Aruna Asaf Ali and many others were extremely important in the freedom struggle.



**Notes**



**Figure 5.8** *Captain Lakshmi Sehgal (in the middle, front row) and other INA Cadres with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (left, front row)*

### **5.4.1 Social and Cultural Policy**

The British had come to India with the idea of making immense profits. This meant buying of raw materials at very cheap rates and selling finished goods at much higher prices. The British wanted the Indians to be educated and modern enough to consume their goods but not to the extent that it proved detrimental to British interests.

Some of the Britishers believed that Western ideas were modern and superior, while Indian ideas were old and inferior. This was, of course, not true. Indians had a rich traditional learning that was still relevant. By this time in England there was a group of Radicals who had a humanistic ideology towards Indians. They wanted India to be a part of the modern, progressive world of science. But the British government was cautious in undertaking rapid modernisation of India. They feared a reaction among the people if too much interference took place with their religious beliefs and social customs. The English wanted perpetuation of their rule in India and not a reaction among the people. Hence, though they talked about introducing reforms, in reality very few measures were taken and these were also half-hearted.

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### 5.4.2 Education Policy

The British took a keen interest in introducing the English language in India. They had many reasons for doing so. Educating Indians in the English language was a part of their strategy. The Indians would be ready to work as clerks on low wages while for the same work the British would demand much higher wages. This would reduce the expenditure on administration. It was also expected to create a class of Indians who were loyal to the British and were not able to relate to other Indians. This class of Indians would be taught to appreciate the culture and opinion of the British. In addition, they would also help to increase the market for British goods. They wanted to use education as a means to strengthen their political authority in the country. They assumed that a few educated Indians would spread English culture to the masses and that they would be able to rule through this class of educated Indians. The British gave jobs to only those Indians who knew English thereby compelling many Indians to go in for English education. Education soon became a monopoly of the rich and the city dwellers.

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. But a controversy soon arose. Some wanted the money to be spent on advocating western ideas only. There were others who placed more emphasis on traditional Indian learning. Some recommended use of vernaculars (regional languages) as the medium of instruction, others were for English. In this confusion people failed to notice the difference between English as a medium and English as a subject for study. The British, of course, decided in favor of teaching western ideas and literature through the medium of English language alone. Another step in this direction was the Woods Despatch of 1854. It asked the Government of India to assume responsibility for the education of the masses. As part of the directive given by the Woods Despatch, Departments of Education were instituted in all provinces and Affiliated Universities were opened in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. A few English schools and colleges were opened instead of many elementary schools. They ignored the education of the masses. But in reality, it was not sufficient to cater to the needs of the Indian people.

Though the British followed a half-hearted education policy in India, English language and western ideas also had some positive impact on the society. Many reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and Swami Vivekananda absorbed western ideas of liberalism and democracy and used it to reform some of the non-humanitarian social and religious practices of the time. Though education did not reach the masses but some ideas of anti-imperialism, nationalism, social and economic equality took root through political parties, discussions and debates on public platform and the press.

The spread of English language and western education helped Indians to adopt modern, rational, democratic, liberal and patriotic outlook. New fields of knowledge

in science, humanities and literature open to them. English became the lingua franca of the educated people in India. It united them and gradually made them politically conscious of their rights. It also gave opportunity to the Indians to study in England and learn about the working of democratic institutions there. The writings of John Locke, Ruskin, Mill, Rousseau and many others instilled in them the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, human rights and self-government. The French and the American Revolutions, and the unifications of Italy and Germany further strengthened their appreciation of these ideas. Cavour, Garibaldi and Mazzini became their favorite heroes. They began to aspire for these ideals for India.

Western thinkers like Max Mueller and Annie Besant encouraged vernacular languages and literary works to instill a sense of pride in Indian heritage and culture. It enabled Indians to revive India's cultural past. Also, the important role of press in arousing political awakening and exchange in ideas is noteworthy. The newspapers and journals gave opportunities to share ideas and problems. Similarly, novel, drama, short story, poetry, song, dance, theatre, art and cinema were used to spread views and express resistance to colonial rule. They spoke the language of the people, showcasing their everyday lives, joys and sorrows. Along with newspapers and journals, they promoted the feelings of self confidence, self respect, awareness and patriotism, thereby developing a feeling of national consciousness.

**Do you know**

Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) was founded in 1943. It used music as an integral medium to express dissent and resistance, and continuing its cultural movement even after Independence. Songs ranged from the awareness of exploitation, immortalising the sacrifices of peasants, the revolt of 1857 and the people killed in the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. They cited the meaninglessness of war and violence and also protested against the partition of India through their songs.

The British devised several strategies to make their rule effective. The early British administrators in India like Warren Hastings, William Jones, Jonathan Duncan and others glorified India's ancient past. These scholars and administrators were called Orientalists. They thought that a better understanding of Indian languages, literature and culture would make it easier for them to rule India. Important institutions that came to be identified with their efforts were the Calcutta Madarsas founded by Warren Hastings (1781), the Asiatic Society of Bengal founded by William Jones (1784), the Sanskrit College at Banaras founded by Jonathan Duncan (1794) and the Fort William College founded by Wellesley (1800). These institutions, especially the Asiatic Society and the Fort William College became the epicenter of the study on Indian culture, languages and literature. For the first time great ancient Sanskrit writers like Kalidasa became known to the world through translation of their monumental work into English.

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### ACTIVITY 5.3

During this period there were some individuals who played a major role in glorifying India's culture, knowledge and tradition. Listed below are some personalities whose contribution have been recognised worldwide. Search for more information in the library/internet on their works.

1. Aryabhatta .....
2. Charaka .....
3. Maitreyi .....
4. Gargi .....

How do you think it must have helped the Indians to take pride in their past history and regain self respect?

#### 5.4.3 Impact of the Reform Movement

How did the socio-religious reform movements led to the national movement? The persistent efforts of the reformers had immense impact on the society. The religious reform movements instilled in the minds of Indians greater self-respect, self-confidence and pride in their country. These reform movements helped many Indians to come to terms with the modern world. The reformers felt that modern ideas and culture could be best imbibed by integrating them into Indian cultural stream. They helped other countrymen to appreciate that all modern ideas were not against Indian culture and values. The introduction of modern education guided the Indians towards a scientific and rational approach to life. People became more conscious of their identity as Indians which was ultimately responsible for their united struggle against the British in the freedom movement of India.

#### 5.4.4 British Administration and Judicial System

The Indians found it difficult to adjust to the new system of administration introduced by the British. The Indians were denied political rights and the British officers treated them with contempt. Indians were excluded from all higher positions in the civil administration and military.

The British also introduced a new system of law and justice in India. A hierarchy of civil and criminal courts was established. The laws were codified and attempts were also made to separate the judiciary from the executive. Efforts were made to establish the 'Rule of Law' in India. But this only helped the British to enjoy arbitrary powers and to interfere with the rights and liberties of the Indians. The law courts were not easily accessible to the common people. Justice became a costly affair. The new judicial system also discriminated between Europeans and Indians.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.3

- Match the following:

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| (a) Widow Remarriage Act        | (i) 1857   |
| (b) Charter Act                 | (ii) 1794  |
| (c) Department of Education     | (iii) 1813 |
| (d) Sanskrit College of Banaras | (iv) 1856  |
|                                 | (v) 1855   |
- Name at least two centers of Indian culture and languages founded by the British.
- Briefly explain at least two legal measures which helped improve the status of women in British India.

### 5.5 PROTESTS MOVEMENTS

The adverse impact of the British rule on the political, economic and social spheres resulted in sharp reaction of the Indian people against the foreigners. This led to a series of the anti-British movements throughout the country. Peasants and tribes rebelled against exploitative rulers. This has been dealt in greater detail in the next few lessons. During the British rule, the number of famines recorded in India was unprecedented. During the first half of the 19th century, 7 big famines were recorded which led to the death of 15 lakh people. Similarly, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were 24 famines causing over 200 lakh deaths. The most devastating was the Bengal Famine of 1943 which killed 3 to 4 million Indians. Peasants burdened with taxation, eviction from land and survivors from the Bengal famine joined the rebel groups of Sanyasis and Fakirs. In 1783, rebels stopped paying revenues to company agents. However, rebels were finally forced to surrender. Similarly, Poligars of Tamil Nadu, Malabar and Coastal Andhra, Mappilas of Malabar revolted against the colonial rule. In North India, the Jats of western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana revolted in 1824. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Kolis revolted.

Tribes in different parts of country also rebelled as colonial government extended their authority to tribal lands. The tribes were subjected to various extortions. Tribal leaders such as Bhils of Khandesh and Kolis of Singhbhum revolted against British rule. However, British suppressed them ruthlessly. Oppressed Santhals on the border of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa also revolted against Britishers as they were being evicted from their lands. They even set up their own government but British suppressed their revolt. Though these rebels did not succeed, they exposed the unpopular character of colonial rule. Even today, we witness many disparities in our society. At least one-third of the country's population barely manages to survive. If you compare this situation with that at the time of independence, we have made good progress but we still have a long way to go.



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### Impact of British Rule on India: Economic, Social and Cultural (1757-1857)



**Figure 5.9** *Santhal Rebellion: Fight between Railway Engineers and Santhals (Illustrated from London News, 1856)*



#### ACTIVITY 5.4

According to expert analysis, more than 17,500 farmers killed themselves between 2002 and 2006. Farmers' suicides have been reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu. The reasons are mainly crop failure and debts. Also, the number of farmers is also falling due to their abandonment of farming. Collect more information either from newspapers, magazines and internet, or by talking to 5-6 farmers on the possible reasons for taking such an extreme step? Share your thoughts.

Have you seen the movie *Peepli Live*? Do watch it if you can.

#### 5.5.1 Impact of the Revolt of 1857

The economic decline of peasantry and artisans were reflected in 12 major and numerous minor famines from 1770 to 1857. All these factors only helped to spread anti-British feeling which ultimately culminated in the revolt of 1857. The British were not very sensitive to the feelings of the masses they ruled ruthlessly. Hence, reforms introduced by them to put an end to some social customs made the people believe that the Government wanted them to be converted to Christianity. As a result, the English East India Company's rule in India witnessed a large number of uprisings and rebellions. In a later lesson you will read about some important and popular uprisings and also analyse the nature and significance of these uprisings. You will also read about the Revolt of 1857 which had a major impact on our national movement. For the first time it unified and brought together people having different ethnic, religious and class background against the British rule.

The revolt brought an end to East India Company's rule, along with changes in the British policy towards Indian States. One of the most important outcomes of the revolt was that it gave rise to nationalism. Indian people became more aware of their heroes, who sacrificed their lives for the country so that others might live in free India in times to come. The revolt however scarred the relationship between Hindus and Muslims with the Divide and Rule Policy which was adopted by the British. They felt that if they wanted to continue their rule in India, it was important to divide the Hindus and Muslims.

### **5.5.2 Impact Today**

After reading this lesson, you would become more aware of how British rule affected every bit of Indian life. This political control also meant a long drawn interaction between two distinct cultures. Some changes were deliberately introduced to strengthen the British political and trading interests. But there were others that occurred as a byproduct of the interaction between the Indian and the western cultures. A large number of British and Europeans stayed in our country during this period which also brought cultural transformation.

We should also understand that our present life is shaped to a great extent by our immediate past. In this immediate past, the British control over a large part of the country becomes an important determining factor. Some of the cultural and legal changes that took place as a result of British rule continue to affect our life even today. The rails, the club life, the imperial buildings like the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Parliament are reminiscent of the British rule in India. Many food items like bread, tea and cake that we consume today are a direct result of our interaction with Europeans during the British rule. If you look around yourself, you will be surprised to know that a large number of costumes prevalent in urban India were adopted during the British rule, for example, trousers, coats and ties. The idea of introducing Indian civil service started during this period. The Indian armed forces still retain many aspects of European training and culture. The medium of our instruction or learning itself is predominantly English. The Supreme Court and the High Court pass their judgments in English. This language itself is a legacy of the British rule and continues to be the lingua franca of Indians seeking employment in their own country.



### **INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.4**

1. Identify two reasons for protest movements by peasants and tribal groups in India.
2. How did the British policy of Divide and Rule affect the national interest of the country? Explain in 30 words.



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### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The British came to India as traders, but also had territorial ambitions. They gradually gained control over the whole of India by using various means like direct conquest, annexation and diplomacy.
- The Battle of Plassey in 1757 marked the beginning of the political dominance of the British in India. British rule had a deep impact on the political and social life of the Indians.
- The economic impact of British rule was most far-reaching. It destroyed the traditional economy of India and drained India's wealth to Britain. The economic policies of the British also affected the classes of peasants, artisans very adversely.
- The discontentment that resulted from British Rule gave rise to a series of resistance movements against the British. The Sanyasi and Fakir uprisings, the Farazi movements, the Wahabi movement and the Santhal rebellion are some examples of resistance to British rule.
- The war of 1857 had to end in defeat due to the military and political weaknesses of the Indians.



### TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How did the land revenue policies of the British affect the life of the peasants?
2. Distinguish between Permanent Settlement and Mahalwari System.
3. How did English education contributed in the rise of nationalism in India?
4. Examine the reasons for the success of the English language in the country?
5. Do you agree with the fact that British impact could be seen even today? If yes, how?



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

#### 5.1

1. (a) (iv)  
(b) (iii)
2. To find raw materials for their industries in Britain and markets for their finished goods.
3. Doctrine of Lapse and Subsidiary Alliance.

**5.2**

1. (a) No because the cheap foreign goods were a threat to Indian handloom. Also, Indian weavers suffered much loss.  
(b) No because the high revenue rates led many peasants to revolt against the British rule. Though the British Empire benefitted economically, it had to suffer politically in the long run.  
(c) No because rice and wheat are food crops.  
(d) Yes because when the peasants failed to pay back their loan their lands passed into the hands of the money lending class.
2. The main purpose was to connect trading ports and industrial towns to villages from where they got their raw materials, that is, cash crops. It ensured its easy and fast transport. Also, finished goods from the trading ports could be taken to various markets.

**5.3**

1. (a) (iv)  
(b) (iii)  
(c) (i)  
(d) (ii)
2. Asiatic Society of Bengal founded by William Jones in 1784.  
Fort William College founded by Lord Wellesley in 1800.
3. The practice of sati, wherein the wife had to jump at her husband's funeral fire, was banned in 1829.  
Sharda Act, which raised the marriageable age of girls to 14 and boys to 18 thereby preventing child marriage, was passed in 1929.

**5.4**

1. (a) The exploitative nature of the British with their heavy taxation and high revenue rates on the peasants.  
(b) Various extortion policies and extension of British authority to tribal lands.
2. The British policy of Divide and Rule led to the division of the country on the basis of religion. The relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims suffered with the British pitching native against native to continue their rule.



**Notes**