



## A STUDY ON THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA UNDER BRITISH EMPIRE

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### **ABSTRACT**

*An investigation into the political structure that existed in India during the time of British colonial rule has revealed a convoluted and diverse link that may be understood as being both exploitative and transformative. During the almost two centuries that the British Empire dominated India, India was characterised by a colonial administrative structure that was hierarchical in nature and aimed to extract economic resources from the subcontinent. A group of British government officers who acted as the system's cornerstone were responsible for administering the vast and diverse Indian population during British rule. This group's work was carried out in India. However, the British government progressively introduced modernization and centralization to India's governance through the construction of a centralised legal system, the expansion of the infrastructure, and the introduction of education in the Western style. This dual nature of British rule in India, which was both oppressive and modernising, is still a topic of historical investigation and controversy, which demonstrates colonialism's continuing influence on India's political and social landscape. A comprehension of this historical context is necessary for one to get an awareness of the challenges and legacies that continue to have an impact on the politics of contemporary India.*

**Keywords:** *British, politica, administration*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The British colonial empire in India was the largest ever built by humanity, and it was centred in India. However, in comparison to the majority of other types of colonies, this one was somewhat unusual. With the exception of the Dutch East Indies, which is now known as

Indonesia, the majority of colonies, notably those in Latin America, were founded by employing the labour of slaves or people who were indentured to work for the colonists. The bulk of Indians who are currently residing in Fiji (as well as in many other regions) were brought there as indentured servants. The British established their colony in India with the assistance of peasants and slave labour who were hired on a voluntary basis. In the same way that there was a white "settler population" in locations like Kenya and Zimbabwe, there was also a white "settler population" in India, which colonised the country and laid the framework for colonial dominance. The wealthier landowners and social notables were persuaded to support the British cause, while the peasantry and labourers were coerced into switching sides; this occasionally occurred after battles, but in the end, the majority of them did so. They did this by replacing the current organisations with new ones and providing the new organisations Zamindaries or other land rights. This also allowed them to build new groups that would work with them. As a consequence of this, a colony known as India was founded with the assistance of "natives." The British government extracted the lion's share of the surplus from the Indian economy by imposing onerous exactions on the country's peasants in the form of revenue demands, indirect taxation, and some sort of tribute. At initially, there was also looting, but that ceased rather fast after it started. What was the process that was followed? In order to carry it out, what strategies did you use? Who among the many classes and strata profited from this, and who was on the receiving end? How did the situation turn out for India? Finally, what potential benefits did it have for the United Kingdom? The answers to these questions will provide light on an intriguing storyline. a story that can be considered our history. a history that is very much a part of our lives now. Before we move on, let's take a short break to discuss the meaning of the term "colonialism" so that everyone is on the same page. Even if colonialism is no longer practised, imperialism and neocolonialism are still prevalent in today's world.

### **Defining Colonialism**

At the beginning of the modern age, in the sixteenth century, the system of colonialism was established for the first time. One distinction from earlier eras must be acknowledged in order to appreciate the distinctive nature of its characteristics. There were colonies from the very beginning. The Greeks had established colonies in a number of locations before the birth of

Christ. Two examples of this impact can be seen in the world-famous Angkor Vat temple in Cambodia and the Ramayana performance in Bali. Colonies were established by the Indians; for example, the Cholas ventured outside of India and established settlements in Indo-China and Indonesia. Foreign control has historically been achieved by military conquest. At that time, however, we did not use the term "colonialism" to describe what was going on. In light of this, the question that has to be answered is the following: what was so revolutionary about the practise of colonisation during the 16th through the 18th centuries that it gave origin to the term colonialism?

Beginning in the 16th century, we witnessed a relatively small region of the world exerting coercive influence over the majority of the world's population. The political sphere of the rest of the world was eventually dominated by a very limited number of countries, notably Spain, Portugal, Holland, Britain, and France. In contrast to earlier times, when the balance of power was continually moving between various powers, colonialism generated a persistent pattern of rule and dominance by a select number of countries over the entirety of the world. This eventually led to the lands that were invaded becoming economically integrated into the demands of the economies of the countries who did the conquering through a process of trade that was deeply unfair. Others, such as Wallerstein, have referred to it as the formation of a "world system" in their writings. On the other hand, a world of interdependence came into being. But there is an interesting quirk to this interdependence: it has always been dependent, and it has been unequally titled in favour of some and against the rest. This is a feature of the global system that continues to exist, much to the cost of the developing nations; for instance, the interdependence of, say, Germany and the United States is beneficial to both of them. On the other hand, one cannot make the same statement about the relationship between India and either the United States or Germany.

There is one more issue that needs to be discussed before we can move on from this subject. Before the advent of colonialism, the levels of development of a great number of countries—among them India, China, and a few Arab nations—were on par with or even higher than those of the colonial powers. This was the case in many of these countries. In point of fact, Arabs held a dominant position in the trade of either the Indian Ocean or the Mediterranean. The European nations enjoyed an advantage as a result of a few technological advancements,

such as the mariner's compass and iron hulls for their ships. These advancements made it easier for the European nations to dominate the high seas and establish their hegemony than it would have been otherwise possible. Remember that the so-called "industrial revolution" hadn't yet started yet at the time of this writing. India was conquered beginning in 1757, which was a significant amount of time after Latin America. A couple of decades later, in the 1780s and beyond, the spinning wheel, the steam engine, and other breakthroughs contributed to the beginning of the industrial revolution. Therefore, the decline of nations such as India did not begin until the beginning of the colonial era. Within a few short decades, the western world had fully surpassed the nations of the so-called "third world" in the majority of fields. This was the case in many different areas. Several authors, including Andre Gunder Frank, have coined the term "development of underdevelopment" to describe this phenomenon.

### **Consequences of Colonialism**

The loss of Siraj-ud-Daula in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 is generally seen as marking the beginning of colonial control. The Battle of Buxar, which took place in 1765, resulted in the British gaining control of the Diwani of Bengal. At the time, the Bengal revenue circle encompassed not just East Bengal but also West Bengal, Bangladesh, Bihar, and Orissa as well. The East India Company was granted a monopoly by the British Parliament to control all aspects of trade with the East, including hdia. As a result of these fights, they were able to acquire full authority over the collection of land taxes in the territories that they had taken control of. The British government was able to exert its influence politically and seize direct control of the economy. The trajectory of the Indian economy was rapidly redirected to serve the interests of the British economy. During that time period, the primary means by which they exercised control over the Indian economy and transferred the surplus to Britain, which was on the cusp of undergoing a prolonged industrial revolution, were the activities of trade and income, respectively. All of these things ended up having a very bad impact on India.

### **Nature and Phases of the Colonial Empire**

Given that the fundamental goals of colonialism are the exploitation of the colony and the appropriation (to gain control of) of its surplus for the sake of benefiting the society in the metropolitan area, the nature of colonialism can be best understood in terms of how this is

accomplished. There were numerous stages that the exploitative methods went through. When attempting to characterise the phases, one can use either the overarching tendency or the tendency in conjunction with the processes and instrumentalities. In either scenario, the process that was used to appropriate the surplus went through substantial iterations of change. As a result, the colonial system of exploitation was never stagnant; rather, it was perpetually developing. We will end up with two patterns that are only slightly distinct from one another regardless of which of the two methods we choose to apply. According to Bipan Chandra, the process of colonisation can be broken down into three distinct stages, each of which was precipitated by distinct shifts in the urban economy, society, and polity. The prevalent pattern serves as the foundation for his assertion. The first phase, which he calls "monopoly trade and revenue appropriation," was distinguished by a "element of plunder and direct seizure of surplus," the absence of any significant imports of manufactured products, and other elements. He refers to this phase as "monopoly trade and revenue appropriation." During the second period, which he considers to be one of "exploitation through trade," the colony evolved into a "subordinate trading partner" by acting as a market for (industrial) commodities as well as a source of raw materials. He describes this period as having been characterised by "exploitation through trade." This is the type of colonial exploitation that has received the greatest attention. He refers to the third stage as the "Foreign investments and competition for colonies" period, which was a time when surplus capital from metropolitan areas was delivered to the colonies for the purpose of the direct exploitation of raw materials through the construction of industry and the theft of profits from those industries.

The fundamental method of exploitation shifts, as can be observed from the categorization presented earlier in this section. The older ones continue to exist, but in a supplemental form; for instance, the monopoly over revenue collection is still in place, but it is now accompanied by unfair trade and trade surpluses. The same may be said for the subsequent stage, which consists of the emergence of profit expropriation as the principal mode and the continuation of unequal trade as a supporting mode. Profit expropriation means "to strip someone of ownership." It doesn't matter how we choose to look at the stages; we can easily recognise a pattern like this no matter what.

As we shall find out with Amiya Bagchi, when we combine the nature and source of political

domination with the tactics and means of exploitation, we obtain a somewhat different picture of the stages of colonial power. This is something that we will uncover in the following section. The first era begins in 1757 with Robert Clive's triumph over the Nawab of Bengal and concludes in 1858 with the Great Rebellion, sometimes referred to as the First War of Independence. This era spans the years 1757–1858. The East India Company was able to wield political power during this time period thanks to a charter that was granted to it by the British parliament, which was also responsible for selecting the Governor-General. The second phase covers the years from 1858 and 1947, beginning when the British parliament first seized direct control of the country and ending with the country's independence and subsequent partition.

It is feasible to divide the first phase into two distinct stages. The first half century, or the years 1757–1765 to 1813, were dedicated entirely to business (during this time period, merchants were the dominating class in charge of long-distance trade). Due to the fact that Britain had not yet begun its industrial revolution, it was impossible to ship large quantities of finished goods to other countries. During this entire time period, the East India Company held a monopoly on all trade with the East, including commerce with China and India. Then, in 1813, the Company's commercial monopoly with India was ended, ushering in a brand new age. This was followed by the Company ending its trading monopoly with China in 1834. At this point in time, Britain had already established itself as the main industrial force on the global stage; therefore, the time called for a different form of exploitation mechanism. A handful of "agency houses," which ultimately developed into "managing agencies," took over the position previously held by the Company. These were in charge of all of the country's foreign trade (with the exception of a minor amount of trade in western India) as well as a significant portion of the country's wholesale trade, particularly in tradable goods that were extremely important to the urban economy at the time. The years following 1813 are best understood as an era marked by the exploitation of free commerce.

In the year 1858, either the British parliament or the Crown took full control of the country. The Viceroy also served as the Governor General at this point. Even though there was a shift in the nominal control of the political system in 1858, the techniques of exploitation remained, for the most part, unchanged. The years 1858 to 1914–1918 represent the zenith of



the exploitation of free trade. However, at this time, the Indian economy fully opened up to the influence of the global capitalist market and was fully integrated into it. During this time period. Integration into the global capitalist economy resulted in the emergence of a diverse set of levers for the capture of domestic surpluses, but did not alter the nature of the exploitation that took place. Along with the development of railways and other forms of transport infrastructure, an interconnected economic network was developed. This network was comprised of various internal economies that were all orientated towards the global capitalist economy, but Britain in particular was the primary focus of this network. In spite of this, a new era of exploitation began in the second decade of the 20th century, roughly during the time of the first world war, and it continued until 1947, despite the fact that the country had been formally independent since 1947. In point of fact, it continues to exist in this day and age in a variety of guises.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study a study on the political administration in India under British Empire
2. To study political administration in India

### **Impact: The First Phase-The Peasantry and Its Impoverishment**

Everyone is familiar with the narrative that colonialism was responsible for the collapse of the agricultural sector in India, which in turn led to the impoverished of the peasantry. impoverished is the state of being poor. Many authors have also pointed out that the British maintained many parts of the Todar Mal-perfected Mughal land revenue system. This is something that the British did. As we have seen previously in this lesson, it is impossible for the handicrafts to have been harmed by exerting pressure to the hands during the 18th century because there were so few produced goods shipped from the United Kingdom at that time period. Then, what was the cause of this? To put it another way, how did poverty come to exist in the first place? This is a key question that will assist us all in better comprehending the circumstances that led to the poverty that exists in India. The British were successful in preserving a considerable portion of the Mughal tax system, but they did make significant modifications to the system's fundamental architecture. The first modification, which was very minor, was that they made a considerable increase in the amount of revenue that was

collected. It is estimated that the overall amount of money received from the Bengal Diwani increased slightly during the first few years of British administration, but that sum remained constant throughout the subsequent 100 years. This was a considerable increase.

It is essential to keep in mind that the quantity of money gathered kept growing even though one-third of the population perished as a direct result of the terrible famines that were triggered as a result of this. It is essential to bear in mind that during the rule of the Mughals, a portion of the revenue collected from taxes was used to support the economy and the growth of local goods, whereas during the rule of the British, only a small portion of the revenue was invested in this manner. Let's take a look at the ways in which the Mughals adapted the revenue system that they preserved for themselves. They made a substantial adjustment by basing revenue estimates on the total quantity of land that had the potential to be farmed rather than the amount of land that was currently being farmed. This was an important change. This was quite important, so for better understanding, let's look at an example. During the Mughal Empire, a peasant who had the right to cultivate 100 acres of land but only used 55 acres of that land was only had to pay tax on 55 acres. Despite this, the British assessed and collected revenue for the entire 100 acres of land. Imagine the great difficulty this would have caused for the peasants if, with the exception of a select few, no one farmed the complete parcel of land that they were authorised to do so legally. To put it another way, one could argue that under the Mughals, valuations were determined not based on assets but rather on production, and that this contributed to the adaptability of the system.

A great number of individuals have also made the observation that the actual rent was frequently not paid in full, and that the predicaments of the peasants were taken into consideration. Thirdly, despite the fact that the Mughals calculated their revenue in cash, the majority of the time they collected it in kind, which prevented the farmer from having to conduct a fire sale. The failure of the Mughals to make payments on time or incur other forms of debt was not the cause of the loss of territory under their rule. This is a very significant and conclusive statement. For the first time, the British allowed those who were not considered to be peasants to buy land. Additionally, the British mandated the sale of land in the case that taxes or other debts were not paid.

The preceding information should make it abundantly evident that the system that was



established by the British was inflexible with regard to the caprices of the agricultural economy in conditions like to those that exist in our tropical climate that is dependent on the monsoon. Even if land cannot be transformed into a commodity in the same way that cloth can, this event marked the beginning of the transformation of land into an entity that is analogous to a commodity. On the other hand, extensive land alienation started to become a defining feature of agrarian relations. This had two repercussions: first, it permitted superior holders, such as moneylenders, to confiscate the land of peasants in order to realise arrears for any reason; second, it authorised moneylenders to seize the land of superior holders, such as Zamindars, in the event that debt and interest were not returned. As a direct consequence of this, a sizeable proportion of landowners began operating their properties as absentee landlords and renting out their land at exorbitant prices to tenants who engaged in share-cropping.

In this situation, an explanation is necessary so that the situation is not misunderstood. This wasn't something that was confined to the Bengali Diwani and the new land tenure system that it established. This was a characteristic that was shared across the entirety of British India, regardless of the land tenure system that was in place at the time. Take a look at the Permanent Settlement that Cornwallis founded in Bengal. There, the government gave a select group of powerful Zamindars the ability to collect taxes from cultivators who were now considered to be tenants in the settlement. It wasn't until the later half of the 19th century that there was a limit placed on how much rent could be charged, despite the fact that the government required a particular sum from the zamindars that remained unchangeable forever. Take, for example, the Ryotwari of Elphinstone in the Bombay Presidency and Munro in the Madras Presidency. In both of these regions, periodic income assessments were carried out every 20–30 years, and direct settlements with peasant landowners were negotiated. The peasants faced extensive problems as a result of the newly introduced characteristics that were described above. The single variable that played a role in the extinction of the peasants was the amount of pauperization, which is defined as the number of people who are dependent on charity for their survival.

### **Impact: The Second Phase-De-industrialisation and its Effects'**

During this time period, the consequences of colonialism on India's political economy were

mixed, having both negative and good repercussions.

### **The Destructive Role**

India already had a significant and widespread secondary manufacturing economy long before the British arrived on the subcontinent. During the time that Akbar was in power, a Mahkarnai Karkhanai, also known as a Department of Industry, is said to have been established. Handicraftsmen operating out of their homes or members of a guild were responsible for the majority of the organisation of the manufacturing process. The national well-being or the riches in the possession of the rulers in our country were not any less than they are today; in fact, some estimations show that they were higher here, with the exception of a few technological advantages acquired by some countries in western Europe, as was mentioned earlier. With the exception of guilds, the fact that pre-capitalist Indian manufacturing were prevalent and frequently intimately related to the agricultural economy is more noteworthy in this particular instance; the linkage between agriculture and manufactures was beneficial to both facets of society. The beginning of the 19th century in India was marked by the collapse of various secondary industries, and the country did not witness the development of any new industries during this time period. De-industrialization is the term that economists have used to refer to this phenomenon. Following that, we will take a cursory look at the technique in question and then analyse its more far-reaching ramifications.

As a follow-up to a previous point, the beginning of this process of de-industrialization may be dated back to 1813, when the East India Company was stripped of its monopoly on international trade. This event took place at the same time as the Industrial Revolution was reaching its peak in Britain. Around the year 1800, India fell into the customary pattern of colonial exploitation that had been going on for centuries. This pattern was seen by the public as "import of raw materials and export of finished goods" by the metropolitan economy, or vice versa, depending on whether one looked at it from the point of view of India or any other colony. What were the factors that led to this phase of deindustrialization? And what did you find out as a consequence?

## Social Reformers and Public Debate

The reformers didn't do away with traditions altogether; rather, they put them under a microscope and questioned their validity. A critique of this nature requires the input of a sizable portion of an educated community. As a consequence of this, the reformers made it a point to take part in public conversation by way of newspapers and journals. Ram Mohun Roy did the same thing through *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*, Keshub Chandra Sen did the same thing through *Indian Mirror* and *Sulabh Sarnachar*, Bal Shastri Jarnbhekar did the same thing through *Darpan* (1832), and Lpkhitadi did the same thing with *Prabhakar*. Reflecting a core democratic ideal that became a reality during the national movement that was gaining steam at the time, nearly every subject relating to social reform was open for public discussion. This was a direct result of the national movement. One of the most striking results of these eruptions in literary production was the enrichment of the vernacular languages. This resulted in an enhancement of several significant languages, including Bengali, Assamese, Marathi, Gujarati, and Tamil, among others. In the end, the desire for a separate Orissa, Andhra, etc. was finally impacted by the reformers' indirect support to the creation of linguistic minorities. This is something that was obviously acknowledged in the 1890s.

The reformers were also aware of how important it was to educate women in addition to all groups of men in order to shield their society from the criticism of colonial and missionary groups and to realise sustainable reform. They argued for an educational system that combined scientific inquiry and critical thinking. According to Rammohun Roy, what India required was "not the revival of Sanskrit learning," but rather the promotion of a more liberal and progressive system of education that covered Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Anatomy in addition to other helpful disciplines. In other words, Rammohun Roy believed that what India need was "not the revival of Sanskrit learning." A member of the Viceroy Council who is responsible for law, Lord Macaulay made a significant contribution that was critical to the success of the English educational system. Despite the fact that Lord Macaulay's goal was to produce a class of people who were Indian in appearance but British in taste, Rammohun Roy and others sought to bring the fruits of modern knowledge into India and infuse Indians with these new ideas and energy. They also intended to bring contemporary knowledge into India.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the political administration of India when it was under British rule was typified by a complicated interaction of power dynamics, policies, and the effects of those policies. The conquest of India by the British Empire had profound and long-lasting consequences on the continent, some of which were advantageous and others of which were detrimental. On the one hand, the British created contemporary structures for government, legal systems, and infrastructure in India, which laid the groundwork for India's future development. However, these reforms were frequently implemented in order to promote British interests first and foremost, which resulted in social unrest, cultural repression, and economic exploitation of the native population.

In addition, the British Raj encouraged the growth of a strong sense of community and nationalism among Indians, all of which contributed to India's eventual achievement of independence in 1947. During the fight for independence, prominent individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru emerged, and the legacies they left behind continue to have an impact on the political atmosphere in India today.

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