

Name _____

Imperialism in India: An Evaluation

Historical Context

European imperialism was widespread in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It resulted in the carving up of areas of Africa and Asia into vast colonial empires. This was the case for British colonialism in India. As imperialism spread, the colonizer and colony viewed imperialism differently. They saw both positive and negative effects of imperialism.

Document 1

This excerpt points out the positive and negative results of imperialism.

Modern progressive nations (European colonizers) ... seek to control "garden spots" in the tropics. Under their direction, these places can yield the tropical produce that their citizens need. In return the progressive nations bring the people of those garden spots the foodstuffs and manufactures they need. They develop the territory by building roads, canals, railways, and telegraphs. The progressive nations can establish schools and newspapers for the people of the colonies. They can also give these people the benefit of other blessings of civilization which they have not the means of creating themselves.

Source: O.P. Austin, "Does Colonization Pay?" *The Forum*, 1900 (adapted)

1a. According to this author, what are the benefits of imperialism to the colony? _____

b. What are the benefits of imperialism to the colonizer? _____

Document 2

In this speech, Dadabhai Naoroji, an Indian, describes the effect of imperialism on India.

To sum up the whole, the British rule has been - morally, a great blessing; politically, peace and order on one hand ... on the other, materially, impoverishment ... The natives call the British system ... "the knife of sugar." That is to say there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is a knife, nevertheless.

In these later comments, Naoroji stresses the negative aspects.

Europeans (the British) occupy almost all the higher places in every department of government ... Natives, no matter how fit, are deliberately kept out of the social institutions started by Europeans... All they (the Europeans) do is live off of India while they are here. When they go, they carry all they have gained.

Source: Dadabhai, Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings*, Caxton Printing Works, 1887 (adapted)

2. According to Naoroji, how is British imperialism both positive **and** negative for India? _____

Document 3

This excerpt comments on benefits to India during British imperialism.

Englishmen... have given the people of India the greatest human blessing - peace. They introduced Western education. This has brought an ancient and civilized nation in touch with modern thought, modern sciences, and modern life. They have built an administration that is strong and efficient. They have framed wise laws and have established courts of justice.

Source: Romesh Dutt, *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, K. Paul Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1902 (adapted)

3. What has India gained during British imperialism, according to Dutt? _____

Document 4

This excerpt describes additional benefits of imperialism.

British brains, British enterprise, and British capital have changed the face of India. Means of communication have been developed. There are great numbers of bridges, more than 40,000 miles of railway, and 70,000 miles of paved roads. These testify to the skill and industry of British engineers. Irrigation works on a very large scale have brought 30 million acres under cultivation. This has greatly added to the agricultural wealth of the country. Industrialization has also begun. India now has improved sanitation and a higher standard of living. It has a fine transport system and carefully thought-out schemes for relief work. Because of these things famines have now almost disappeared.

Source: J.A.R. Marriott, *The English in India*, Clarendon Press, 1932 (adapted)

4. List at least **five** benefits of imperialism cited by this author. _____

Document 5

This excerpt points out the social and economic impact of imperialism on India.

British rule brought with it from the West certain standards of humanity that Indian society had not reached. Early action was taken to stop infanticide (the killing of female babies)... The slave trade was ended and the owning of slaves was forbidden... One result of the new order was a steady rise in the value of India's export trade.

Source: Sir Reginald Coupland, *India: A Restatement*, 1945 (adapted)

5. What benefits of imperialism does this author identify? _____

Document 6

In this excerpt, Mohandas Gandhi offers a complaint about imperialism.

You English committed one supreme crime against my people. For a hundred years you have done everything for us. You have given us no responsibility in our own government.

6. What is Gandhi's criticism of imperialism? _____

Document 7

This excerpt explains how India became a "typical" colonial economy.

This process continued throughout the nineteenth century. Other old Indian industries - shipbuilding, metalwork, glass, paper - and many crafts were broken up. Thus the economic development of India was stopped and the growth of new industry prevented... A typical colonial economy was build up. India became an agricultural colony of industrial England.

It supplied raw material and provided markets for England's industrial goods. The destruction of industry led to unemployment on a vast scale... The poverty of the country grew. The standard of living fell to terribly low levels.

Source: Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, The John Day Company, 1946 (adapted)

7. What negative effects of imperialism does Nehru point out? _____

Document 8

In his book *Indian Home Rule*, Gandhi asked the question, "Why do you want to drive away the English?" He replied with the following statement:

... "Because India has become impoverished by the Government. They take away our money from year to year. The most important posts are reserved for themselves. We are kept in a state of slavery. They behave insolently (insultingly) towards us and disregard our feelings..."

Source: Mohandas Gandhi, *Indian Home Rule*, Navajivan Publishing, 1938, reprinted in 1946 (adapted)

8. Based on this document, state **two** reasons Gandhi wanted to drive away the English.
1) _____

2) _____

Task

Explain for **both** nations, Great Britain the imperial power and India the colony the following:

- ♣ The positive effects of imperialism.
- ♣ The negative effects of imperialism.