



Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyze the impact of colonialism on the economic, social, and political structures of India during the 19th and early 20th century. Discuss the various forms of resistance that emerged in response to colonial rule. (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly describing about colonialism.
- Discuss various impacts of colonialism during 19th & 20th century.
- Discuss different resistances that emerge in response to colonial rule.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- Colonialism implies domination of people's life and culture. The main goal of colonialism is extraction of economic benefits from the colony. Colonialism results in control over life of natives in political, economic, cultural and social spheres.

Body

- During the 19th and early 20th centuries, colonialism had a profound impact on the economic, social, and political structures of India in various ways like:
 - **Economically:**
 - The British introduced a series of economic policies that aimed to extract maximum resources and wealth from the country.
 - **Replacement of Food Crops with Commercial Crops:** The British introduced new forms of agriculture, such as indigo and opium cultivation, which led to the displacement of traditional farming practices and the exploitation of local farmers.
 - **Exploitation of India's Resources:** The British also established a network of railways and ports, which facilitated the export of Indian raw materials and the import of manufactured goods from Britain.
 - This led to the deindustrialization of India and the creation of a dependent economy.
 - **Exploitive Policies:** These policies included the imposition of high tariffs on Indian goods, the establishment of a series of monopolies, and the introduction of a new land revenue system that aimed to increase the amount of money extracted from Indian farmers.
 - These policies had a negative impact on the economy, as they reduced the competitiveness of Indian industries and increased the burden on farmers.
 - **Socially:**
 - **Exploiting Social Division:** The British implemented a system of caste-based discrimination, known as the "divide and rule" policy, which exacerbated existing social divisions and led to the marginalization of certain groups.
 - **Imposing Western Thoughts:** The British also introduced Western education and values, which led to the emergence of a Western-educated elite and the erosion of

traditional cultural practices.

- **Politically:**

- **Introduction of Parliamentary System:** The British introduced a system of parliamentary democracy, but this was only available to a small elite minority of the population.
- **Centralized Administration:** They also imposed a centralized system of administration, which led to the erosion of traditional forms of governance and the loss of local autonomy.

- **Various forms of resistance that emerged in response to colonial rule:**

- In response to colonial rule, a number of forms of resistance and rebellion emerged in India. These included non-violent movements, such as the Non-cooperation movement and the Salt Satyagraha, as well as armed uprisings, such as the revolt of 1857 and the Quit India Movement.
 - **Political Movements:** The Indian independence movement was a political struggle to end British rule in India. It was led by figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and involved **campaigns of civil disobedience, non-cooperation movement**, and negotiations with the British government.
 - **Armed Resistance:** Some groups in India, such as the revolt of 1857, Ghadar Party and the Indian National Army (INA), and various other revolutionaries sought to use armed force to drive out the British. These groups carried out acts of sabotage and guerrilla warfare against British military and civilian targets.
 - **Cultural Resistance:** Some Indian nationalists used cultural expression as a means of resistance to colonial rule. This included the promotion of Indian languages, literature, and art as a way of asserting Indian identity and rejecting British cultural domination.
 - **Religious Resistance:** Some religious leaders and movements in India, such as the **Arya Samaj**, sought to resist colonial rule by promoting a "purified" version of Hinduism that rejected Western influence and sought to unite Hindus against the British.
 - **Labor Resistance:** There were also instances of labor strikes and other forms of collective action by Indian workers to protest against colonial policies and demand better working conditions.

Conclusion

- The effectiveness of these movements in bringing about change varied. Non-violent movements, such as the non-cooperation movement, were able to exert pressure on the British and eventually achieve independence for India.
- However, armed uprisings, such as the Indian Mutiny, were largely unsuccessful in achieving their objectives. Ultimately, it was the combination of both non-violent and violent resistance that contributed to the end of colonial rule in India.