



- Mid-18th century : – transformation of the English East India Company from a trading enterprise to a political power.
- Company had remained a commercial body for one and a half centuries.
- Why did EIC acquire political ambitions after such a long time?

➤ The expansion of European production & trade
➤ Emergence of aggressive nation states in Europe – lay behind the expansion of the European companies in India from the 1730s.

➤ The decline of Mughal authority obviously provided a great opportunity for expansion of influence
➤ The company's need for more revenue from taxation

- Why did EIC acquire political ambitions ?
- The failure of indigenous rulers was primarily due to their inability to make naval interventions and inefficiency and efficiency of their armies against the better-equipped professional armies.
 - The existing rivalries among the indigenous rulers and the voltaic political situation provided a favourable ground for political intervention
 - It took a prolonged struggle for territorial expansion & political consolidation of the British. They fought a number of wars to subdue the local rulers.
 - Political ideologies & traditions emerged from the 1860s – when a large colonial bureaucracy occupied itself – with classifying people & their attributes, with censuses, surveys, ethnographies, with recording transactions, marking space, establishing routines, and standardizing practices.

EARLY BRITISH CONCEPTION OF INDIA

- The early perception of India in the British mind was guided by: –
1. Their own Western experience
 2. Their travels in the great voyages of discovery
 3. Perception of their early travellers to India – Edward Terry & John Ovington described, the Mughal rule in 1689 'yet another example of Muslim despotism'
 4. Perception of early British, who had read about the Ottoman & Persian empires in the Bernier's writings – felt that, study of the Mughals would be less informative.
- People like Sir William Temple in the classical age believed , that Lycurgus & Pythagoras had been taught by the Indians.
 - The general impression was that in 17th century India tradition of learning no longer remained.
 - Terry argued that the Brahmins who were the ancient repositories of learning had degenerated.
 - It was argued that they were 'industrious, submissive, frugal & cowardly people' who had rigid habits of mind.

- The caste system was frequently cited as an example of their rigid mind.

WARREN HASTINGS & PERCEPTION OF INDIA

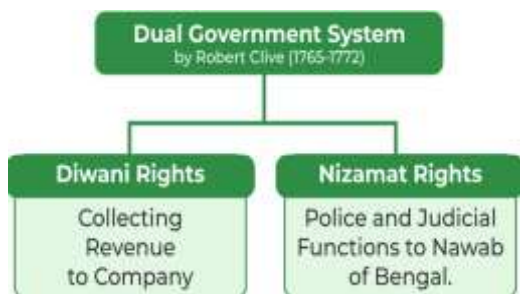
- The early administrators were keenly aware of India's past glory.
- But prevalent belief that, Indians had degenerated, reinforced by British experience in 18th century India.
- To administer this country properly a thorough knowledge of India and its past was needed.
- Warren-Hastings(1772-1785) required a band of dedicated british administrators - who are not opportunistic fortune hunters.
- For this purpose, he worked on institutions of learning – to provide knowledge of the golden past of India.

WILLIAM JONES

- This vision, which has been called the Orientalist vision.
 - William Jones, an English Jurist & a Whig follower – committed himself to rediscover India
 - Jones set himself the task of making India more intelligible to the British.
 - He realised the need of organised efforts to combine scientific study with the labour & knowledge of a group of dedicated individuals – to understand India
 - It was thus that the famous Asiatic Society was formed (1784)- to unearth knowledge about Asia both within & outside Asia.
 - The Society received full blessings of the Governor-General
 - It was a departure from the perception of early travellers who would normally record impressions & go away.
 - Contribution of Asiatic Society
1. Translating from Persian & Sanskrit works of Grammar, Puranas & the writings of Kalidasa.
 2. It researched & published a large number of articles on Indian society & religion.
 3. Jones' contributed to 'infectious spread of the romantic fascination of India & its culture throughout Europe.'

HASTINGS IN ACTION

- He had more practical reasons for promoting the Asiatic Society.
- He ended the 'dual Govt' established by Clive
- East India Company was given the responsibility of Bengal.
- But he was not in favour of introducing English laws & English ways in India.
- He wanted to rule Indians in their own way'.
- He felt that the rapid growth of the British rule had excited various prejudices - which needs to tackle
- He wanted to reconcile with the Indian institutions - meant more intensive investigation into the 'manners & customs' of the country – in depth analysis of the literature & laws of the Indians.



- 'Nathaniel Brassey Halhed', one of Hastings' lieutenants, drew up a list of religious & customary laws called the 'Gentoo Laws'
- These laws would help in understanding the process of 'the conciliation of natives.'
- According to Halhed, it would help further in enhancing the prospects of commerce & territorial establishment.

INSTITUTIONALISATION

- The early enthusiasm to rediscover the rich Indian past slowly subsumed to the practical needs of the British rule
- For the training & orienting future administrators to the goals of this task, in the tradition of Warren Hastings, Wellesley established the Fort William College at Calcutta in 1800.
- The Fort William College promoted the studies of Indian language – so that the future administrator should get a 'vernacular' touch & to rediscover India's past in a more concrete fashion.
- Most of the Indian states used Persian as the language for maintaining official record & running the day-to-day business.
- The Indian Residents, at the courts of various submissive Indian rulers, combined both the knowledge & usage of Persian with the cultural lifestyles of the court.
- The British Residents often wore the Indian dresses & maintained establishments like the court nobility – to establish an identity with the Indian courtiers.
- Britishers often adopt the manners & etiquettes of the court, while having a major say in the decisions of the ruler.
- The Indian rulers maintained cultural independence in spite of being politically subservient to the British.
- British had to step in to realms of Indian institutions like law & landed property.

EVANGELICALISM

- The industrial revolution in Britain had forced the need of market and raw materials – affected the policy makers minds in Britain
- The idea of retaining Indian institutions & laws had to be reviewed
- If new products were to enter the market there was a need to create a taste for them. This meant the infusion of a new way of life & culture, at least in the top crust of society.
- Serampore missionaries, on the task of 'reforming' the current degeneration of the Indian society – had to compromise as per the new orders - 'learn about the Indian society but do not disturb it.'

- While the Serampore missionaries were to do this task quietly, respecting the Indian traditions.
- The later missionaries like Charles Grant were to be openly hostile to 'Indian barbarism'.
- This hostility, a hallmark of evangelicalism, was combined with the desire to 'civilize' India.
- Grant was to propagate the policy of assimilation of India into the great civilizing mission of Britain
- This attitude was to go hand in hand with the expression of British liberalism.
- For example in Macaulay, the liberal British administrator's task was to 'civilize' rather than subdue.
- The merchant community supported this, as they would benefit from the civilizing missions' laws to acquire property etc.
- Under 'free trade' they could work out the problems of creating a market for British goods amongst the Indians.
- Charles Grant saw a complementarity between the civilizing process and material prosperity.
- Another liberal C.E. Trevelyan, in 1838, was to outline his vision of India as 'the proudest monument of British benevolence'.

THE STRUGGLE FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The 'idea of improvement' was to take shape in the late 18th & early 19th centuries as a part of the vision of Britain as a promoter of prosperity & civilization.
- It was thus, that Cornwallis agreed to settling the revenue permanently on the landed class (Zamindars) in Bengal.
- Cornwallis's assumed that the main source of wealth was agriculture, the 'magic touch of property' will create capital and market in land.
- A more prosperous landed class with fixed obligation to the state and an English rule of law would create new men of enterprise in land who would also take trade forward.
- John Shore, seen the idea of Permanent Settlement grow and had more experience of the countryside
- Agreeing with Cornwallis's vision of improvement, he suggested that the improvement should be brought about by slow degrees by experimentally introducing innovations.

PRESERVATION & MUNRO

- Among the critics of Cornwallis were Thomas Munro in the South along with his famous colleagues like Malcolm & Metcalfe.
- They found the Cornwallis System as having no regard for Indian history or experience.
- They opposed the idea that a political society could be built on principles derived from an alien English tradition
- They opposed Cornwallis's import of the English rule of law with its strict division of judiciary and executive powers of the government.
- To Munro, politics was both experimental & pragmatic.
- He thought, the period he spent in India was too short for any permanent solutions.
- He argued for periodic revision of the rate of ryotwari.

- Munro argued that the basis of India's stable heritage, the village communities should be conserved.
- Law & order problem should be met with a system where the judiciary executive were fused together.
- This according to him, would enable the preservation of justice to the peasantry & the aims of the British rule.
- Munro & his colleagues opposed a centrally imposed rule in India and 'favoured diversity in the Indian govt'.
- The task 'of transforming the Indian mind was then to become more complex.
- The task of education in the process was mooted by the liberal Macaulay as a prime responsibility of the British in India.
- But in the context of both the resistance of Orientalists, & pragmatic British like Munro wanted to preserve the Indian institutions and culture
- The role of a western or an Anglicist education became a subject of immense controversy in the middle of the 19th century

THE UTILITARIANS

- They emphasised of reform of : - 1) Law & 2) Landed property to create conditions where the market could flourish.
- They believed, that, a scientific & logical approach to these two problems can resolve it
- Emphasised the reforms – which would satisfy the principle of 'the greatest good of the greatest number'
- The utilitarian ideas were to have a fundamental influence in moulding the British attitudes towards India.
- The question of law as an instrument of change was mooted under Bentinck.
- According to Bentick, its possible, for judiciary to be the instrument of changing Indian practices like Sati and female infanticide
- With the coming of James Mill to the East India Company's London office, a systematic utilitarian attempt was made to combat the Orientalist, Cornwallis and the Munro heritage.
- A utilitarian vision of political reform was sought to be given a concrete shape.
- A series of laws & penal codes enacted under the Benthamite principle of a centrally logically & coherently evolved system which would go down to the grassroots.
- It would give the direction to the Indian govt to function 'with a united purpose.

LAND REVENUE

- Mill also supported a restructuring of the land revenue policy – consistent with utilitarian economics.
- This meant a direct contact with the mass of cultivators as in Munro's ryotwari settlement
- This meant taxing the landlord along Ricardo's philosophy. This taxation would be in such a manner that the landlord would not enjoy undue benefit at the cost of manufacture & trade just by virtue of ownership of land.
- This meant that landholder would give to the state as tax on land revenue a certain proportion of the net

produce (i.e. the gross produce minus cost of cultivation).

- This doctrine of rent was sought to be put into practice by officers like Pringle in Bombay.
- Elaborate survey methods were used to calculate the 'net produce' from land. Then tax rates were assessed.
- However, in practise the revenue demand often went very high, sometimes as much as fifty to sixty percent of the produce.
- This led gradually to the abandonment of complex calculations based on the rent doctrine.
- From 1840s purely pragmatic and empirical methods derived from the tradition of taxation.
- But, the rent doctrine of the, utilitarian philosophy was not given up in theory.
- In spite of the purely pragmatic and empirical calculation of rent, the justification of rent theory for the calculation was still given.
- Over the next decades the idea of defining rights and obligations of the taxpaying cultivators permanently was relegated to the background
- But then the scientific calculations of the utilitarianism were again paradoxically submitted to Munro.

EMERGENCE OF NEW PERCEPTION OF EMPIRE

- Utilitarianism in India despite being born in the tradition of liberalism could never accept a democratic government in India.
- James Mill consistently opposed any form of representative govt in India.
- The consolidation of the empire under Dalhousie was to take the paradoxes of the various kinds of perceptions of British India
- Dalhousie took forward Mill's vision of belligerent advancement of Britain's mission
- In the true Benthamite tradition he created 'all India' departments with single heads for Post and Telegraph Services, the Public Work Department, etc.
- He encourage the development of his legislative council into a forum for the representation of non-official opinion.
- He also provided it with elaborate rules of procedure taken from the English Parliament.
- He even favoured the admission of Indian members into the legislative council.
- He agreed with the Macaulay's view of diffusion of English education and along with his colleague Thomason encouraged a system of vernacular education at mass level.
- With the consolidation of law codes the focus shifted to efficiency of governance.
- Pragmatism with rationality and efficiency now dominated the British administration.
- Utilitarian arguments were still used for governance, for example in the change of law codes under Macaulay. But the overall spirit of reform declined