

Historians and researchers suggest that from 1870 to 1930 Britain took about 1% of India's wealth per year. This was much less than the French, Dutch and Germans took from their lands.

Historians estimate that the British invested about £400 million in India between 1870 and 1930. They developed a coal industry, which had not existed before. Public health and life expectancy increased under British rule – due to improved water supplies and treatment for malaria.

Recent research suggests that India gained little economically from British rule. Britain gained hugely from ruling India, but most of the wealth created was not invested back into the country.

The British abolished the sati (a Hindu custom where the widow was burned to death on the funeral pyre of her dead husband) and of infanticide (the mass killing of unwanted children).

40% of India's wealth was spent on the army to be used by Britain all over the world, while the great mass of Indians were incredibly poor.

There were terrible famines that devastated India. When famine struck in 1876-1877 and 1899-1900 the British system of government could not organize a big enough relief effort. Too many Indians were growing 'cash crops' for the British, such as tea or cotton and not enough staple foods. It has been estimated that 19 million Indians had died from starvation and disease in these famines.
Source: *The Lancet* 1901.

Florence Nightingale, the famous British nurse, said 'we do not care enough to stop them dying slow and terrible deaths from things we could easily stop. We have taken their land, and we rule it, for our good, not theirs'.



'India has become impoverished [poor] by their [Britain's] government. They take away our money from year to year. The most important jobs are reserved for themselves. We are kept in a state of slavery. They behave insolently [insultingly] towards us and disregard our feelings...'

Written by Gandhi in 'Indian Home Rule', 1938. Gandhi wanted India to govern itself.

'From 1815 to 1900 the British had built 2,300 miles of road and 2,900 miles of railway in India. The land used for farming increased from 400,000 acres to 3.2 million acres, the schools from 170 to 2900, the hospitals from 0 to 65...'

Written by James Morris in *Pax Britannica*, 1968.

