The Benefits of British Rule for India

In the Cause of Humanity: Abolition of sati and infanticide. Destruction of Gangs, Thugs, and other such pests of Indian society. Allowing remarriage of Hindu widows.

In the Cause of Civilization: Education, both male and female, though yet only partial. Leading gradually to the destruction of superstition, and many moral and social evils. Resuscitation of India's own noble literature, refined by the enlightenment of the West.


Materially: Loans for railways and irrigation. Development of a few valuable products, such as indigo, tea, coffee, silk, etc. Increase of exports. Telegraphs.

Generally: Growing desire to treat India equitably. Good intentions. No nation on earth has ever had the opportunity of achieving such a glorious work. If I have omitted any item of importance, I will gladly insert it. I appreciate what England has done for India, and I know that it is only in British hands that her glory can be accomplished.

The Detriments of British Rule in India

In the Cause of Humanity: Nothing. Everything is in your favor under this heading.

In the Cause of Civilization: There has been a failure to do as much as might have been done, but I complain not. Much has been done, though.

Politically: Repeated break of pledges to give Indians a fair share in the administration of their own country, which has much shaken confidence in the good faith of the British word. An utter disregard of the feelings and views of the natives.

Financially: All attention is paid on new taxes without any effort to increase the means of the people to pay; and the consequent vexation and oppressiveness of the taxes imposed, imperial and local. Inequitable financial relations between England and India.

Materially: The impoverishment of the country, except it has been partly relieved and replenished by the railway and irrigation loans, and the American war, since 1850. Even with this relief, the poor have hardly a daily meal and a few rags to wear. The famines they could have prevented, if they had done their duty, as an intelligent government. An increase of exports without compensation; loss of manufacturing industry and skill.

Summary: British rule has been: morally, a great blessing; politically, peace and order on one hand, blunders on the other; materially, hunger. The natives call the British system "Sakar ki Churi," or the “knife of sugar.” In other words there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is the knife. I say this that you should know these feelings. You do not know our wants. When you will know our real wishes, I have not the least doubt that you would do justice. The genius and spirit of the British people is fair play and justice.

Source: