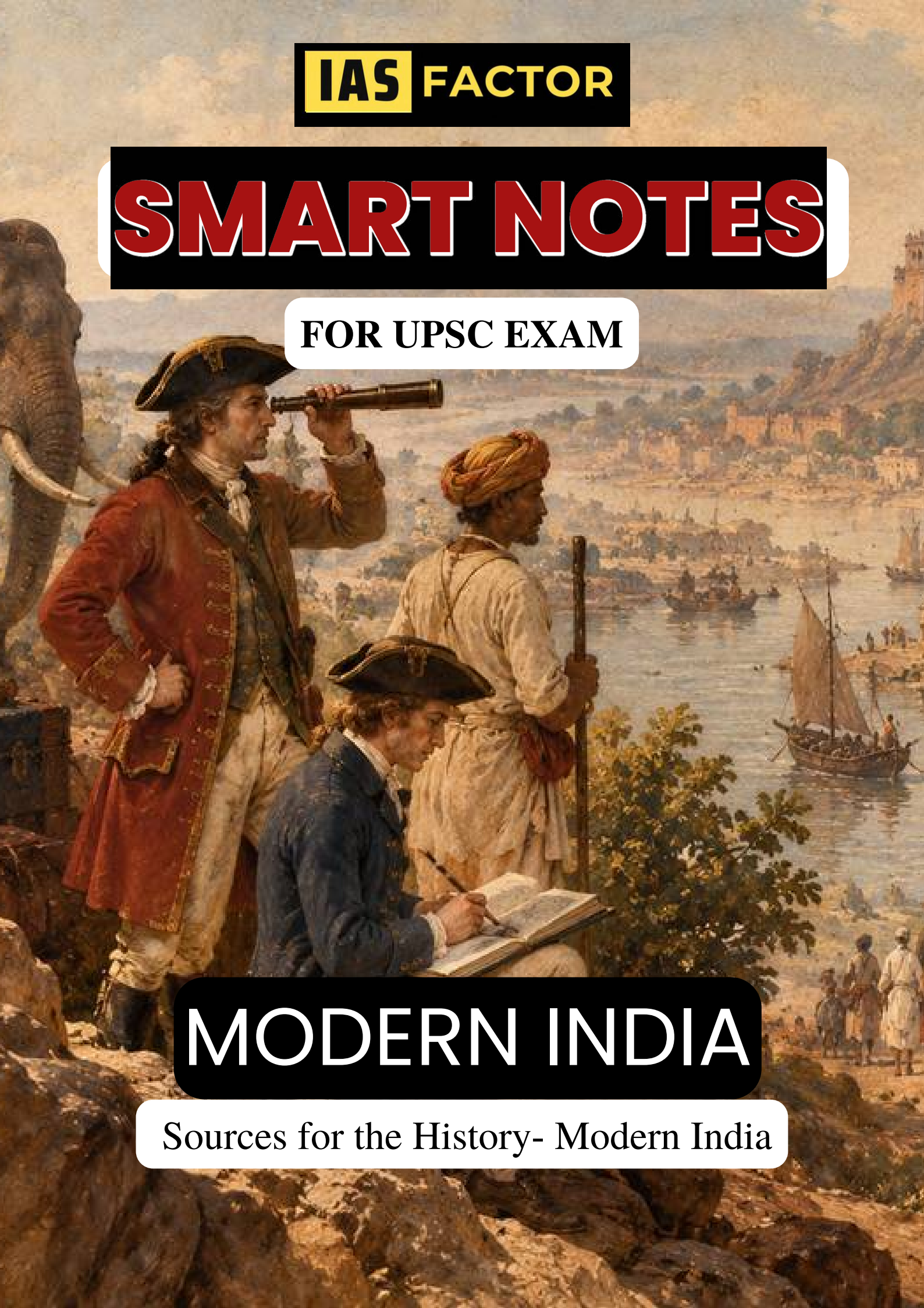
IAS FACTOR

SMART NOTES

FOR UPSC EXAM



MODERN INDIA

Sources for the History- Modern India

Sources for the History of Modern India

Q. What Are the Major Sources for Studying the History of Modern India? Explain Why the Modern Period Has an Abundance of Historical Evidence and How Different Types of Sources Help Historians Understand the Past.

- To understand the history of modern India, historians depend on a very large variety of sources.
- From the **mid-18th century to the mid-20th century**, record-keeping increased enormously because colonial governments, trading companies, courts, newspapers and individuals began producing and preserving large amounts of written material.
- Unlike many earlier periods of Indian history, the modern period therefore has an abundance of evidence.
- These sources are not limited to government documents.
- They include **official records, private papers, newspapers, journals, biographies, memoirs, travel accounts, novels, paintings and oral evidence**.
- Each source tells us something different.
- Government records may explain administration and policy, while a novel or painting may tell us much more about the society in which people lived.

Facts to Remember

- Modern Indian history has abundant source material.
- The period covered extends broadly from the **mid-18th to mid-20th century**.
- Sources include both **official and non-official records**.
- Sources must be examined critically because every source reflects the circumstances in which it was produced.

Q. How Do the Records of the East India Company Help Us Understand the History of Modern India? Discuss Their Importance Along with the Records of Other European Trading Companies.

- The **East India Company** was not merely a trading organisation. Over time, it became a major political and administrative power in India.
- Because of this, it produced an enormous quantity of records.
- Its records provide a detailed account of trading conditions between roughly **1600 and 1857**.

- Once the Company became involved in administration, its records expanded further.

They help us trace:

- ***Administrative decisions***
- ***Political developments***
- ***Economic policies***
- ***Trade***
- ***Relations with Indian rulers***
- ***Changes in governance***
- ***Decision-making by colonial officials***



These records can even help historians understand the **thinking and psychology of policymakers**, because discussions and correspondence often reveal how decisions were reached.

Records of other European trading companies are also useful. These include the **Portuguese, Dutch and French** companies.

They are particularly useful for understanding the history of the **17th and 18th centuries**.

However, these records often concentrate heavily on **economic history**, since these organisations originally came to India primarily for trade.

Q. What Are Contemporary and Semi-Contemporary Works? Explain Their Importance as Sources for Understanding the History of the 18th and Early 19th Centuries.

- Not everything we know comes from government files.
- Many people living during or close to a particular historical period wrote about the events they witnessed.
- These are called **contemporary or semi-contemporary works**.

They include:

- Books
- Personal accounts
- Biographies
- Memoirs

Such writings provide valuable glimpses into the history of the **18th and early 19th centuries**. They are particularly useful because they can reveal the experiences and observations of individuals rather than simply presenting the official government's position.



The **National Archives of India**, located in **New Delhi**, contains a vast collection of documents relating to modern Indian history.

These records are valuable because they preserve documents generated by different branches of colonial administration.



Q. What Is the Historical Importance of the Survey of India Records? Explain the Role of James Rennell and How Surveying and Mapping Help Us Understand India's Geographical, Political, Economic and Social History.



Administrative control also required the British to understand India's geography.

A major development came with the appointment of **James Rennell as the first Surveyor General of Bengal in 1767**.

Scientific surveying and mapping began to expand.

The **Survey of India** eventually produced maps and records dealing with:

- Geography
- Borders
- Land
- Natural resources
- Economic conditions
- Social conditions

Therefore, maps are not simply geographical documents. They can also provide important information about the political, economic and social history of an area.

Q. How Do Public, Judicial and Legislative Records Help Us Understand Colonial India? Explain Their Importance with Special Reference to Educational Records, the Home Political Series and the Reforms Office Records.

The proceedings of the **public, judicial and legislative departments** are particularly useful for studying colonial policies.

They provide information about subjects such as:

- Social policy
- Religious policy
- Education
- Administration
- Law
- Governance

Educational records are particularly useful for tracing the **growth of the education system during colonial rule**.

Records of the central archives also contain important material concerning major political developments.

A particularly important collection is the **Home Political** series, which began in **1907** and dealt specifically with **political and communal issues**.

Another major source is the records of the **Reforms Office**, which are valuable for studying constitutional developments between **1920 and 1937**.

Facts to Remember

- Departmental proceedings reveal colonial social, religious and educational policies.
- **Home Political series began in 1907**.
- It dealt particularly with **political and communal issues**.
- **Reforms Office records** are important for constitutional developments during **1920–1937**.

Q. What Are State Government Archives? Explain the Major Types of Records Preserved in Them and Their Importance in Understanding the Regional History of Modern India.

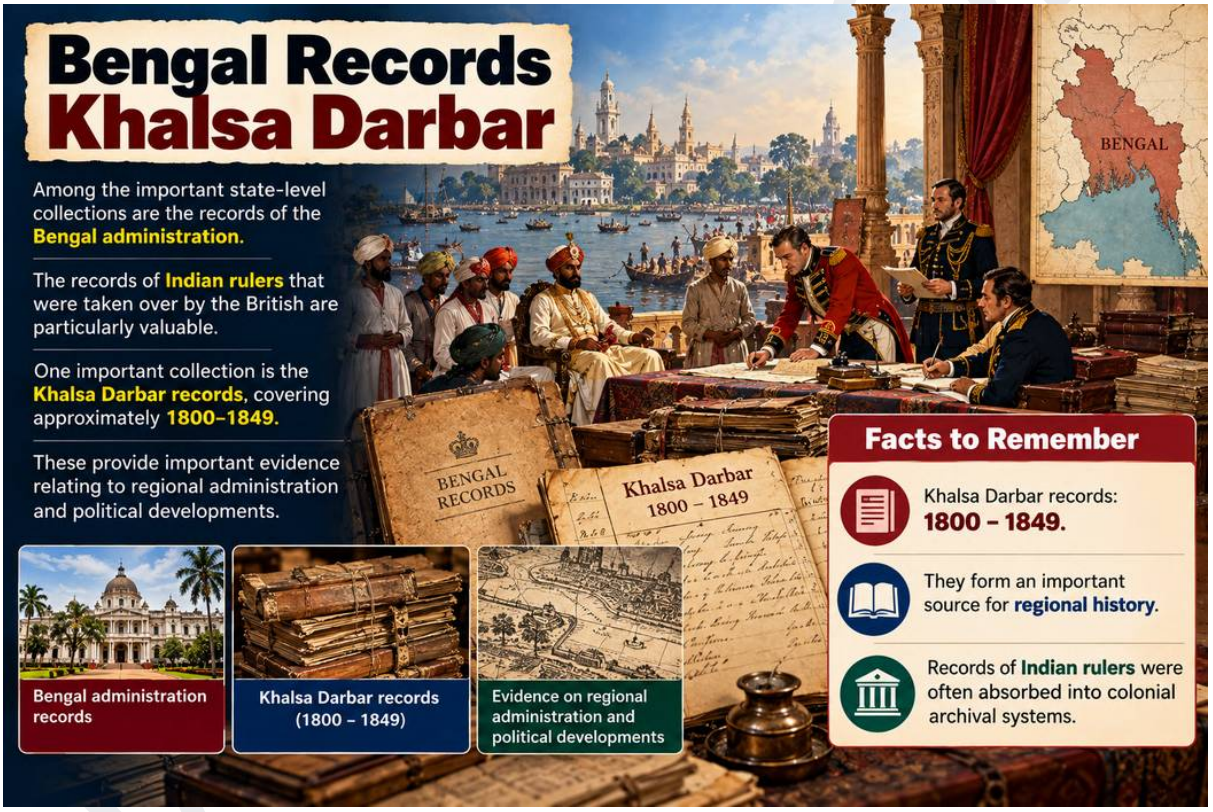
Central government records give only one part of the story.

State archives contain records produced by regional administrations.

These include records of:

1. Former British Indian provinces
2. Princely states incorporated into India after **1947**
3. Former foreign administrations other than the British

State archives are extremely important because many developments can only be properly understood at the regional level.

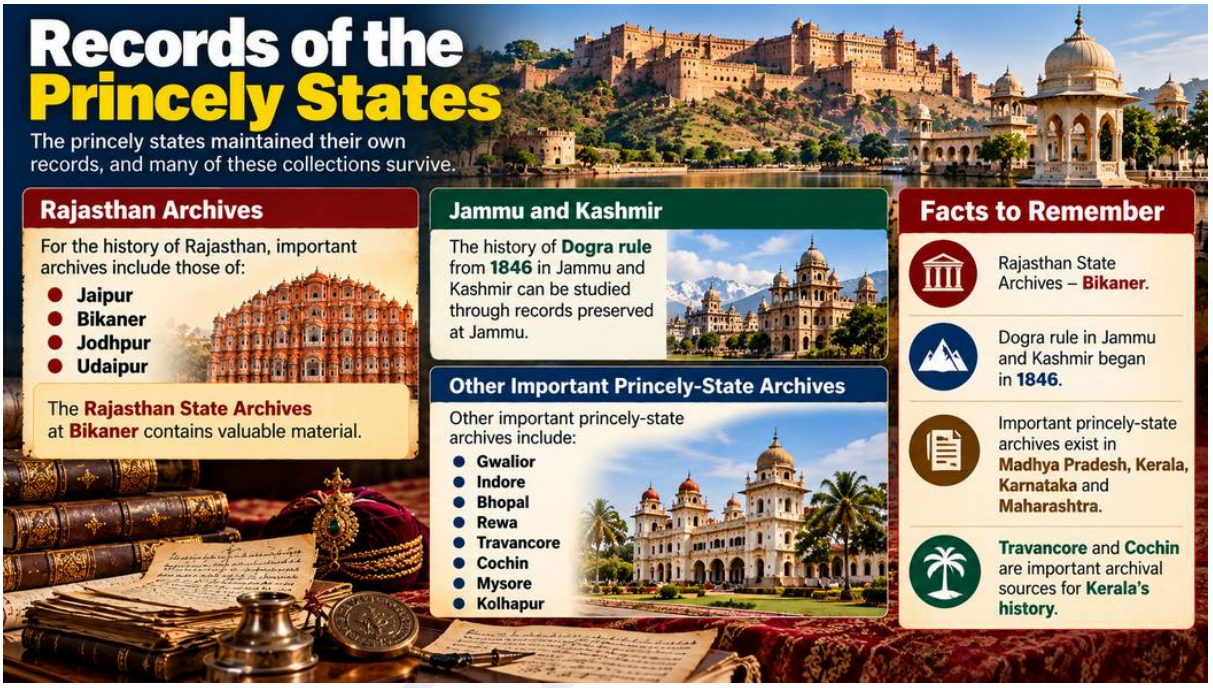


Q. What Is the Peshwa Daftar? Where Is It Preserved and Why Is It an Important Source for Studying the History, Administration and Politics of the Marathas?

- One of the most important collections for studying the **Marathas** is the **Peshwa Daftar**.
- It is preserved in the **Alienation Office, Pune**.
- The collection is extremely large and contains records extending over almost a century before the fall of the Peshwas.
- It is therefore one of the most valuable documentary sources for studying Maratha administration and politics.

Facts to Remember

- **Peshwa Daftar – Alienation Office, Pune**.
- Important for the history of the **Marathas**.
- Covers almost a century before the fall of the Peshwas.



Q. Why Are the Archives of the Three Presidencies Important for Studying British India? Explain with Special Reference to the Bengal Presidency, Fort William, the Sack of Calcutta in 1756 and the Records Surviving from the Post-Plassey Period.

British India developed around three major Presidency centres:

Bengal – Madras – Bombay

- Their archives are extremely important for reconstructing the history of British expansion and administration.
- Many early records of **Fort William in Bengal** were destroyed during the **sack of Calcutta in 1756**.
- However, surviving records are preserved in several locations.
- Records from the period after the British victory at **Plassey** survive in different archives, including the National Archives of India and the State Archives of West Bengal.

Facts to Remember

- Fort William was the centre of the Bengal Presidency.

- Many early records were lost during the **sack of Calcutta, 1756**.
- Important records survive from the period following **Plassey**.



Q. Why Are Judicial Records Important Sources for the Study of Modern Indian History? Explain with Reference to the Mayor's Courts of Fort St. George, Fort William and Bombay, and the Supreme Court of Bengal.

Court records provide another window into society.

Important judicial archives include records of the **Mayor's Court at Fort St. George**, beginning from **AD 1689**.

Some early records of the **Mayor's Court at Fort William** have been lost, but records covering **1757–73** survive in the record room of the **Calcutta High Court**.

Other important collections include:

- **Supreme Court of Bengal – 1774–1861**
- **Mayor's Court at Bombay – established in 1728**
- **Bombay Recorder's Court**
- **Supreme Court records**

Judicial records do much more than tell us about court cases.

They can reveal information about:

- ***Families***

- ***Property***
- ***Social relations***
- ***Economic conditions***
- ***Administration***
- ***Regional society***

They are therefore useful for **genealogical investigations** as well.

Facts to Remember

- Fort St. George Mayor's Court records begin in **1689**.
- Fort William Mayor's Court records survive for **1757–73**.
- **Supreme Court of Bengal records: 1774–1861**.
- **Bombay Mayor's Court established in 1728**.
- Judicial records help reconstruct social and economic history.



Q. Why Are Foreign Repositories Important for Studying Modern Indian History? Explain with Special Reference to the India Office Records, British Administrative Collections, Papers of Senior Officials and Missionary Archives in Britain.

- A large amount of material relating to Indian history is preserved outside India.
- This happened because India was connected with several European colonial powers and because many officials carried records back to Europe.Important collections are preserved in Britain, including the **India Office Records in London** and collections in the **British Museum**.

These contain documents such as:

- Minutes of the East India Company's Court of Directors
- General Court records
- Committee records
- Board of Control correspondence
- Records of the Secretary of State for India
- Records of the India Council

British repositories also contain:

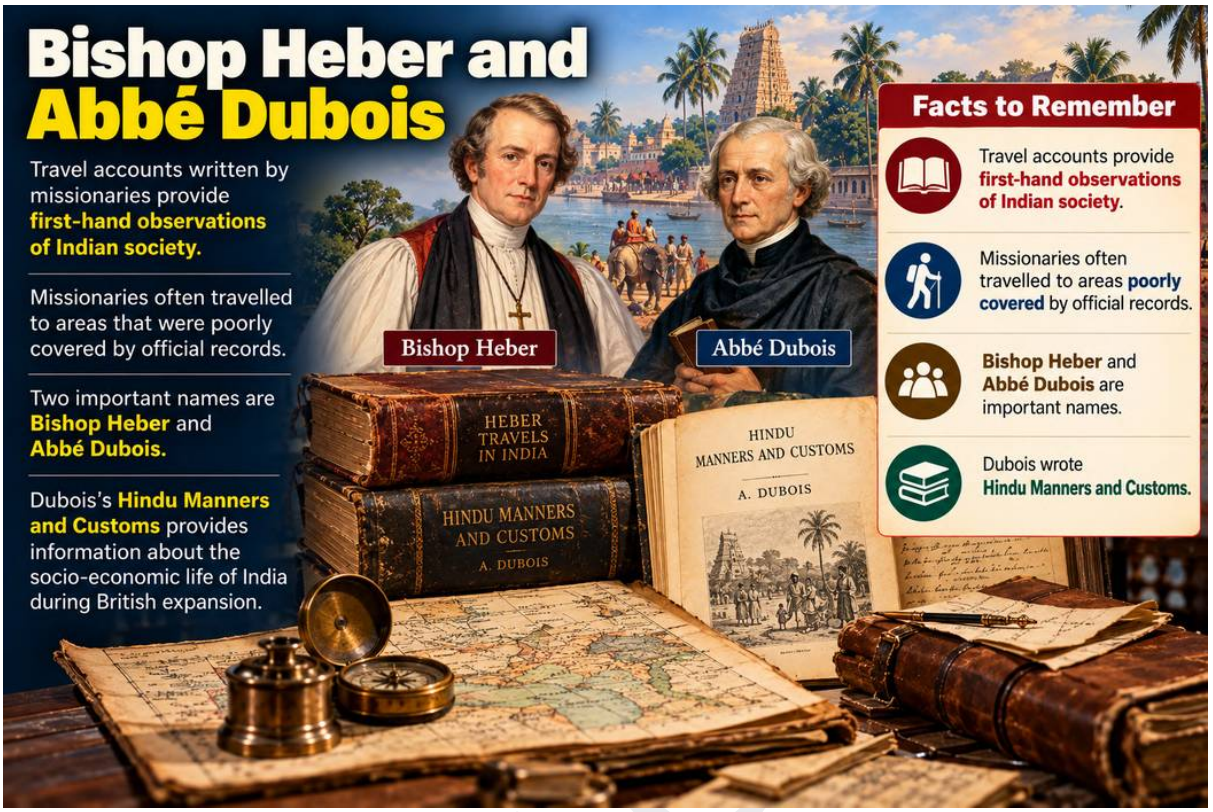
- Papers of British viceroys
- Secretaries of state
- Senior civil and military officials

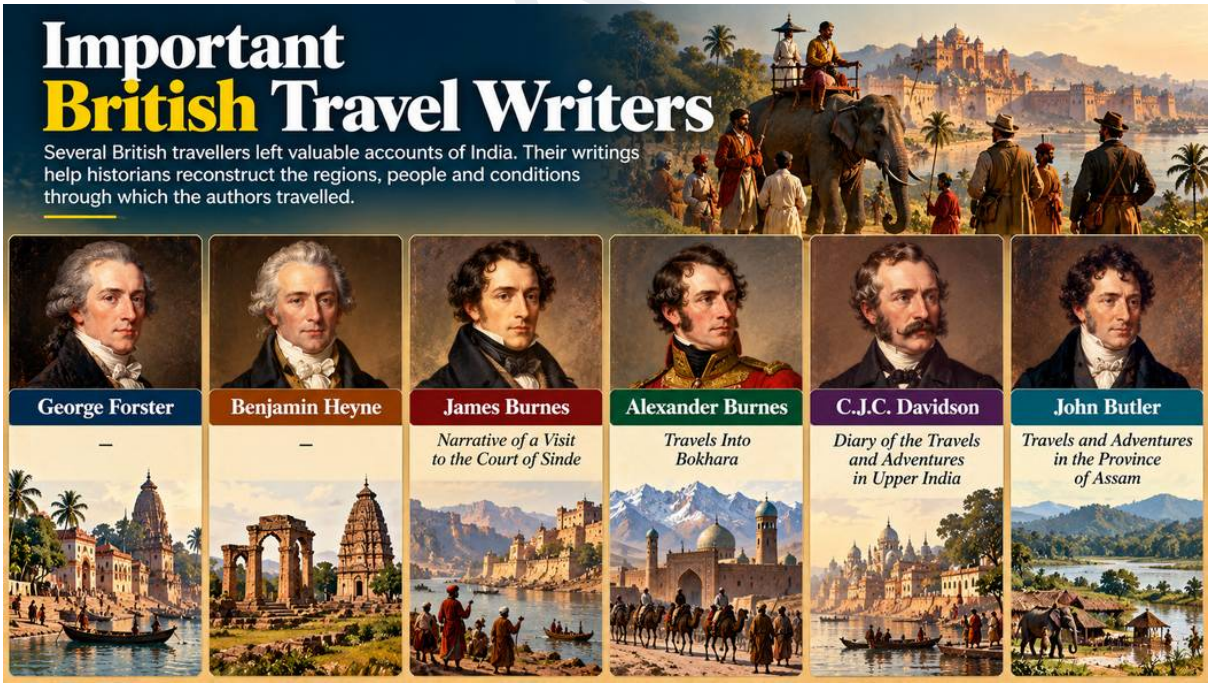
The archives of missionary organisations, including the **Church Missionary Society of London**, are valuable for studying educational and social developments in pre-independence India.

Facts to Remember

- **India Office Records – London**.
- British collections contain East India Company and imperial administrative records.
- Papers of viceroys and senior officials are important sources.
- Missionary archives provide information on education and society.





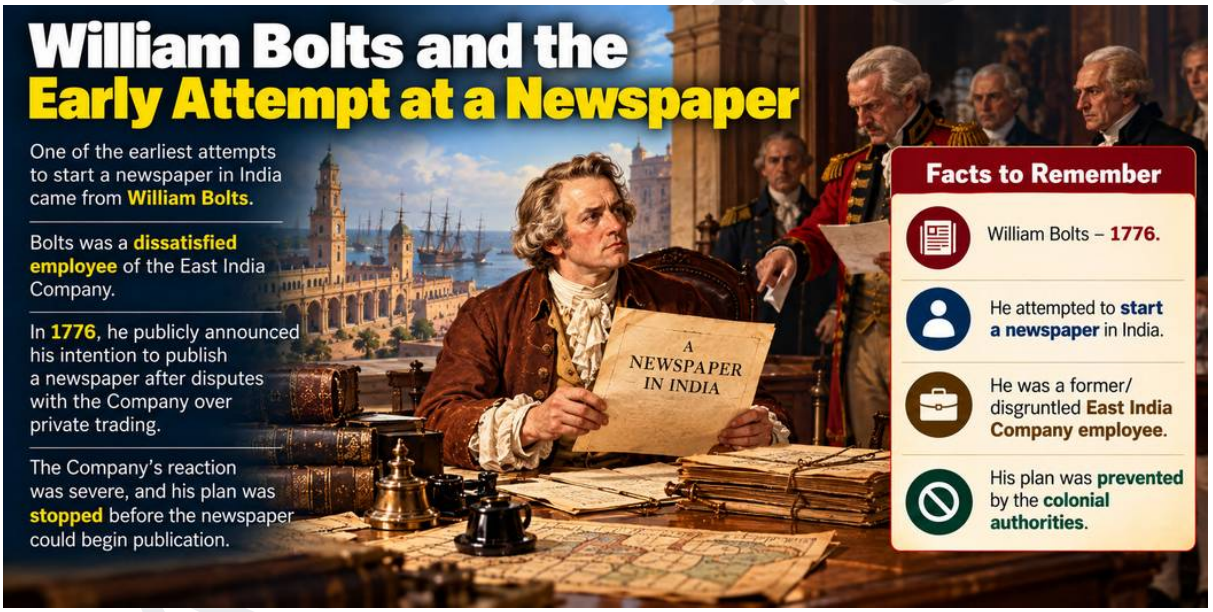


Q. Which Was the First Newspaper Published in India? Explain the Role of James Augustus Hickey, the Nature of the Bengal Gazette and the Reasons for Its Suppression.

- The first newspaper actually published in India appeared in **1780**.
- It was started by **James Augustus Hickey**.
- Its title was:**The Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser**
- Hickey used the newspaper to criticise government officials.
- This led to conflict with the colonial establishment, and the paper was eventually suppressed.

Facts to Remember

- **1780 – first newspaper in India**
- Founder: **James Augustus Hickey**
- Newspaper: **The Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser**
- Hickey criticised government officials.
- The newspaper was eventually suppressed



After Hickey's newspaper, several other publications appeared.

Important examples include:

- **Calcutta Gazette – 1784**
- **Madras Courier – 1788**
- **Bombay Herald – 1789**

In their early phase, many newspapers mainly catered to the **European and Anglo-Indian population**.

Over time, however, Indian-owned and Indian-edited newspapers became powerful instruments of social reform, political debate and nationalism.

Newspapers and the Rise of Nationalism

- From the second half of the **19th century**, newspapers became increasingly important in Indian public life.
- Many were edited or published by prominent intellectuals and political leaders.
- A striking fact is that roughly **one-third of the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress in 1885 were journalists**.

Important publications and personalities included:

★ **The Hindu** and **Swadesamitran** – under the editorship of **G. Subramaniya Iyer**
★ **Kesari** and **Mahratta** – under **Bal Gangadhar Tilak**
★ **Bengalee** – under **Surendranath Banerjea**
★ **Amrita Bazar Patrika** – under **Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh**
★ **Sudharak** – under **Gopal Ganesh Agarkar**
★ **Indian Mirror** – under **N.N. Sen**
★ **Voice of India** – under **Dadabhai Naoroji**
★ **Hindustan** and **Advocate** – under **G.P. Varma**
★ **Tribune** and **Akhbar-i-Am** – in Punjab
★ **Indu Prakash**, **Dnyan Prakash**, **Kal** and **Gujarati** – in Bombay
★ **Som Prakash**, **Bangavasi** and **Sadharani** – in Bengal

These newspapers helped spread political ideas and create public awareness.

Q. Discuss the Contribution of Govardhanram to Gujarati Literature with Special Reference to His Novel *Saraswatichandra* and Its Social and Cultural Significance.

In Gujarati literature, **Govardhanram** is mentioned as an important writer and scholar of medieval Gujarati literary history.

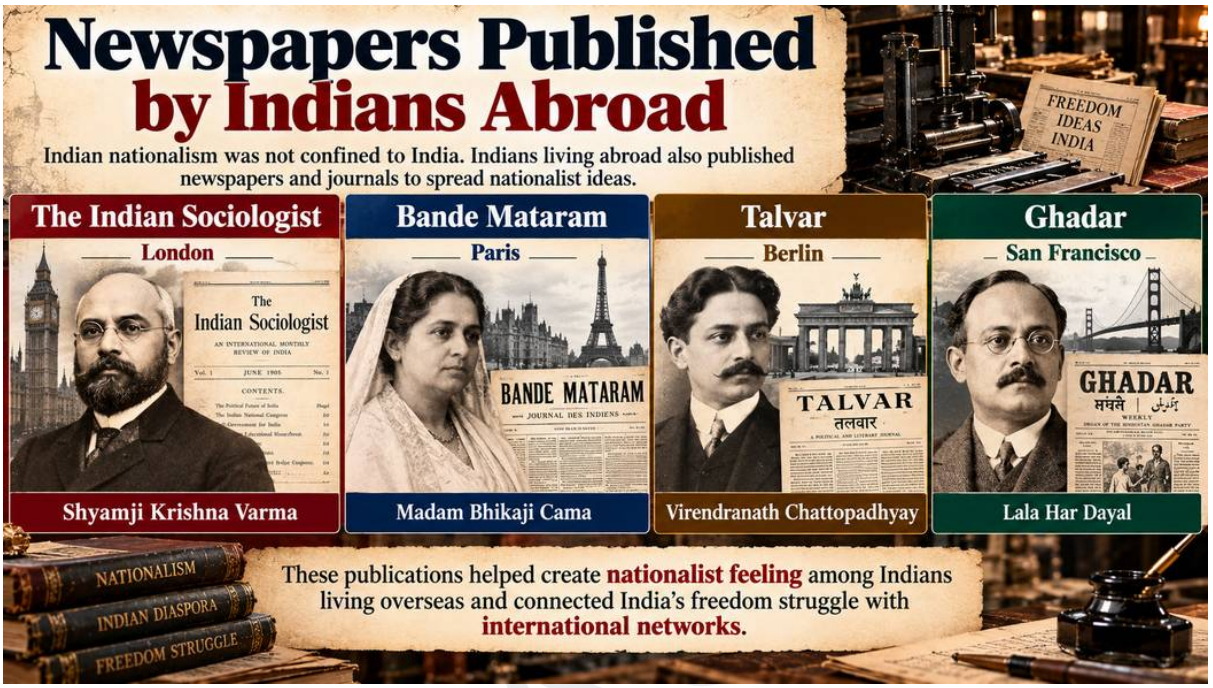
His first novel, **Saraswatichandra**, became an important literary work.

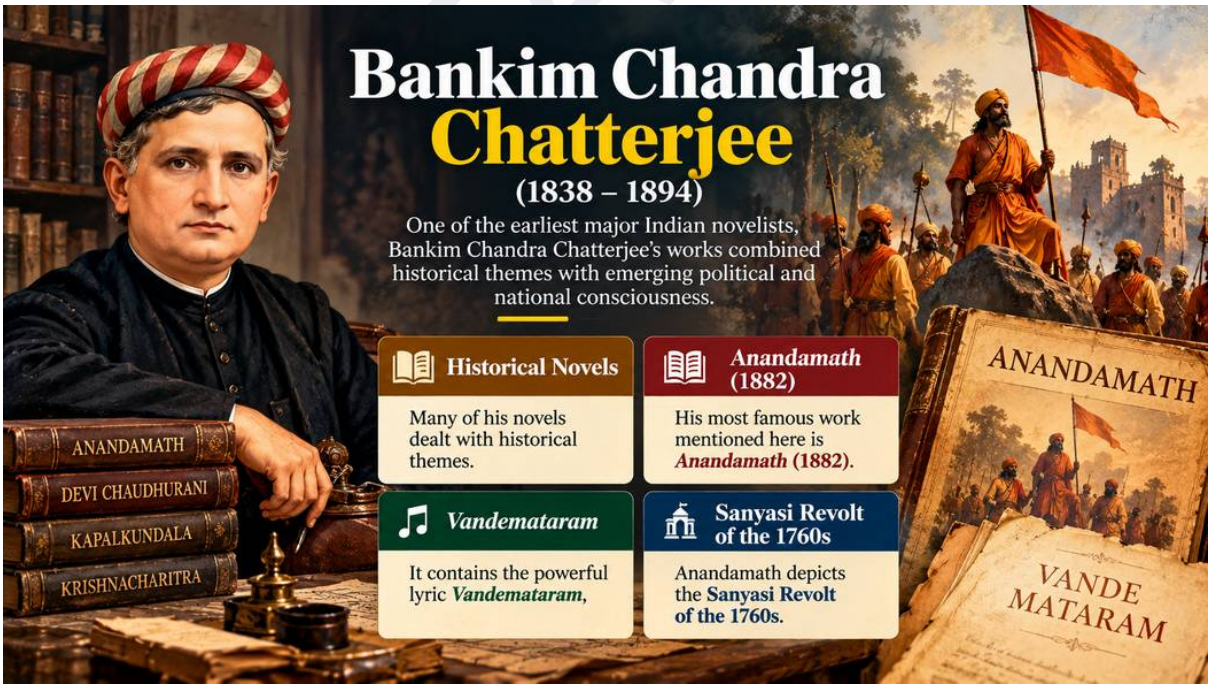
It demonstrates the development of the novel as a major vehicle for social and cultural expression in Indian languages.

Q. How Did Tamil Literature Become a Medium of Social Reform? Explain with Reference to Girija Devi's *Rajamarthandam* and T. Madhavaiah's *Muthumeenakshi*.

- Tamil writers also used novels to portray society and encourage reform.
- Important examples include:
- **Girija Devi – Rajamarthandam**

- **T. Madhavaiah – Muthumeenakshi (1936)**
- These works had **social overtones**, showing how novels increasingly became instruments for discussing the problems and experiences of society.





G.V. Krishna Rao and Telugu Literature

- **G.V. Krishna Rao** wrote **Keelubommalu (The Puppets)** in **1956**.

- The novel was concerned with the **moral aspects and behaviour of rural people**.
- It therefore provides insight into rural social relations and values.

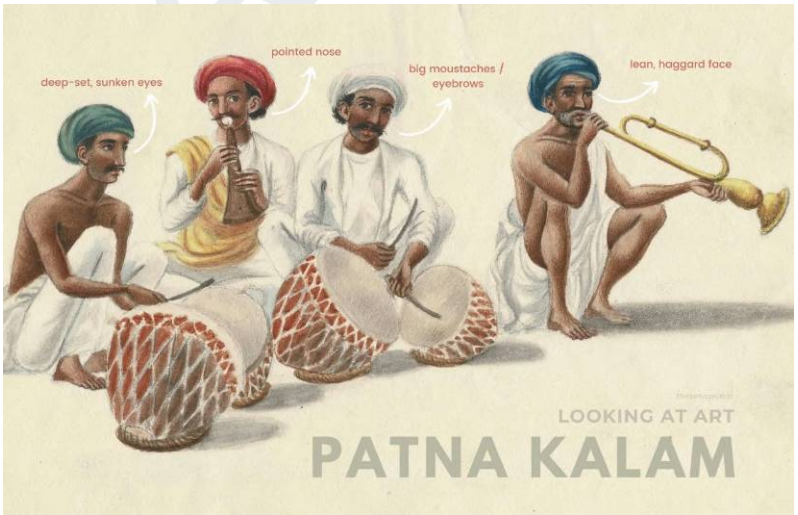
Vaikom Muhammad Basheer

- In Malayalam literature, **Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1910–1994)** became one of the most important writers.
- His famous novel **Balyakalasakhi – The Childhood Friends – was published in 1944**.
- His writings reflected the lives, emotions and social world of ordinary people.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai

- Another major Malayalam writer was **Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai**.
- Two important works mentioned are:
- **Thottiyude Makan – Son of a Scavenger – 1948**
- **Chemmeen – Shrimps – 1956**
- These works dealt with sections of society that had often remained marginal to elite literary traditions.
- Writers such as Thakazhi showed increasing interest in the lives of **marginalised and oppressed sections of society**.
- This makes literary works valuable sources for understanding social conditions.

Q. What Were Company Paintings? Explain the Development and Major Features of Patna Kalam and Discuss How These Paintings Depicted Everyday Indian Life Before the Spread of Photography.



A distinctive form of painting emerged under the patronage of the **East India Company**.

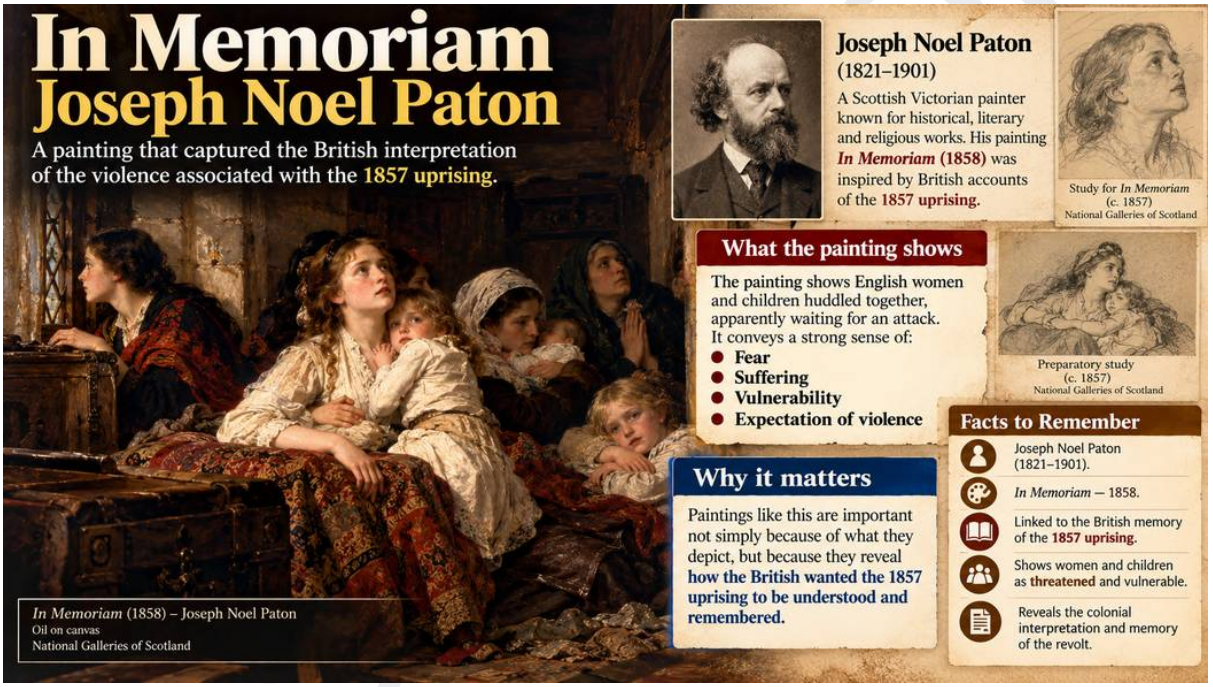
These works are often referred to as **Company paintings**.

A style known as **Patna Kalam** developed under Company patronage.

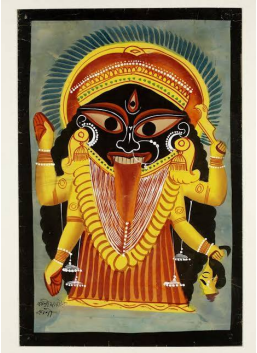
These paintings depicted ordinary aspects of Indian life, including:

- ***People***
- ***Street scenes***
- ***Trades***
- ***Festivals***
- ***Dances***
- ***Clothing and attire***

Company paintings remained popular during the **19th century** and continued until the introduction and spread of **photography in India in the 1840s**.



Q. How Did Kalighat Paintings Become an Important Record of 19th-Century Society? Explain Their Depiction of Everyday Life, Social Change and Social Criticism in Calcutta.



Indian paintings of the **19th century** also became valuable records of changing society.

Kalighat paintings, which emerged in **Calcutta**, portrayed more than religious or mythological figures.

They also depicted ordinary people engaged in everyday activities.

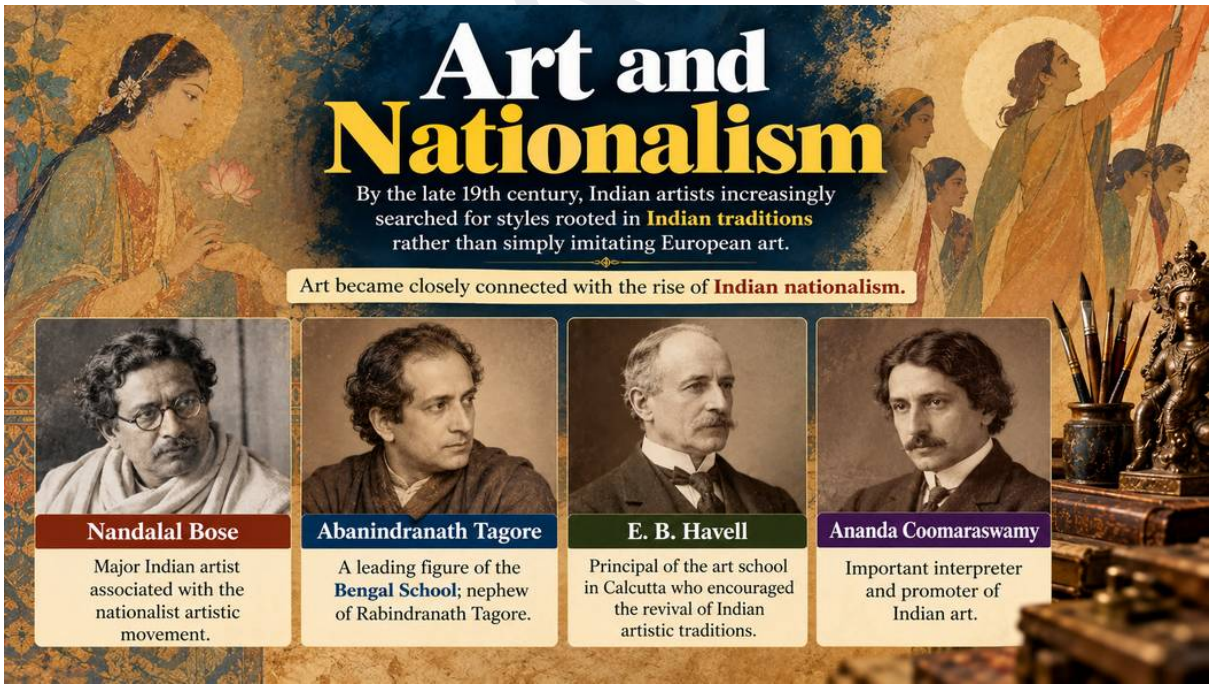
Later paintings began to reflect the **social changes taking place in Calcutta**.

They often contained commentary on social problems and criticised certain behaviours and customs.

Thus, paintings could become a form of **social criticism**.







Mains Practice Questions

1. What are the major sources for reconstructing the history of modern India? Explain the importance of archival materials in understanding colonial administration. (10 Marks, 150 Words)
2. How did newspapers and journals emerge as important sources for understanding political consciousness and the growth of nationalism in India? (10 Marks, 150 Words)
3. Creative literature and paintings provide insights into society that official records may fail to capture. Explain with suitable examples. (10 Marks, 150 Words)
4. Official records provide extensive information about modern Indian history, but they also have limitations. Discuss the importance of supplementing official archives with private papers, travel accounts, oral evidence and other non-official sources. (15 Marks, 250 Words)
5. Examine the role of newspapers, literature and visual art in reflecting the social and political transformation of India during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

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