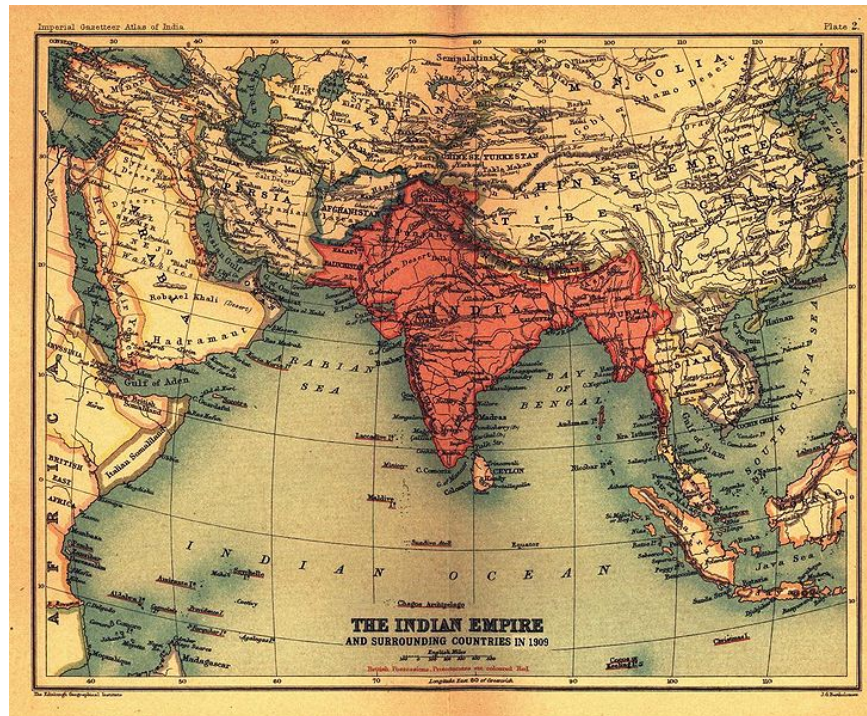




INDIA FACT SHEET



Events that led India into WWI

The Indian Empire included present day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In 1910, India was part of the British Empire; in fact, India was considered the “Jewel in the crown of the British Empire.” Queen Victoria had been made Empress of India and the British had a major military presence in India. Indian nationals had no say in central government and barely any control at the local level. In 1909, reforms led to each province in India having its own governor and Indian people were allowed to sit on the councils which advised these governors.

At the outbreak of the war, India was in a relatively strong financial position. Crops and export trade were good. The international trade in cotton and some food produces was mostly with countries that were part of the Central Powers. When it became clear that Britain was going to be part of the Allies in the war, Indian trade dropped off; however, it recovered quickly. Just before the war, India had a surplus of approximately \$6.2 million. By the next year, that was a deficit of almost \$14 million.

India made a lot of money from the war preparations because it charged high prices for raw materials and products. It managed to reduce its deficit by about \$5 million in one year. The next year, India had erased the deficit and was making a lot of money. As a colony of Great Britain, India was already contributing people and goods to the war effort. In 1917, India offered a gift to its colonial rulers—an extra \$500 million for the war. India also paid all the costs for its own troops throughout the war (about \$100 million total).

Effects of WWI on India

In 1914 Britain was able to draw upon considerable military manpower from its overseas Empire. More than one million men from colonies and ethnic minorities served in the war. The greatest military contribution was from India, whose troops saw action in all the major theatres of war. In Europe, four Indians served as pilots and the Royal Indian Marine supported the British Royal Navy around the world.

The war began with an surprising show of loyalty and goodwill towards Britain from within the Indian leadership, contrary to initial British fears of an Indian revolt. India under British rule contributed massively to the British war effort by providing men and resources. This was done by the Indian Congress in hope of achieving self-government as India was very much under the control of the British. The United Kingdom disappointed the Indians by not providing self-governance. Approximately 1.3 million Indian soldiers and laborers served in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, while both the Indian government and the princes sent large supplies of food, money, and ammunition. In all, 140,000 men served on the Western Front and nearly 700,000 in the Middle East.

Information about India’s participation in WWI is often folded into statistics for Great Britain, as India was one of Britain’s many colonies. It can be difficult to find statistics from WWI separated out to show both Great Britain and her colonies.

Allied Powers	Cost in Dollars in 1914-18
India	\$601,279,000

Because the war was not fought on Indian land, many measures (such as ships lost or civilian casualties) do not apply to India. The colony sent all of its soldiers, goods, and money to Europe or the Middle East for the war.

Allied Powers	Population in Millions	Military Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Total Deaths	Military Wounded
Indian Empire	315.1	74,187	–	74,187	69,214

Questions to prepare for simulation to represent India's perspective

1. How might India's role and involvement in WWI have been different from the other Allied Powers?
2. How might India's decision to support Great Britain in the war effort contribute to the Indians' goal of establishing self-government?
3. What arguments could be made for and against allowing a colony such as India to participate in the peace conference to end WWI?
4. As a representative of the India for the peace conference, what price would you suggest that India and the other countries pay to achieve an end to the war and bring peace to the world?