

## **CC-12:HISTORY OF INDIA(1750s-1857)**

### **II.EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF COLONIAL POWER:**

#### **(A) MERCANTILISM,FOREIGN TRADE AND EARLY FORMS OF EXTRACTION FROM BENGAL**

The coming of the Europeans to the Indian subcontinent was an event of great significance as it ultimately led to revolutionary changes in its destiny in the future. Europe's interest in India goes back to the ancient times when lucrative trade was carried on between India and Europe. India was rich in terms of spices, textile and other oriental products which had huge demand in the large consumer markets in the west. Since the ancient time till the medieval period, spices formed an important part of European trade with India. Pepper, ginger, chillies, cinnamon and cloves were carried to Europe where they fetched high prices. Indian silk, fine Muslin and Indian cotton too were much in demand among rich European families. Pearls and other precious stone also found high demand among the European elites.

Trade was conducted both by sea and by land. While the sea routes opened from the ports of the western coast of India and went westward through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to Alexandria and Constantinople, Indian trade goods found their way across the Mediterranean to the commercial hubs of Venice and Genoa, from where they were then dispersed throughout the main cities of Europe.

The old trading routes between the east and the west came under Turkish control after the Ottoman conquest of Asia Minor and the capture of Constantinople in 1453. The merchants of Venice and Genoa monopolised the trade between Europe and Asia and refused to let the new nation states of Western Europe, particularly Spain and Portugal, have any share in the trade through these old routes. The West European states and merchants therefore began to search for new and safe sea routes to India and the Spice Island in Indonesia. They wanted to break the Arab and Venetian trade monopoly, to bypass the Turkish hostility, and to open direct trade relation with the East.

The Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> that took place in Europe equipped the Europeans with ship building technologies and also with the science of navigation. The Renaissance also instilled in the Europeans a sense and desire of adventure to discover and know the unknown. Initially the Europeans began trading and exploration along with new discoveries and inventions and navigation but when this phase came to end, the age of European exploitation began-ultimately leading to colonialism and economic imperialism.

Portugal became the first European nation to make vital attempts to discover a new sea route to India. The Portuguese merchants were soon followed by the Dutch, the English, and the French-among which the last two went on to become giant maritime powers. Commanded by enterprising men and equipped with large ships and ammunitions, the merchant communities of the English and the French made a heady start by building their own armies and making a debut in the territorial conquest of India.

The success of the Portuguese merchants and trader in conducting trade and making high profit made the merchants of England more and more interested in conducting direct trade and participate in the profitable commerce with the East. After the victory of the English over the Spanish Armada in 1588CE their desire of direct trade began to increase. An English company to trade with the East was formed in 1599CE under a group of Merchants. The company popularly known as 'The English East India Company' was granted a royal charter and an exclusive privilege to trade with the East by Queen Elizabeth I on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1600CE.

In 15608 the English East India Company decided to open a 'factory', the name given at the time to a trading depot, at Surat on the west coast of India and with the purpose of trade in silk, precious stones, indigo and sulphur sent Captain William Hawkins to met Mughal Emperor Jahangir with a letter of introduction from James I, the King of England. Captain Hawkins stayed at the Mughal court for three years but was unable to get any trading concession because of stiff Portuguese opposition to the English gaining any commercial privileges. It was only after the Portuguese were defeated by Captain Best in a naval attack off the coast of Surat in 1612CE that the Mughal Emperor Jahangir permitted the English to built a factory at Surat.

Eager to gain a foot hold in India ,the English sent Sir Thomas Roe as the Company's Ambassador to the Mughal court of Jahangir in 1615CE. Roe

succeeded in getting an imperial farman to trade and establish factories in all part of the Mughal Empire. In 1622 , the English captured the Ormuz from the Portuguese with the help of the King of Iran. The English also set up their trading stations at Aramgaon and Masulipatam. In 1633 factories were set up in Balasore and Hariharpore. The site of Madras was bought by the English East India Company in 1640. In 1639CE, Francis Day obtained the site Chennai (Madras) from the Governor of Chandragiri, Damarla Venkata(son of Chenna), In 1641CE, the English built the Fort St. George, which was to become the Headquarters of the English settlements on the Eastern Coast of India and laid the foundation of modern Chennai. In 1651 a factory was set up at Hoogli. In 1661, the Portuguese gave the Island of Bombay to king Charles II of England as dowry for marrying a Portuguese Princess. Eventually the Portuguese lost all its possessions in India except for Goa, Daman and Diu. The English Company fell out with the Dutch Company over division of spice trade of the Indonesian Island. The intermittent war in India between the two powers, began in 1654 and ended in 1667, when the English gave up all claims to Indonesia while the Dutch agree to leave alone the English settlements in India.

Though the English did not face any opposition in Bombay and Madras, due to the Coastal location of their settlement, in Bengal however, when the Company's agent tried to fortify Hoogli, Shaista Khan, the Mughal Governor of Bengal, seized several factories and drove out the English. It was only after Job Charnok the Company's agent in Bengal, negotiated with the Mughals the English were allowed to return to Hoogli. Again when the English seized some Indian ships in the Arabian Sea, Aurangzeb ordered general attack on all the English settlements, ordering all their factories at Surat, Masulipatnam and Vizagapatnam to be locked up. The fort of English at Bombay was besieged too. Later on submission of a humble petition, the English were allowed to resume their trade in Bengal on payment of a huge amount of indemnity, including the return of all warships. The English reorganised their settlements in Bengal under the separate control of a president and a council.

The progress of English East India Company was rapid during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It managed to subdue all its European rivals and also succeeded in establishing British rule in India. In 1715CE the Company's Ambassador ,John Surman, visited the Mughal court of Farukh Shiyar, to secure commercial privileges throughout Mughal India .Another member of the Delegation ,William Hamilton, a physician by profession, was able to cure the Mughal Emperor of a

painful disease. In gratitude they were granted trading facility which included the grant of certain villages near Calcutta(Sutanuti, Gobindapur ,Kalikata) and Madras(Madraspatnam,Chennapatnam, Nungambakam etc) as well as the right to reside wherever they choose..Thus Bombay, Madras and Calcutta became the centres of their principal presidencies.

Of all the rival European trading companies, the French East India Company turned out to be the most serious threat for the English East India Company in India. For nearly 20 years from 1744 to 1763the French and the English were to wage a bitter war for control over the trade, wealth and the territory of India.

### **The First Carnatic War(1745-1748)**

- Capture of the French ships by the English navy under Barnett (1745) and retaliation of the French under Dupleix by the capture of Madras (1746).
- Appeal of the English to the Carnatic Nawab to save them from the French and secure the release of Madras from the French.
- Refusal of the French to obey the Nawab (Anwarud-din)and the battle between the forces of the Nawab (10,000)and the French (around 1000) at St.Thome which resulted in a severe defeat to the Nawab, exposing the weakness of the traditional Indian armies against the European trained armies.
- End of the war of Austrian succession in Europe resulting in the end of Anglo-French hostilities in India (1748) and restoration of Madras to the English by the French.

### **The Second Carnatic War (1749-1754)**

- French support to Muzaffar Jung and Chanda Sahib in Hyderabad and Carnatic respectively.
- English support to their opponents in the two states (Nasir lung in Hyderabad and Anwarud-din and later his son Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic).
- Success of the French in both states in defeating and murdering their opponents and placing their supporters on the thrones in 1749.
- Capture of the Arcot by English under Clive (1751) and successive defeats of the French by the English.

- Capture and execution of Chanda Sahib (he was killed by a general of Tanjore, an ally of the British during the war-1752) and placement of Muhammad Ali on the Throne of the Carnatic.
- Futile efforts of Dupleix to reverse the trend 1753-1754) and his recall by the French government (1754).
- Retention of French position at Hyderabad through their agent Bussy.

### **The Third Carnatic War (1758-1763)**

- Outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe in 1756, the capture of Chandannagore by Clive and Watson (1757) in Bengal and the arrival of Count de Lally to retrieve the position of the French in India (1758).
- Defeat of the French fleet under d' Ache by the English navy under Pocock in three naval battles, and the departure of d, Ache for French(1759).
- Defeat of Count Lally by the English General Eyre Coote in the Battle of Wandiwash (a fort in the Carnatic state)(1760).
- Replacement of the French by the English as the Nizam's protectors (1756),surrender of Pondicherry to the English(1761) and loss of all other settlements in India by the French.
- Conclusion of peace and restoration of the settlement to the French (1763).

### **THE OCCUPATION OF BENGAL BY THE BRITISH**

The beginning of British rule in India may be traced to the province of Bengal which emerged as the base from which the British first embarked on their political career that would last for almost two centuries. After the death of Aurangzeb various parts of the Mughal Empire became independent under different heads. Bengal became independent under the leadership of Alivardi Khan who maintained friendly relation with the English officials throughout his reign. However he did not allow them to fortify their settlements till the end of his rule up to 1756CE.

Alivardi Khan was succeeded by his grandson Nawab Shiraj –ud-Daulah who as soon as ascending the throne demanded of the English that they should trade on the same basis as in the times of Murshid Quli Khan. The English did not agree to the Nawab's proposal rather they levied heavy duties on

Indian goods entering Calcutta which was under their control. They also started fortifying their settlements against the order of the Nawab. All these amounted to a direct challenge to the Nawab's Sovereignty. Shiraj-ud – Daulah in order to control the English activities and maintain the laws of the land seized the English Factory at Kasimbazar, marched on to Calcutta and occupied the Fort Williams in 1756 .As the Nawab went on to celebrate this easy victory of his, he made a mistake to underestimate the strength of his enemy.

The English with aids and allies from Madras as well as the leading men of the Nawab's court under the leadership of admiral Watson and Colonel Clive re-conquered Calcutta in the Beginning of 1757.This was not all as the English were determined to put down the Nawab and place a more pliant tool on the throne of Bengal. They hatched a conspiracy with Mir Jafar. Both the side met at the battle field of Plassey, near Murshidabad on 23 June,1757. The English army emerged victorious under the leadership of Robert Clive. The Nawab was forced to flee and was put to death by Mir Jafar's son Miran.

The Battle of Plassey paved the way for British mastery of Bengal and eventually the whole of India. It boosted the power of the British and made them a major contender for the Indian empire. The victory in this battle enabled the Company and its servants to amass untold wealth at the cost of the people of Bengal. Apart from all these it marked the beginning of the Drain of Wealth from India to Britain.

Although Mir Jafar had accepted the tutelage of the English, he was soon dissatisfied with their continuous dominance and interference in state affairs. His coffers were emptied by the demand of the Company's officials for presents and bribes. As a result the large sum of money that he had promised to pay to the Company could not be paid even after three years of his accession to the Throne of Bengal. He grew restless under financial pressure and the growing supremacy of the English. Meanwhile there was a tussle between Mir Jafar and his son-in-law Mir Qasim on a succession issue. The English replaced Mir Jafar by Mir Qasim as the new Nawab of Bengal.

After coming to power Mir Qasim realised that the farman of 1717 was misused by the Company's servants .He resented the stifling control exercised by the English in the internal affairs of the state administration as

well as in the activities of the Indian merchants. The disputes arising out of trade interest became so serious that a conflict between the Nawab and the Company became imminent.

Mir Qasim was defeated in a series of Battle in 1763CE and fled to Awadh where he formed an alliance with Shuja-ud-Daula ,the Nawab of Awadh and Shah Alam II the Mughal Emperor. The three allies faced the English army at the Battle of Buxar in 1764 CE and was thoroughly defeated.

The Battle of Buxar made the British the *de facto* rulers of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The defeat in the battle made the Nawab of Awadh a dependent of the Company and the Mughal Emperor a mere prisoner, thus raising the prestige of the company. The Battle of Buxar significantly demonstrated the superiority of the English in military skills and army.

### **DUAL SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OF BENGAL(1765-1772 CE)**

After the Battle of Buxar the East India Company became the real master of Bengal exercising sole control of its defence .The supreme political powers were reduced to the status of mere puppets at the hands of the British.

The English signed the Treaty of Allahabad with Shah Alam II in 1765 CE that secured the diwani rights on return for an annual payment of Rs, 26 lakh to the Emperor and a provision of Rs. 53 lakh for the nizamat functions. Prior to this treaty the English had signed another treaty earlier that same year with the Nawab Najam-ud-Daula who surrendered virtually all the nizamat powers, including military defence and foreign affairs to the Company. Thus the Company secured the diwani powers of the province from the Emperor and the nizamat i.e. military power and criminal justice from the Nawab. The Company exercised the diwani and the nizamat functions through its agents who were Indian but the actual power was in the hand of the Company. The English was thus given the complete control over the province but were not responsible for its administration. This system of administration -the rule of the Company and the Nawab was known as the Dual or Double Government of Bengal.

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